

Press release: UK Ambassador: we are a proud partner of the Lebanese army

Within the framework of the High Level Steering Committee, British ambassador to Lebanon Hugo Shorter and John Rath representing the American Ambassador, accompanied by UK and the US Defence attachés Chris Gunning and Daniel Mouton, met with the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces General Joseph Aoun to discuss the Land Border Security Project.

The UK is a proud partner of the LAF, and we want to help the LAF build on its record of success. In recent months, we have seen the LAF conduct successful and complex counter-terrorism operations, make significant progress on securing Lebanon's borders with Syria, and protect Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees from the dreadful impacts of the Syrian civil war.

As we approach Army Day, we celebrate the fact that this is an army that has transformed itself over the last decade, and which commands not only the respect of the Lebanese, but also of the international community. Today the LAF is capable of exercising control and ensuring security over all Lebanese territory.

Only a strong state, with a strong LAF at its heart, can over the long term guarantee Lebanon's stability, its democracy and its model of coexistence. Only the LAF can act with the consent of all the Lebanese people, and in line with the Constitution and relevant Security Council resolutions. The UK supports the LAF because it is the only legitimate defender of Lebanon.

Part of our discussions today also touched on the importance of human rights and accountability within the LAF, as a key ingredient of operational effectiveness and public respect. I am pleased that the LAF too see respect of human rights as a priority as part of its vision of being a modern, professional armed force.