

Press release: Foreign Secretary visits Benghazi as part of drive to support Libyan political process

During his visit the Foreign Secretary met Field Marshall Heftar, the Head of the Libyan National Army, as well as members of the House of Representatives representing Benghazi.

This was the first visit by a UK government minister to Benghazi since 2011 and the first time that the Foreign Secretary has met Field Marshall Heftar. It reflects UK efforts to reach out across Libya to persuade all parties to engage in the political process and work together to bring peace and stability to Libya.

Libya is likely to feature high on the international agenda during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) week in September. Ahead of UNGA the Foreign Secretary will be working intensively with key partners to galvanise international support for a renewed effort to break the political deadlock in Libya and the UK will be at the forefront of efforts to support the new UN Special Representative, Ghassan Salamé to revitalise the political process.

Speaking from Benghazi, the Foreign Secretary said:

A secure and stable Libya, better able to deal with the threat from terrorism and the challenge of migration, is firmly in the UK interests.

The Libyan people need a stable state that can meet their fundamental economic and security needs. That requires all sides to compromise and work together. Only a united Libya can defeat the terrorists and smuggling networks who are exploiting the instability.

That's why we are reaching out to all sides in Libya in support of the United Nations work to amend the Libyan Political Agreement so that it delivers for all Libyans.

Field Marshall Heftar has a role to play in the political process. I urged him to adhere to the commitments he made during recent meetings in Paris, to respect a ceasefire, and to work with Mr Salamé in order to amend the Libyan Political Agreement.

Ultimately it will be for Libyans to decide what an acceptable compromise looks like. I have encouraged all sides to resolve their differences by dialogue, not conflict, and to respect international human rights law.

The Foreign Secretary's visit to Benghazi follows [meetings in Tripoli yesterday](#) with Prime Minister Fayyez Al-Serraj, the President of Libya's High State Council Abdurrahman Swehli and a visit to Misrata to meet with political leaders there. The Foreign Secretary met the President of the House of Representatives, Agila Salah, in Tobruk during [his last visit to Libya in May](#).

In Benghazi the Foreign Secretary also met with representatives from the Benghazi Free Zone and discussed opportunities for UK companies to help stabilise Libya. The project is designed to help diversify the city's economy and is already being supported by UK companies.