

[Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Costa: 10 April 2018](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa at Downing Street earlier today.

The Prime Minister said that the UK deeply values our long-standing alliance with Portugal and wanted to maintain and strengthen those ties in future across a range of areas, including science, defence, and trade and investment.

They discussed the recent attacks in Syria and Salisbury and agreed that the international community needed to come together to uphold the worldwide prohibition on the use of chemical weapons.

They also discussed Brexit and the progress of negotiations. The Prime Minister underlined the value she placed on the contribution of the Portuguese community in the UK. Prime Minister Costa also welcomed the contribution of UK nationals in Portugal and expressed his desire to maintain a close relationship with the UK after exit.

The Prime Minister also noted that yesterday marked the centenary of the First World War battle of La Lys where the Portuguese suffered their greatest loss of life, and she paid tribute to the bravery of the Portuguese forces.

[Speech: Pursuing peace and stability](#)

in the Great Lakes region

Thank you very much indeed Mr President.

I wanted to take the floor because we are at an important point in this region, but I also wanted to welcome the SRSG back to the Council, and through him, to thank the UN mission for everything they are doing. It is also extremely helpful to have the update from the Ambassador of Congo.

I would like to start by saying to my good friend, the Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea, that it isn't a modest contribution that his country makes, it is much more than that.

Mr President, it's been five years since the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was signed. It has proved to be a crucial framework for pursuing peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. But as the SRSG and the Ambassador from Congo have spelt out the DRC has always been at the centre of the framework. The situation in the DRC, the nerve centre, affects the stability of the region. As this Council has discussed in recent days, we are now at a critical juncture. What happens in the DRC over the next few months could be a defining moment in greater regional stability. We have a choice, Mr President, between seeing the situation improve or being overturned.

The United Kingdom, for our part, remains committed to supporting the implementation of the PSCF and we support free, fair and credible elections in DRC in December. We welcome the progress that has been made in the five years since the signing of the framework and I'd like to highlight the increase in the participation of women and a commitment to greater regional and international cooperation in the course of advancing peace and security.

That said Mr President, we are concerned that implementation of key elements has not made progress and this includes the repatriation of foreign combatants. As the Ambassador from Congo highlighted, we welcome efforts to reinvigorate the framework and urge all signatories to implement the framework in full, and we are very supportive of what the SRSG had to say on judicial issues. We are also concerned by the continued proliferation of violence in DRC, particularly in North and South Kivu, Tanganyika, Ituri and the Kasais. The results of this instability have indeed been devastating. 4.5 million Congolese have fled their homes and communities. There are more internally displaced people in DRC than anywhere else in Africa. And over 13.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. So we support the other calls in the Council, Mr President, for regional players to come together in the interest of stability in the coming months. And I would like to endorse what the French Ambassador said about the importance of that regional cooperation.

Mr President, I'd like to conclude by talking about elections. Credible and constitutional elections are the only way to end the political crisis and achieve stability in DRC and we urge the signatories of the framework to ensure that peaceful and credible elections can take place in December 2018.

This means that the electoral calendar needs to be respected and key milestones must be met and the confidence building measures of the 2016 December Agreement need to be implemented in full. This critically includes the freeing of political prisoners and the opening of political space and peaceful demonstrations. It is a region Mr President that is in all our interest and the United Kingdom pledges to work together with partners to achieve progress.

I have some other remarks, Mr President, on some other aspects of the region and framework but I will save those for consultations.

Thank you.

Press release: Free tyre checks at fire charity car wash

In a national project being trialled in the North West, Highways England is working with fire and rescue services to offer free tyre safety checks and advice alongside a long-running programme of fire station charity car washes. As part of the pilot project, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and The Fire Fighters Charity have allowed Highways England traffic officers and other staff to run the tyre checking service at several car wash events – with the latest at Lancashire’s Fulwood fire station on Saturday (14 April).

Highways England is working to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on England’s motorways and major A roads by 40 percent by 2020 and says focusing on tyre safety will make an important contribution. The tie-up with firefighters and the established charity car wash events is seen as a friendly and informal way of reaching drivers to spread the tyre safety message.



Highways England traffic officer Neil Waring, from Knutsford outstation, checking car tyres at one of Cheshire's charity car wash events last month

Stuart Lovatt, Highways England's Road Safety Lead, said:

Highways England and fire and rescue services have a mutual interest in reducing the number of incidents caused by poorly-inflated or damaged tyres which could be picked up by simple and regular checks. The Fire Fighters Charity's National Car Wash programme is now huge – involving some 20,000 vehicles across more than 600 events annually. We think it's a great way of reaching out to potentially thousands of drivers to check their tyres for free and give them safety advice while they wait for their cars to be washed.

The feedback from the first 2 events we've run at Frodsham and Ellesmere Port fire stations last month has been really positive and after Saturday's visit to Fulwood we'll be assessing whether we can extend the idea right across the country.

Firefighters are among the emergency service workers called out to tyre-related incidents on the motorway and major A road network while Highways England traffic officers and colleagues have to manage the congestion caused by breakdowns, punctures and road traffic collisions. Statistics show:

- there were 80,000 tyre incidents on England's network of motorways and major A roads between 2013 and 2015

- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service was called out to over 4,500 vehicle incidents between 2015 and 2017
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service was called out to 2,866 vehicle incidents over the same period
- 27% of vehicles have at least one illegal tyre (Tyresafe 2016)
- 40% of road traffic accidents caused by vehicle defects are tyre related (DfT 2015)



Hi-tech scanners are being used to carry out the free tread and pressure checks

Tony Crook, an Area Manager at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, said:

We attend over a thousand road traffic collisions each year and some of these could have been prevented if the vehicles involved were fitted with legal tyres.

Our firefighters see first-hand the dangers of driving poorly-maintained vehicles and we hope that this new partnership with Highways England will result in preventing crashes and even saving lives.

Watch Manager Andy Gray, a Road Safety Officer at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, said:

Tyre treads are designed to give good grip on wet roads. As the

tread wears down the tyre loses the ability of good grip. It is essential that people regularly check their tyres. Many tyres only get checked at their yearly MOT inspection and then subsequently fail, resulting in a vehicle that could well have been driving with unsafe tyres for some time.

This partnership not only benefits people immediately with the tyre checks but crews will show and educate them on how to check their tyres in the future. The Fire Fighters Charity also benefits from the public's kind donations from the car wash events. These are positive events where you can meet multiple partners who want to engage with you and help keep you safe on the roads.

Drivers attending Saturday's car wash event can get a free hi-tech check of their tyres from 3D tyre tread checking scanners linked to an app on a smart device. The scanners allow a quick and easy way to check tyre tread levels and provide instant feedback and advice to motorists, via a print out.

More information about the Fire Fighters Charity can be found on their [website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Changes to the assessment economic link conditions](#)

All UK fishing licences contain a condition that requires vessels to demonstrate a genuine economic link with the UK. The economic link condition applies to landings of quota species and is assessed on a yearly basis.

From 1 May 2018 we will be changing the current assessment period of 1 April to 31 March to 01 January to 31 December (the 'calendar year'). This is to bring the assessment period in line with the yearly monitoring of quota uptake and to help those vessel owners who are required to comply with this condition to manage their quota for the year.

This change will also ensure that the English inshore fleet will benefit

earlier in the year from quota donations made in fulfillment of the economic link condition. This gives the English fleet a greater opportunity to use the quota in what can be seasonal fisheries.

The way in which vessel owners must demonstrate an economic link with the UK will not be changed and are listed below by:

- landing over 50% by weight of their catch (which are subject to EU quotas) into UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man ports.
- demonstrating that at least 50% of the total crew man days at sea were accounted for by crew normally resident in UK coastal areas.
- providing proof that routine expenditure in the UK on goods and services for the vessel was equal to either: i) 50% of the value of quota stocks landed net of crew wages, or ii) 50% of the vessel's total operating expenditure for the year, net of crew wages.
- donating quota to the English under-10m fleet equivalent to a value representing 10% of the value of catch landed overseas.
- any combination of the above methods agreed by the MMO.

The change to the assessment period is not expected to affect the ability of vessel owners to comply with the economic link condition.

[Press release: Call for Project Proposals – Rwanda](#)

Updated: Needed to give a proper reference to the attachments

The British High Commission (BHC) in Kigali is now accepting project proposals for the 2018/2019 financial year (April 2018-March 2019).

This year the BHC is seeking to support projects in Rwanda that focus on the following themes:

- Human Rights – Implementation of the accepted 2015 UPR recommendations and strengthening human rights in Rwanda
- Justice – Strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice system, enabling improved access to justice and protection of rights for all citizens

We are particularly interested in project proposals aiming towards the following outcomes:

1. Measurable progress towards full implementation of the UPRs in Rwanda
2. Strengthening human rights in Rwanda via innovative activities to improve relationships and cooperation between all stakeholders (civil society organisations, the general public, relevant institutions and the Government of Rwanda)
3. Measurable increase awareness of, and access to judicial services,

particularly for citizens in rural areas

Bid Guidance:

- Projects are funded for a single financial year running from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, with no expectation of continued funding beyond this period.
- Minimum budget limit: £15,000
- Maximum budget limit: £55,000

Assessment:

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment with the above mentioned thematic priorities and outcomes
- Outcomes are achievable within the funding period
- Project design includes clear monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Sustainability demonstrating the project benefits continue after the funding ends
- Risk and financial accountability procedures
- The organisation's safeguarding policies that ensure protection of beneficiaries
- Overall value for money

Process:

1. Project proposals must be received by midnight on Friday 27th April. Late proposals will not be considered.
2. Proposals must be submitted using the attached form only.
3. Proposals must be submitted to BHC.Kigali@fco.gov.uk
4. Successful project proposals will be notified on Wednesday 9th May. Only those selected for further consideration will be notified.
5. The BHC aim to sign grant agreements with successful project implementers by 16th May

[Proposal Form for £10k to £80k:1]

[Project Form Guidance:2]

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