

Press release: PM welcomes Western Balkans Heads of Government to London

At a reception also attended by the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Minister for Europe and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster the Prime Minister briefed the visiting leaders on the UK's objectives for the upcoming Summit. She also sought their views on achieving our shared goals for the region.

Our relationship endures because all of us in this room share the same vision for the future of the Western Balkans. We want a peaceful, prosperous and democratic region – one anchored to European values and systems and contributing to European security.

The countries of the Western Balkans have tremendous potential. And it's the people here in this room tonight who have a crucial role in harnessing that potential. By putting in place the governance, rule of law and institutions to support prosperity and by building relations between your countries that shape a promising future for all.

The UK will support you in that. Your challenges are our challenges. European security, serious and organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism and extremism; these are all threats that go beyond borders. So I want to deepen further our security partnership to address these shared threats.

At the Summit we will take forward a bold agenda. One that promotes economic stability and fosters co-operation on the security and political challenges that the region continues to face.

We will continue the good work begun by previous Summits, taking forward initiatives countering corruption, serious and organised crime, and other issues that deter investment and economic growth.

I look forward to working with you to shape a positive, productive, prosperous future for the Western Balkans, for the UK and the whole of Europe.

Speech: Call for Security Council Members to Vote in Favour of

Resolution on Yemen

Thank you Mr President.

The Security Council has long recognised that the situation in Yemen threatens international peace and security. It has caused the world's largest humanitarian crisis, which gets worse by the day. The conflict creates ungoverned spaces in which terrorists can operate, poses security threats to countries in the region and international shipping, and fuels regional tensions. While international attention is rightly focussed on the horror that continues to unfold in Syria, this Council must not ignore the appalling situation in Yemen.

We have a duty to respond using all the tools at our disposal. We must show unity of effort and purpose to put an end to this terrible and destabilising conflict. That is why we have tabled this resolution before us today.

Mr President,

The UN sanctions regime is a critical tool that we must use to pressurise the individuals and organisations bent on undermining peace and security in Yemen.

We welcome the work of the Panel of Experts, who have played a key role in supporting the Sanctions Committee to carry out its mandate, including through the provision of recommendations regarding the implementation of measures decided upon in Security Council Resolutions 2140 and 2216. It is vital that this work, the work of the Panel of Experts, continues.

Furthermore, we in this Council must not ignore the growing ballistic missile threat emanating from Yemen, which gravely threatens international peace and security. Attacks such as those launched on 22 July, 4 November and 19 December against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia are unacceptable. They undermine the prospects for peace, prolong the conflict, and put civilian lives at risk. This Council must speak out with a united voice against such attacks. We can do this by voting in favour of the resolution before us today, which strongly condemns these attacks.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned that Iran has failed to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of short-range ballistic missiles, missile propellant and unmanned aerial vehicles to the then Houthi-Saleh alliance, as reported by the Panel of Experts. We agree with the Panel's assessment that in light of this, Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of Resolution 2216.

Iran – and other states who violate the Security Council Resolutions – must be held accountable for this. This Council needs to stand firm in the face of state non-compliance and send a clear message that it will not be tolerated. This is what the UN Charter demands from us: to respect the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law.

Mr President,

We are also deeply concerned by the growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen. A record 22.2 million people are now in need of assistance – 3.4 million more than last year. Last year's UN humanitarian appeal was only 70 per cent funded, and this year's appeal stands at \$2.96 billion. We encourage all member states to respond fully to this appeal. Restrictions on vital humanitarian access continue to be imposed by all parties to the conflict. The impact of access restrictions on the people of Yemen are made clear by the UN Panel of Experts and therefore this resolution before you calls for full and unfettered access for humanitarian and commercial cargo through all of Yemen's ports, including Hodeidah and Saleef, and for supplies to be increased beyond pre-November levels.

This year is an important year. With a new UN Special Envoy in place, it is vital that the international community redoubles its efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict. We call upon all parties to the conflict to resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation and refrain from provocation. Until an enduring political settlement is reached, we must maintain the sanctions regime to deter those who would otherwise use violence to achieve their political aims.

The United Kingdom has worked hard with all Council members in order to reach consensus on a resolution which responds to our concern at all the ongoing political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges in Yemen, and the threats arising from the illicit transfer and misuse of weapons. Today we have spent over five hours in detailed talks with delegations, and have proposed a number of compromises. I am personally grateful for all of your patience today. We have sought to agree a text which provides a balanced and impartial assessment of the situation in Yemen but which does not shy away from calling out those whose actions undermine international peace and security. Today we need to show that we in this Council are unified against the threats to Yemen's future. We must also send a clear message that we support the independence and integrity of the UN Panel of Experts. We in this Council rely on these independent expert international panels. We may not always like all of their reports. We may find their conclusions politically inconvenient. But if we want the United Nations to function, we need to support them in their work.

Those who do not vote in favour of this resolution today are preventing us from sending a clear message to those that seek to undermine the peace and security in Yemen and the region beyond. They are also failing in their duty to do all they can to uphold the international rules-based system and hold those states that violate resolutions agreed by this Council to account.

With this in mind, I strongly urge now you now to vote in favour of the resolution before you.

Thank you Mr President.

[News story: Middle East Minister Alistair Burt issues stark warning as the number of people affected by humanitarian crises doubles over decade](#)

The UK has renewed calls for the international community to reform the global humanitarian system to ensure aid continues to get to the 100 million people in desperate need of help right now.

Speaking on a visit to the Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum in Saudi Arabia, Middle East Minister Alistair Burt warned that the number of people affected by humanitarian crises has doubled over the last ten years. By 2030 more than half of the world's poor could be living in countries affected by conflict.

He demanded that global leaders act now to better support those affected by brutal and relentless conflict.

Alistair Burt said: "Whilst the number of conflicts is in decline, those that persist are becoming more complex, harder to resolve and lasting significantly longer. From Syria to South Sudan, merciless conflicts rage on and over the last few years, we have seen that people who are forced to flee their home countries become refugees for over ten years on average.

"The UK's focus is on bigger, better and faster humanitarian responses. We are already improving preparedness in emergency including investing in financial programmes such as disaster risk insurance schemes that help provide cheaper, faster and reliable finance when crises hit. But this is not enough, and international coordination is vital if we are to continue getting aid to those most in need together with an urgent examination of the failure of current intended processes to prevent, or bring to a conclusion, the conflict doing so much damage.

"Alongside this we must all take a longer-term approach to protracted crises, including supporting those countries and communities which host significant numbers of refugees who have fled relentless violence. This will help foster stability and security which is firmly in all our interests."

Mr Burt's comments come on a visit to Saudi Arabia's launch of the inaugural Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum. The UK welcomes this initiative by Saudi Arabia, permitting global leaders to discuss a range of humanitarian demands.

The Minister raised the dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen with his counterparts, reminding all parties of the need for permanent unhindered access to the critical ports of Hodeidah and Saleef to ensure lifesaving food, fuel and medical supplies continue to enter the country. He also pressed for renewed engagement with a political process, underlining that there is no military solution to the conflict.

Background

- The Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum, hosted by King Salman, is the first conference of its kind pulling together high level humanitarian representatives from across the Middle East region and further afield.

[Press release: PM call with Prime Minister Abe: 26 February 2018](#)



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

This morning the Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Abe of Japan. The leaders noted the positive impact of the Prime Minister's visit to Japan last year and the significant progress made in a range of areas. In particular they welcomed the meeting between UK and Japanese Foreign and Defence Ministers and the first UK-Japan Industrial Policy Dialogue, both of which took place in December last year.

The Prime Minister updated Prime Minister Abe on her meeting with senior Japanese business leaders at Downing Street earlier this month and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring the UK remains welcoming to Japanese companies.

They discussed the Prime Minister's recent visit to China, and in particular North Korea, where they agreed on the need for the international community to continue to work together to maintain

pressure on North Korea to cease its destabilising activity. The Prime Minister reiterated that the UK will continue to support all efforts to maintain and properly implement sanctions.

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[News story: Royal Navy and Royal Marines join major French deployment](#)



847 Naval Air Squadron stand to attention next to one of two Wildcat helicopters. They have deployed for five months with the Jeanne D'Arc. Crown Copyright.

Around 40 Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel and two Wildcat helicopters have joined the French naval task force, Jeanne D'Arc, for a five-month mission. The ship's port calls will include Jakarta, Bali, Darwin, Saigon and Singapore. British personnel will take part in amphibious exercises and Defence Engagement. This builds on the UK's very successful participation in last year's Jeanne D'Arc mission.

The UK's contribution to France's annual Jeanne D'Arc naval deployment demonstrates a shared commitment from both countries to enhance their maritime cooperation in home waters and around the world, in support of global security and prosperity and protection of freedom of navigation. This priority was agreed at the UK-France Summit in January 2018.

The deployment is part of the UK's wide-ranging programme of bilateral defence cooperation with French forces, which includes the development of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, a rapidly deployable joint UK-French force that can respond to crises.

British and French forces also operate together as members of NATO, with France agreeing to contribute troops to the UK-led enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Estonia in 2019.

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