

News story: Troika statement on South Sudan forum

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) welcome the parties' constructive efforts toward compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan at the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) over the last two weeks in Addis Ababa. The Troika expresses its appreciation for and fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to restore peace through the HLRF, and commends the tireless efforts of the IGAD Special Envoy Ambassador Ismail Wais and the mediation team.

The Troika underscores the critical importance of the parties creating a conducive environment for peacemaking: fighting while talking is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. The parties must make good on their promises to implement the Agreement on a Cessation of Hostilities (ACOH) signed in December 2017. We take note and support the intention by IGAD and the African Union to identify and impose consequences on those undermining peace as soon as possible and we stand ready to support them in their efforts. Implementation of the ACOH must also include the release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, the end to the use of child soldiers and sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon. The parties must also allow unfettered access for Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) monitors and for humanitarian assistance and aid workers responding to Africa's worst humanitarian crisis.

While useful dialogue has taken place over the past two weeks, there is much more for the parties to do if the HLRF is to make meaningful and sustainable progress towards peace. The Troika calls on all parties to reconvene as soon as possible, without preconditions, to address the important security and governance arrangements that are essential for peace. We urge all parties to take steps to maintain the momentum of the process and refrain from comments or actions that could make returning to dialogue more difficult. We urge the parties to agree that a negotiated arrangement for an inclusive transitional government that reflects South Sudan's diversity is needed. We encourage the parties to set as priorities the separation of powers, dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms, service delivery, and accountability. Arrangements must not advantage any political, armed, or ethnic group. We call on the parties to develop practical security arrangements that end violence and build confidence, and set out a realistic path to broader security sector reform. We urge the parties to support financial reforms that address corruption and build confidence in public institutions.

The Troika renews its firm view that elections in 2018 are not viable given the continuing conflict, lack of security, displacement of one third of the population, and severe food insecurity affecting half the population. It calls on all parties to reject any unilateral effort to extend power through the ballot box, the legislature, or military means. A negotiated path to elections also means the protection of fundamental political freedoms, and

significant improvements in security and humanitarian conditions. The Troika continues to stand with the people of South Sudan and urges their leaders to move expeditiously to achieve the peace their people deserve.

Further information

News story: Statement from the International Development Secretary on Oxfam

On Friday 16 February International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

“I have now received a formal response to the set of demands I put to Oxfam in my meeting with Mark Goldring, Chief Executive, and Caroline Thomson, Chair of Trustees, on 12 February.

“I made three demands: that they make clear how they will handle any forthcoming allegations around safeguarding – historic or live; that they report staff members involved in this incident to their respective national governments; and that they fully cooperate with the Haitian authorities, including handing over all evidence they hold. Oxfam has now confirmed that they have complied with all of these points.

“Following our discussions, Oxfam has agreed to withdraw from bidding for any new UK Government funding until DFID is satisfied that they can meet the high standards we expect of our partners.

“My priority is to deliver for the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, while keeping people safe from harm. We want to ensure that programmes we are already financially committed to are being delivered appropriately by Oxfam or any other DFID partner.

“We have asked for assurances from all our charitable partners regarding their safeguarding and reporting practices by 26 February, including Oxfam. At that stage we will make further decisions about continuing or amending how those programmes are delivered. Our primary guiding principle in this will be the welfare of the beneficiaries of UK aid.

“The UK Government reserves the right to take whatever decisions about present or future funding to Oxfam, and any other organisation, that we deem necessary. We have been very clear that we will not work with any organisation that does not live up to the high standards on safeguarding and protection that we require.

“In taking these actions I am very aware that there are hundreds of good, brave and compassionate people working for Oxfam around the world. They have been poorly served by Oxfam’s leadership team too.

“Clearly Oxfam have a long way to go before they can regain the trust of the British public, their staff and the people they aim to help. The actions and attitude of the organisation over the coming weeks will be critical.

“I am determined that we do our utmost to prevent exploitation and abuse happening – and ensure that where it does happen it is identified and dealt with appropriately.

“The UK will continue to take all necessary action and it is vital now that the whole aid sector – from UK-based charities working overseas, to the UN, to other donor countries – step up and demonstrate the leadership required.”

[Press release: Foreign Secretary welcomes new UN Special Envoy for Yemen](#)

I welcome the appointment of Martin Griffiths to the role of UN Special Envoy for Yemen. Mr Griffiths brings a wealth of experience from several high profile UN positions in the region, and is a leading expert on international mediation and conflict resolution.

I would like to thank Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his dedication in the role of UN Special Envoy since April 2015, working to facilitate a credible peace process in Yemen.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to help bring to Yemen the peace, stability and security that all Yemenis deserve. This can only be reached through an inclusive political settlement. Mr Griffiths and his team will be central to achieving progress and I call upon all parties to engage with the UN process in good faith.

The UK strongly supports the work of the UN in Yemen. We support the efforts to reboot a UN peace process as a matter of urgency. By the end of the financial year 2017/18, we will have provided £1.68 million to the UN Special Envoy’s office to bolster the UN’s capacity to facilitate the peace process.

News story: Radioactive Waste Management establishes Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will provide expertise, balanced perspective and strategic direction to support RWM as it moves into a significant phase of its programme to deliver a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), a nationally significant infrastructure project.

Its members include experienced leaders in business, engineering, infrastructure and society who will collectively provide vital input to one of the most complex and important long-term projects ever undertaken in the UK. Bruce McKirdy, RWM's Managing Director, commented:

I'm delighted that we can draw upon such a wealth of talent and experience to help us to establish a safe and long-term solution to dispose of our radioactive waste. I'm looking forward to working with the Advisory Council and harnessing their insights as we deliver geological disposal for the UK.

Lorraine Baldry OBE, Advisory Council Chair commented:

I am very pleased at the opportunity to bring together the outstanding skills and experience of the Council in order to help deliver what might be one of the most important environmental and societal projects ever undertaken in the UK.

Panel members' short biographies:

Lorraine Baldry OBE (Chair) has experience in a wide range of industries including technology, broadcasting, distribution, healthcare, water, real estate and financial services. She has held a number of Board-level positions and is currently Chairman of London and Continental Railways, Schroder Real Estate Investment Trust, Inventa Partners, and Hydroxyl Technologies.

Norman Harrison (Deputy Chair) has held a number of senior roles in the UK nuclear industry including CEO of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and when with British Energy, Station Director at Heysham and Sizewell B nuclear power stations. He currently has a portfolio of non-executive and advisory appointments including the UKAEA (Fusion programme) and is Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Sonia Davidson-Grant is an experienced Director, Non-Executive Director and Board Member of private and public sector organisations, an international researcher and a strategic advisor to governments in the UK and the Middle

East.

Dai Hudd has spent his career as a trade union official. He is currently Deputy General Secretary of the Prospect trade union and also holds lead policy responsibility for the energy services industry.

John Markham OBE had a distinguished career in the chemical industry, holding a range of executive management positions, before moving into regeneration where he has held a number of senior roles in the public and private sectors.

Dr Mike Naylor has had a long career in the oil and gas industry, rising through Shell to become Vice President Technical, Global Exploration. He has wide-ranging experience in developing technical standards, processes and execution of major capital projects and brings a deep expertise and understanding of sub-surface evaluation and risk assessment.

Michael Prescott is an experienced communications professional with a proven track record of building and motivating teams to award-winning standard, and managing in high-pressure environments. His previous employment includes roles as Director of Corporate Affairs at British Telecom, Managing Director Corporate Comms and Public Affairs at Weber Shandwick, and Political Editor at The Sunday Times. Michael is a Trustee of Bloodwise and a former member of the Government Communications Board.

Howard Shiplee CBE is a recognised construction industry professional with extensive experience in the delivery of high value infrastructure projects, including as Project Director Hong Kong International Airport Terminal and as Director of Construction for the Olympic Delivery Authority.

Morag Stuart has held various senior roles working in the defence and aerospace industries and is currently Director of Commercial Improvement at Defence Equipment and Support, part of the Ministry of Defence. Morag also sits on a Procurement Advisory panel for HS2 Ltd.

Eugenie Turton CB is a former senior government servant who now works as a Non-Executive Director in the private and charitable sectors. Previously Eugenie was Director General for Housing and Planning, responsible for the government's public service improvement programme, and creation of London's new mayoral government.

Robert Upton CBE has held positions as Director of Planning in Hong Kong, Chief Executive of Rushmoor Borough Council, Secretary General of the Royal Town Planning Institute, Deputy Chair of the Infrastructure Planning Commission and subsequently Senior Examining Inspector for major infrastructure at the Planning Inspectorate.

News story: First female chief appointed to Royal Mint in its one thousand year history

The Royal Mint today appointed Anne Jessopp as its new chief executive and Deputy Master of the Mint. She will lead work to provide Britain with its cutting-edge secure currency and will also develop the commemorative coin and bullion arm of the business.

On a visit to the Royal Mint, the Exchequer Secretary officially confirmed Anne Jessopp's appointment – the first female to take up the role in the Royal Mint's 1,100 year history.

Speaking of her new appointment, the Deputy Master of the Mint, Anne Jessopp said:

I am delighted to be appointed to lead this unique and important British organisation. The Royal Mint has an impressive history of over 1,100 years and its longevity is due to its ability to adapt as society changes. This was never truer than today, as we reinterpret The Royal Mint for the 21st century, building on the values that have been at the heart of the organisation throughout our history – authenticity, security, precious metals, craftsmanship and design.

I have had the privilege to work for The Royal Mint for almost 10 years and it is testament to the great colleagues and opportunities I have had, that I have been able to develop the skills that enable me to take on this role.

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick welcomed the appointment and said:

Anne Jessopp brings a wealth of expertise to this role. With her decade of experience at the Royal Mint, I am confident she will ensure the UK continues to have the most secure currency in the world, and our coins are loved and collected the world over.

It may have taken over 1,000 years but the Mint is now finally led by a woman, and I am certain Anne will do a great job.

What does the Deputy Master of the Mint do?

As chief executive of the Royal Mint, Anne will be tasked with running the Great British institution which produces up to 90 million coins every week. At the top of her in-tray will be overseeing the introduction of the new 50 pence coin, announced last week, to mark the centenary celebrations of women's suffrage.

Her official position as Deputy Master of the Mint is one that is steeped in history. Her first ceremonial role will be to lead the annual Trial of the Pyx.

First held in 1282, the Trial of the Pyx tests the integrity of the nation's coins, ensuring that they are the proper weight and size, and contain the right amount of precious metals. Every February, coins of each denomination struck by the Royal Mint are selected at random and locked away in the Pyx chests.

In a ceremony, which has not changed since before Henry VIII's reign, the Deputy Master of the Mint brings these chests to London's Goldsmiths' Hall, where the coins are checked by an independent jury. The Jury consists of leaders from the financial world and six assayers from the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths who, wearing traditional red robes, put the coins to the test.

After two months of rigorous testing, the trial reconvenes and the Queen's Remembrancer asks the Jury for its verdict. In May, this verdict will be given in the presence of the Deputy Master of The Royal Mint and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (or a representative).

Remarkably, the history books reveal that if the coins fail the test, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is the ceremonial Master of the Mint, risks losing a hand as punishment.

It should be made clear that in the trial's long history, 94 Minters have had their right hands cut off by order of the King. However, this has not happened for hundreds of years.

Notes to editors:

- One of the most famous Masters of the Mint, before it was made a political position was Sir Isaac Newton, who had previously held the position between 1700-27.