

News story: UK urges Coalition to maintain momentum against Daesh

With Daesh losing in both Iraq and Syria, Ministers considered the Coalition campaign plan for 2017. This included plans for the operation to liberate Western Mosul, which the Defence Secretary reviewed with the Iraqi Prime Minister and Defence Minister during his visit to Iraq last weekend. With eastern Mosul recently liberated by Iraqi forces, operations to free the west of the city from Daesh's tyranny will start shortly.

The RAF has been in action, striking Daesh around the approaches to the city in recent weeks ahead of the launch of the operation, including sinking a Daesh heavy machine gun team last week on a boat on the River Tigris. On Tuesday careful surveillance operations allowed a building on the north-western outskirts of Mosul to be identified as a Daesh headquarters. With Iraqi forces keeping close watch from across the Tigris, a flight of Typhoons were able to conduct a highly accurate attack late at night – two Paveway IVs demolished the target.

RAF Typhoons bomb a Daesh HQ

RAF fast jets and remotely piloted aircraft have now carried out over 1,200 airstrikes against Daesh, second only to the United States in numbers of Coalition strikes.

In Syria, where the picture is more complicated, the Defence Secretary confirmed that by spring the operation to isolate Raqqa, the last major city Daesh holds in Syria, would be complete. It is expected that thereafter the liberation of the city itself will begin.

As the fight against Daesh enters a new phase, Ministers reviewed Coalition requests to make the training effort more flexible. The Defence Secretary last month authorised UK personnel to deliver training at secured and protected locations in Iraq, in addition to the training sites at Taji, Al Asad, Besmayah and Irbil, where personnel are already deployed. By training forward Britain will now deliver the infantry skills, counter-IED, combat first aid and bridge-building training where Iraqi forces need it. British forces previously mentored Iraqi forces carrying out bridge building ahead of the liberation of eastern Mosul.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Daesh is losing ground, fighters, and funding. Now we need to keep up the pressure on Mosul and Raqqa to deal Daesh a decisive blow. Britain will continue playing its leading role providing vital intelligence, precision airstrikes, and training Iraqi forces where they need it.

The meeting of Coalition Defence Ministers took place following discussions the day before on what more NATO would do to protect its southern borders. Sir Michael confirmed that Britain will send a UK military officer to help lead NATO's newly established training and capacity building mission in Iraq. This effort will help Iraqis defeat Daesh with training including in countering explosive devices. This commitment builds on the work that Britain is already doing in the country, where, we are helping to train Iraqi forces at an unprecedented level, with over 3,000 being trained a month.

Read more about UK activity against Daesh [here](#)

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Paraguay

From:

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Part of:

Mr Matthew Hedges has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Paraguay

Mr Matthew Hedges has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Paraguay in succession to Dr Jeremy Hobbs, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Hedges will take up his appointment in August 2017.

Curriculum Vitae

Full name Matthew James Hedges

2015 – 2016 Princeton University, Master in Public Policy – International Relations

2012 – 2015 Rangoon, Deputy Head of Mission

2009 – 2012 Tokyo, Head of Political Section

2008 – 2009 Turks & Caicos Islands, Head of Governor's Office

2006 – 2008 House of Commons, International Development Select Committee, Senior Clerk

2005 Basra, Head of Chancery

2005 – 2006 FC0, Team Leader, EU Constitutional Treaty/Future of Europe, EU Directorate

2001 – 2005 Rabat, Second Secretary Political

2000 UK Mission to the UN in New York, Adviser

1999 – 2000 FC0, Desk Officer, NATO Enlargement, Security Policy Department

1999

Joined FCO

Further information

News story: Appointment, reappointment and extensions of Parole Board members

Ministers have approved the appointment, reappointment and extensions of Parole Board members. Appointments are subject to security clearance.

Parole Board members are appointed under Schedule 19 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The appointment of Parole Board members are made after an open, transparent recruitment process which complies – save for judicial members – with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA). There are currently 214 Parole Board members.

The Parole Board is an independent body that works with its criminal justice partners to protect the public by risk assessing prisoners to decide whether they can be safely released into the community.

The Parole Board was established by the Criminal Justice Act 1967. It is an Executive Non Departmental Public Body sponsored by the MoJ.

Appointments

Ministers have approved the appointment of 104 Parole Board members:

Independent members

The members below were appointed from 1 December 2016 until 30 November 2019:

- Shazia Ahmed
- Katy Barrow
- Daniel Bunting
- Dr Rob Cawley
- Joanne Chambers
- Michelle Coulson
- Jo Dowling
- Jacki Duff
- Robert Edmondson-Jones
- Hedd Emrys Vine
- Melanie Essex
- Paulene Gandhi
- Victoria Goodfellow
- Christine Lawrie
- Elaine Moloney

- Douglas Paxton
- Alison Pearson
- Wendy Poynton
- Margaret Prythergch
- Elizabeth Rantzen
- Lisa Sanderson
- Karol Sanderson
- Victoria Scott
- Helena Suffield-Thompson
- Bill Warren
- Sarah Wells
- Jeremy Weston
- Cassie Williams

The following were appointed from 1 July 2017 and until 30 June 2021.

- Sarfraz Ahmad
- Sally Allbeury
- Nicola Auguste
- Joanna Cain
- Rachel Cook
- Amy Coyte
- Angharad Davies
- Emma Davy
- Stefan Fafinski
- Paul French
- Chris Fry
- Philip Hindson
- Gill Hirst
- Lisa Lamb
- Timothy Lawrence
- Siobhan McBride
- Fran McGrath
- Lynn O'Malley
- Helen Potts
- Jayne Salt
- Alex Simmonds
- Alice Sims
- Rebecca Sims
- Robert Smith
- Kay Taylor
- Julia Thackray
- Carol Trimmer

Ministers have approved the appointment from 1 July 2017 until 30 June 2020, the following serving Parole Board members who were successful applicants in the recent open recruitment process.

- Graham Bull
- Sue Dale
- Malcolm Davidson
- Sian Flynn

- Alan Harris
- Bill Mayne
- Clare Mitchell
- Susan Smith
- Ilana Tessler

Judicial members

Ministers have approved the appointment of the following judicial members from 1 December 2016 until 30 November 2019.

- HH Anthony Ansell
- HH Pamela Badley
- HH Roger Chapple
- HHJ Stephen Dawson
- HH John Dowse
- HHJ John Evans
- HH Peter Grobel
- HH Simon Hammond
- HH John Harrow

These members below have been appointed from 1 July 2017 until 30 June 2020.

- The Hon Sir David Calvert-Smith
- HH Nick Coleman
- HH Michael Lawson
- HHJ Philip Wassall

Psychiatrist members

Ministers have approved the appointment of Luke Birmingham and Huw Stone from 1 December 2016 until 30 November 2020.

Ministers have appointed two serving members: Lynne Daly and Caryl Morgan from 1 December 2016 until 30 November 2020.

Ministers have approved the appointment of Tim McInerny, Chris Jones and Sajid Muzaffar from 1 July 2017 until 30 June 2021.

Psychologist members

Ministers have approved the appointment of the following members. From 1 December 2016 until 30 November 2020:

- Abby Fenton
- Jane Gilbert
- Victoria Magrath
- Mary McMurran
- Rebecca Milner
- Wendy Morgan
- Brendan O'Mahony
- Sue Vivian-Byrne

From 1 July 2017 until 30 June 2021.

- Fiona Ainsworth
- Pamela Attwell
- Elina Baker
- Claire Barker
- Linda Blud
- Vivien Le Fort
- Lindy Maslin
- Libby Payne
- Rachel Roper
- Georgina Rowse
- Alyson Smith
- Claire Smith

Re-appointments

Judicial members

Ministers have approved the reappointment of four Judicial members. Details of those reappointed and the duration of each reappointment are provided below.

- HHJ Jeffrey Burke QC from 31 August 2016 until 30 August 2018
- HH Robert Brown from 1 September 2016 until 30 August 2018
- HH Michael Burr from 1 September 2016 until 31 August 2018
- HHJ Nicholas Webb from 1 October 2016 until 26 September 2020

Psychiatrist members

Ministers have approved the reappointments from 1 September 2016 until 31 August 2018 of:

- Ian Keitch
- John O'Grady
- Helen Whitworth

Psychologist members

Ministers have approved the reappointment of 13 members. Details of those reappointed and the duration of each reappointment are provided below.

- Martha Blom-Cooper from 17 April 2016 until 16 April 2018
- Joanna Homewood from 31 August 2016 until 30 August 2018
- Eleni Belevanaki from 7 November 2016 until 6 November 2021
- Jacqueline Bates-Gaston from 28 November 2016 until 13 November 2021

From 28 November 2016 until 27 November 2021;

- Eliza Harris
- Julia Higginbottom
- Claire Hunt
- Sarah Khan

- Sharon Leitch
- Lorraine Mosson-Jones
- Caroline Preston
- Kate Saward
- Anne Williams

Extension of appointment

The CPA also agreed an exemption from the provisions of the Code of Practice in order that Ministers might extend the appointment of a number of serving Parole Board members so that they might support the mentoring and training of newly appointed members. These were as follows:

Independent members

Ministers have approved the extension of the appointments from 1 October 2016 until 30 September 2018 of:

- Ms Kim Evans
- James Haines MBE
- Peter Haynes
- Andrew Mimmack
- Emma Pusill
- Alan Rayner
- Denise White

Psychiatrist members

Ministers have approved the extension of the appointments from 1 October 2016 until 30 September 2018 of:

- Dawn Black
- Derek Chiswick
- Rosmarie Cope
- Paul Courtney
- Sukh Lally

Declarations of political interest

The following Members have declared that they have political interest within the last 5 years:

- Victoria Scott has declared that she had canvassed on behalf of the Labour Party or helped at election, she also acted as a teller outside the local polling station.
- Nicola Auguste has declared that she had canvassed on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Party or helped at the previous 2 general elections by assisting with the organisation of election day activities. This included co-ordinating door to door canvassing and updating databases. She also attended polling stations to ask if voters would give their voter number.
- Sian Flynn has declared that she canvassed for the Conservative Party in the 2015 General Election.

- Chris Jones has declared that he is an active member of the Labour Party and holds an Executive Committee position in his local constituency party. In 2015, he stood as a Parliamentary candidate. In 2016, he stood as the Labour and Cooperative candidate in the Police and Crime Commissioner election.
 - Peter Haynes has declared that he stood as an Independent member of Eccleston Parish Council from 2006 to 2011.
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News story: UK's national cyber security centre to help improve skills in Wales

Opened officially by Her Majesty The Queen on Tuesday 14 February 2017, the National Cyber Security Centre's operational nerve centre in London will manage incidents, analyse threats and offer advice for online security.

By working with businesses, educational facilities and authorities across the UK, the centre will enable generations to navigate the internet safely and be protected from the growing threat of online attack.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Ben Gummer, toured the centre and outlined the important role UK regions will play in boosting British cyber security.

He said:

Although the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is based in London, cyber attacks can happen anywhere, at any time – and we need to be prepared.

That is why we are expanding our outreach programmes such as CyberFirst, GCHQ degrees and academic centres of excellence, so we can increase skills, build capability and fight cyber attacks wherever they occur.

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales, said:

Cyber security is of growing importance in our daily lives and I am pleased Wales is playing its part through offering GCHQ-certified degrees.

Hackers are no respecters of national boundaries and businesses and Government installations in Wales are under threat as much as anywhere else in the UK. Wales will now be able to produce the

highly skilled workforce we need to combat this new frontier in crime.

The Government is fully committed to defending against cyber threats and a five year National Cyber Security Strategy (NCSS) was announced in November 2016 by the Cabinet Office, supported by £1.9 billion of transformational investment.

It has also announced the creation of Industry 100 – a pioneering initiative that will grant 100 highly competitive NCSC secondments to private sector staff who will work in the centre to bring innovation that wouldn't have been possible without collaboration.

A key objective of the NCSC is to reduce risks to the UK by working with public and private sector organisations to improve their cyber security. Industry 100 will see high quality staff embedded into the NCSC to achieve a better understanding of cyber security using wide and diverse thinking.

The NCSC will work closely with law enforcement and the wider public sector, including the National Crime Agency (NCA) to support cyber security awareness campaigns. The NCSC is tirelessly committed to enhancing the UK's reputation of being a world centre for cyber security research, innovation and skills.

The popular CyberFirst programme is inspiring, encouraging and developing a cyber-savvy cohort of students to help protect the UK's digital society.

Speech: Workshop on climate risk management strategies for Kolkata

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to be here at the workshop on climate risk management strategies for Kolkata. It is my first official visit to Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC). And I must say that like my predecessors I am too very impressed by KMC's enthusiasm and genuine interest in embracing new concepts and emerging ideas when it comes to addressing climate vulnerability of this great city.

The UN estimates that there are 3,351 cities located in low-elevation coastal zones around the world. The top 10, in terms of population exposed to coastal flood hazard, are Mumbai, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Miami, Ho Chi Minh City, Kolkata, New York, Osaka-Kobe, Alexandria and New Orleans. The cities of Tokyo, New York, Mumbai, Shanghai, Kolkata and Buenos Aires are the most vulnerable to storm surge.

India is one of the world's most vulnerable countries. It has faced several types of extreme weather events in 2015 and 2016 – from floods to unseasonal rainfalls to deadliest heat-waves to snow storms. As per a report by Earth Security Group, India is incurring losses of about US \$9-10 billion annually due to extreme weather incidents.

In 2015, the heaviest rainfall in over a century caused extreme flooding in Tamil Nadu leading to an estimated US\$ 710 million in insurance claims.

Climate risks, as we all know, have the potential to severely dent urban systems and pose serious threats to urban infrastructure and importantly the life of citizens. This is especially true for cities like Kolkata that are more susceptible to the effects of climate risk which imposes both social and economic costs. Cyclone Aila, in 2009, left 150,000 people homeless and without livelihood in this part of West Bengal. Lloyd's City Risk Index has estimated that storms and floods will put a huge burden on Kolkata's GDP.

Many of you would be aware that under our UK-Kolkata Municipal Corporation Programme on low carbon and climate resilient Kolkata, PwC and TARU conducted a GIS-based and ground level survey to assess the level of climate risks the city is exposed to and came up with a Climate-Induced Disaster Management Plan for the city. You will get a glimpse of this interesting management strategy later in the session when TARU presents key highlights and recommendations. There is one recommendation that I would like to mention here which is directly linked to this workshop today—and that is of climate risk insurance.

With a large urban poor population and majority of urban infrastructure exceedingly vulnerable to climate risks, it is important for cities to prepare for calamities and safeguard citizens and investments through innovative approaches. One such approach is the use of advanced climate modelling and risk assessment at the municipal level coupled with effective insurance tools built into the city's disaster recovery and relief schemes.

On climate modelling, we are exploring ways of using the expertise of UK Met Office.

And on risk assessment, we have undertaken this study with PwC to:

- understand the extent of climate risks faced by urban infrastructure in five pilot Indian cities – Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Patna and Kochi
- sensitise key stakeholders on the importance of and options for mitigating climate induced risks for infrastructure through risk insurance

This workshop is part of this endeavour.

We need to work together to strengthen resilient policies of cities against climatic events. We need to support and help each other to invest in risk reduction and introduce innovative steps and technologies to enable cities cope with disasters.

Further information

Climate Smart Disaster Management Strategy for Kolkata: A project was recently undertaken for preparation of a climate smart disaster management strategy for Kolkata under the UK KMC memorandum of understanding (MoU) for low Carbon and climate resilience Kolkata. The project was implemented by PwC and TARU Leading Edge Pvt Ltd.

The project aimed at analysing implications of climate change for extreme weather in the city, understanding the city's preparedness for extreme events, and recommending an action plan for better preparedness and management to reduce current and future vulnerabilities taking into account the on-going disaster risk management efforts.

As part of the climate vulnerability assessment under this project, a ward level mapping of climate vulnerabilities was done in a sample of 5 wards in Kolkata. The methodology adopted combined ground level surveys coupled with satellite imagery, as well as community engagement and participation to arrive at conclusions on vulnerability as well as local needs with respect to climatic disaster preparedness.

Key findings of the study depicted the following:

- on an average, 2 extreme rainfall (~64 to 124 mm) events were found to occur every year ranging from 0 to 11 days per year. Most of the city drains are old and were designed to carry much less volume – probable rainfall of a quarter inch (6 mm) an hour or 150 mm in a day. The absence of adequate drainage infrastructure makes the city highly vulnerable to flooding – with low income settlements being particularly affected during cyclones and floods.
- on an average around 21 man days per employee are lost in a year. Poor especially daily wage earners are disproportionately more affected by these events. Skin diseases and water borne diseases affect majority of the households on an annual basis. Informal economies (primarily hawkers) report a revenue loss of 30% during water logging periods.
- simulations of Kolkata comparable to rainfall levels in Chennai during recent floods (2015) indicate that more than 90% of the city will be flooded, most affected regions being the west, south and northern parts of the city.
- Heat Island Effect evident – The city is also vulnerable to climate induced heat island effect especially in pockets where dense urbanisation has taken place. {The city's open space has declined from 25% (1990) to 10% (2012)}. Heat island assessment as part of the project indicated a temperature difference to the tune of 2-6 degrees between different areas within the city during peak summers.

Some of the key recommendations include:

- establishment of Early warning systems and emergency operation centres
- augmenting number of automated weather monitoring stations and river gauge stations across the city
- installation of Automated tidal flow prevention systems at locations where storm water drains / sewage connect with the canals / river
- effective drainage area planning
- widening of roads to ensure minimum access roads for fire brigade and ambulances
- ward-level stormwater management measures to encourage preventative action, including behavioral change amongst residents so as to encourage the safe disposal of waste
- Heat and Health Action Plan for the city to address public health impacts of heat island effect.

KMC has already gone ahead with implementation plans and would be soon commencing work on establishment of early warning systems, drainage area planning through climate smart landuse planning, and capacity building, with support from an international funding agency.

Similarly, as part of follow up action on the project, UK government has also initiated a project aiming at building financial resilience of 5 Indian cities including Kolkata, through introduction of tools such as climate risk insurance to safeguard infrastructure investments by the city.

The findings of the disaster management study were presented at a stakeholder workshop on climate risk management held at KMC on 16 February 2017. The workshop discussed the key findings and recommendations of the disaster management study and future action plan by KMC for better disaster preparedness of the city.

For further technical information please contact Haimanti Poddar on 0-98314-77692.