

# Speech: Standing in solidarity alongside those who want a more prosperous and stable future for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Thank you Madam President, and congratulations on taking up the Presidency. We wish you every success. Thank you also to High Representative Inzko, and your team, for your objective and detailed reports and for your continued efforts to support the implementation of the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. You have the United Kingdom's full and continuous support.

Madam President, I would agree with my French colleague that today, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains at a crossroads. In the six months since we last met, there has been some small, incremental reform progress, and the reaching of at least two significant milestones. And yet, the vestiges of division continue to mar that progress and to prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina reaching the potential its citizens deserve. I will briefly touch on those two milestones.

First, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia issued its final judgments in November and, at the end of the year, transferred responsibility to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals. We recognise the tribunal's achievements, including the first instance conviction of former wartime commander Ratko Mladić of genocide and crimes against humanity. Although Mladić's conviction will not bring back the thousands who lost their lives, it demonstrates that the architects of suffering will be held to account, giving others around the world hope that there can be justice for appalling human rights abuses. The court has accumulated a wealth of practical knowledge and experience over the 24 years it has been operating. And it is important that the lessons learnt are shared with other international criminal courts and tribunals.

The Tribunal has done ground-breaking work to investigate, prosecute and convict perpetrators of wartime sexual violence. I would like to echo the report of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee in welcoming Bosnia and Herzegovina's initiatives to integrate women, peace and security in counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) issues through the development of national and local action plans, and the UK would encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue and intensify its efforts on this trajectory.

Madam President, it is a matter of regret that some political leaders have disputed the rulings of the Tribunal and the decisions of domestic war crimes chambers in the region, and have even made inflammatory remarks about a return to conflict. I agree with my American colleague that we should condemn such rhetoric, which privileges the pursuit of political advantage ahead of

the pursuit of justice for victims and a peaceful future for all.

Second, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its EU questionnaire earlier this year. We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for this achievement, which was not insignificant given the complexities of the system being assessed.

But we have been disappointed to see only limited commitment to the difficult but essential reforms that underlie the political commitment to becoming an EU member state.

Now the questionnaire has been submitted, Bosnia and Herzegovina must demonstrate the commitment to uphold the rule of law and to implement agreed reforms.

Among these, as my Dutch colleague has already highlighted today, there is an urgent need to amend the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code on special investigative measures in order to comply with the Constitutional Court decision of June 2017 and align with international standards. Failure to do so would seriously undermine the fight against corruption and organised crime, put in jeopardy international cooperation, and the security of partner countries.

Madam President, as the High Representative noted, 2018 will also be a significant year for Bosnia and Herzegovina with elections expected in October. However, amendments to the electoral law are necessary so the results of those elections can be implemented. If political leaders fail to agree to amendments, the entire country will be exposed to an unnecessary and serious risk. Political leaders must demonstrate their ability to compromise on a solution without further delay, and move towards European standards.

As elections approach, we see an opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to focus on the future, not the past. Divisive nationalist rhetoric demeans those who use it and does a disservice to the people and the country as a whole. The United Kingdom encourages the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to demonstrate to their people and the European Union that they are committed to building a better and more secure future for them and their children.

The consequences of Bosnia and Herzegovina's divisive politics are easy to see. Huge numbers of young people leave every year in search of the political stability and employment opportunities that they are denied at home. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve better.

As a longstanding friend of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UK will continue to stand in solidarity alongside those who want a better, more prosperous and stable future for the country, including as Bosnia and Herzegovina pursues Euro-Atlantic integration. The UK's hosting of the Western Balkans Berlin Process summit in London this summer is a signal of that solidarity and commitment. We remain committed, too, to Operation Althea and the High Representative, including the use of Bonn Powers if the situation requires, until stability and security are firmly entrenched.

Thank you.

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## **Press release: Joint statement from Prime Minister May, Chancellor Merkel and President Macron following President Trump's statement on Iran**

It is with regret and concern that we, the Leaders of France, Germany and the United Kingdom take note of President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States of America from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Together, we emphasise our continuing commitment to the JCPoA. This agreement remains important for our shared security. We recall that the JCPoA was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council in resolution 2231. This resolution remains the binding international legal framework for the resolution of the dispute about the Iranian nuclear programme. We urge all sides to remain committed to its full implementation and to act in a spirit of responsibility.

According to the IAEA, Iran continues to abide by the restrictions set out by the JCPoA, in line with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The world is a safer place as a result. Therefore we, the E3, will remain parties to the JCPoA. Our governments remain committed to ensuring the agreement is upheld, and will work with all the remaining parties to the deal to ensure this remains the case including through ensuring the continuing economic benefits to the Iranian people that are linked to the agreement.

We urge the US to ensure that the structures of the JCPoA can remain intact, and to avoid taking action which obstructs its full implementation by all other parties to the deal. After engaging with the US Administration in a thorough manner over the past months, we call on the US to do everything possible to preserve the gains for nuclear non-proliferation brought about by the JCPoA, by allowing for a continued enforcement of its main elements.

We encourage Iran to show restraint in response to the decision by the US; Iran must continue to meet its own obligations under the deal, cooperating fully and in a timely manner with IAEA inspection requirements. The IAEA must be able to continue to carry out its long-term verification and monitoring programme without restriction or hindrance. In turn, Iran should continue to receive the sanctions relief it is entitled to whilst it remains in compliance with the terms of the deal.

There must be no doubt: Iran's nuclear program must always remain peaceful

and civilian. While taking the JCPOA as a base, we also agree that other major issues of concern need to be addressed. A long-term framework for Iran's nuclear programme after some of the provisions of the JCPOA expire, after 2025, will have to be defined. Because our commitment to the security of our allies and partners in the region is unwavering, we must also address in a meaningful way shared concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme and its destabilising regional activities, especially in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. We have already started constructive and mutually beneficial discussions on these issues, and the E3 is committed to continuing them with key partners and concerned states across the region.

We and our Foreign Ministers will reach out to all parties to the JCPOA to seek a positive way forward.

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## **News story: Extension of Countryside Stewardship payment claim deadline**

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) claim deadline is being extended by one month to 15 June 2018. This means CS agreement holders have an extra month to submit their CS annual claim. The original deadline for Natural England to receive these by was 15 May 2018.

The claim deadline extension does not apply to Environmental Stewardship claims or Basic Payment Scheme 2018 applications; both of these must be submitted by 15 May to avoid late claim penalties.

Farmers and land managers who are waiting for their CS agreement offer will be notified soon about whether or not their application was successful. Natural England is working to send out the remaining agreement offers by the end of May, and successful candidates will need to accept their agreements and send in a claim by 15 June.

Natural England is writing to all Countryside Stewardship agreement holders and applicants awaiting their agreement to inform them of the one month extension. The extra month also means that customers who need to make any changes to the maps on their agreement offer or raise any other queries with Natural England have time to do so.

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# [Press release: Minister for Europe statement on election of new Armenian Prime Minister](#)

Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan said:

I am pleased that a solution to the political situation in Armenia has been found, via negotiation and through the Parliament, and congratulate Nikol Pashinyan on his election as Armenia's new Prime Minister.

It is to the credit of all involved that events over the last three weeks have unfolded peacefully and largely without incident.

It is important that the restraint and statesmanship shown by all parties continues and that the political process moves forward, based on solid constitutional and legal foundations.

In my two visits to Armenia in the last 12 months, I have seen first-hand the country's rich history, and its huge potential. I was particularly impressed by the many young people I met, who are determined to build a bright future for Armenia.

The UK, as a longstanding friend of Armenia, stands ready to support its efforts to strengthen its democracy, deliver good governance, and improve economic opportunities for all.

## **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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## Government response: Ministerial statement on the peace process in South Sudan

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK welcomes the resumption of peace talks in South Sudan next week and the consultations that are now underway. This is a critical moment for the peace process and we remain strongly in support of regional efforts to bring about a lasting peace.

It is disappointing that we once again find ourselves in a position where the cessation of hostilities agreement reached at the last set of talks has not held, and the talks have so far failed to generate serious commitment to compromise. Meanwhile, the people of South Sudan remain in a terrible state of conflict and humanitarian crisis. Fighting, troop movements and the rhetoric of war continues, pushing the country deeper into crisis. In recent weeks we have seen violent clashes surge in Unity, Jonglei and the Central Equatorias. This is causing immense suffering and preventing lifesaving assistance from reaching those most in need.

As no party has yet been held to account for violating the cessation of hostilities agreement, the perpetrators continue to act with impunity. This is undermining prospects for a lasting peace to be agreed at the upcoming talks. Those who have violated the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement must face consequences for their actions. We urge the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to take immediate action in this regard, to leave the parties in no doubt of the region's commitment to peace.

Only a negotiated agreement can bring peace in South Sudan and create the conditions for elections. We believe that the High-level Revitalisation Forum remains the only platform with the scope and inclusion to deliver this.

## **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Harriett Baldwin on Twitter [@hbaldwin](#)
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