

# News story: Minister for Africa urges restraint and dialogue in Cameroon

Minister for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, Harriett Baldwin, visited West Africa between 11 and 14 February. On her first trip to the region since taking up this role, the Minister visited Cameroon and Côte D'Ivoire.

During her visit to Cameroon (13 and 14 February), the Minister visited the Anglophone region to discuss the ongoing dispute. Meeting with senior members of the Cameroonian Government, traditional rulers, human rights groups, and members of civil society organisations, she encouraged restraint and for a de-escalation of current tensions.

On the situation in the Anglophone regions, Minister Baldwin said:

As a long-standing friend and Commonwealth partner, the UK wants to see urgent steps taken on all sides to de-escalate current tensions.

President Biya's announcement in his New Year speech of steps to rebuild trust, resume dialogue, and allow decentralisation are a welcome start – but only a start. Cameroonians need to come together to talk and to secure a peaceful resolution.

During her visit to Cameroon, the Minister discussed issues around democracy, security, prosperity and human rights in meetings with Prime Minister Philemon Yang and other senior ministers, as well as with representatives from Cameroonian and UK businesses and civil society organisations.

The Minister visited a girls' school supported by a UK charity as well as the Lake Ossa Reserve, a Zoological Society of London and Darwin sponsored conservation project, which is an important refuge for West African manatees and other freshwater biodiversity.

Minister Baldwin said:

The UK and Cameroon share historic ties, and I have seen ample evidence that those ties – of business partnership, security cooperation, and support to education and wildlife conservation – continue to strengthen.

During her visit to Côte D'Ivoire (11 and 12 February), Mrs. Baldwin visited the headquarters of the Transnational Organized Crime Unit (UCT) to inspect a recent seizure of more than 600 kilos of ivory and pangolin scales by the Ivorian authorities. She handed over technical equipment gifted by the

National Crime Agency to enable the UCT to improve the identification of illegal commodities during operations.

On the Illegal Wildlife Trade, Minister Baldwin said:

The extent of trafficking of wild and endangered animals is shocking. I am hugely impressed with the work here in Côte D'Ivoire to prevent wildlife being smuggled out of the country to overseas markets, and I am pleased that the UK is able to support these efforts.

Stronger regional and global cooperation is needed to prevent traffickers from profiting from this trade. That is why the UK is hosting a conference in October to bring countries together to ensure we take action collectively to tackle the despicable illegal wildlife trade.

As Côte D'Ivoire is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Minister Baldwin held discussions on upcoming Security Council matters with President Ouattara and other senior ministers. She also met President of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina, to discuss the Bank's plans for inclusive growth across Africa.

## **Further information**

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## **[Press release: Motorists receive millions of pounds in automatic refunds for vehicle tax](#)**

When you tell DVLA that you've sold your car, you're eligible for a refund of vehicle tax for any unused months.

While the quickest and simplest way to tell DVLA that a vehicle has been sold is online, the latest figures from DVLA show that more than 60% do not use the service. This means they will be waiting longer for their refund.

The online service only takes a few minutes to complete, the seller will get confirmation instantly that they are no longer the vehicle keeper and the refund will arrive within 3 to 5 working days. Further information is available in the following video.

[Tell DVLA about a sale of a vehicle online.](#)

DVLA Vehicles Service Manager Rohan Gye said:

While some of our digital services have over 90% take-up there are still millions of motorists who tell us they've sold their vehicle by post. This means that they will have to wait longer for their automatic refund of any unused tax. My advice is the next time you sell your car – tell us online.

Motorists can also go online to put a personalised registration on a vehicle or to take one off – this service is proving popular with the majority (more than 85%) choosing the online route rather than posting paperwork to DVLA.

## **Notes to editors**

The [online service](#) is available on GOV.UK seven days a week from 7am to 7pm.

Since it was launched the service has been used over 12 million times.

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## **[News story: New rules introduced to protect consumers against ticket touting](#)**

Ticket resellers will be required to provide purchasers with additional detailed information about tickets

Fans of live events are set to benefit from new rules which will demand more information from sellers on secondary ticket websites.

Under the new rules, which will come into force in April 2018, ticket resellers will be required to provide purchasers with additional detailed information about tickets including the location of seats, disclosure of any restrictions and the original price of the ticket itself.

New guidance has also been published today to help prepare business for these changes, providing clarity to ensure they comply while also securing a better deal for consumers.

Consumer Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

All too often people are left feeling ripped off when buying tickets from resale websites. Whether it's a major music festival or a stadium concert, people want to know they're paying a fair price for tickets to see the events they love.

We are already taking steps to crack down on touts using "bots" to bulk buy tickets for resale and the CMA is investigating suspected breaches of consumer protection law online and today we are going even further, making it easier for consumers to understand what they are buying to help save them from rip off ticket prices.

Later this year, we will also publish a Consumer Green Paper which will examine how we can help people to engage with markets to find the best deals."

Margot James, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, said:

We want real fans to get the chance to see their favourite stars at a fair price. That is why we are clamping down on touts using bots to buy huge numbers of tickets, only to sell them on at rip-off prices.

Today's guidance will give consumers even greater protection and transparency in the secondary market, helping Britain's live events scene to continue to thrive.

Under the new rules, ticket resellers will have to provide additional detailed information about the tickets they are selling to better inform and protect consumers. This will mean that ticket resellers must:

- identify the location to which the ticket provides access – such as the particular seat or standing area of the venue;
- disclose any restrictions that apply to the category of person who can use the ticket;
- disclose the original price of the ticket; and
- reveal the details of connections they have with either the online facility on which they are selling, or the organiser of the event for which the ticket is being sold.

For the first time, resellers will also have to supply the unique ticket number (UTN) to the purchaser if the event organiser or primary seller specifies one, helping to identify the tickets seat, standing area or location.

Today's guidance demonstrates a further commitment from government to improve conditions for consumers in the secondary market. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) are investigating whether secondary ticketing websites have broken advertising rules.

Last week Google also announced that from 7 February they will require ticket resellers to be certified before they can advertise through their AdWords service. This should make it easier for consumers to find tickets on the primary market.

Citizens Advice provide [information for consumers](#) about buying event tickets and how to make sure a ticketing site is genuine.

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## **Press release: UK helps rid war-torn Afghanistan of lethal landmines making thousands safer**

Among Herat City's historic sites cleared of landmines are the 15th century minarets of the Husain Baiqara Madrasa

UK aid-backed The HALO Trust has, after a mammoth 10-year clear-up operation, handed back Afghanistan's most deadly province for landmines to its governor, after making land safe once again for homes, schools and farmland.

The NGO's Afghan staff have cleared 39 million square metres of mine fields and 45 million square metres of battlefield in Herat with UK aid support.

In total, more than 600 minefields have been cleared in the province in the west of the country.

Minelaying during previous conflicts had left Herat with the highest landmine accident rate in the country. Before mine clearance began there, on average 125 people each year were maimed or killed by landmines each year in the province.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Landmines are an abhorrent and indiscriminate killer that causes suffering across the world. It is often children who are the most affected by landmines, playing in dangerous areas where one wrong step can maim them forever or take their life.

Clearing land of mines gives people a chance to rebuild their lives through new schools, farming the land and starting businesses that allow them to support their families.

The HALO Trust was founded 30 years ago in Afghanistan and has grown to be the world's largest humanitarian mine clearance organisation. The handover of the land to the governor is yet another milestone for them to celebrate and shows how UK aid is supporting one of the most fragile countries in the world to stand on its own two feet.

This is one of the many ways that UK aid is making the world safer, healthier and more prosperous for us all.

James Cowan, The Halo Trust CEO, said:

Among the achievements of this project, one that makes me most proud is the USAID-funded women's dormitory built at Herat University on land cleared by HALO with UK funding. Hundreds of young women now have access to higher education at Afghanistan's second-largest university. This has given hope to an entire province of one of the world's most heavily-mined countries.

We have witnessed the amazing contribution that DFID is making to clearing the country of landmines. DFID's support is saving lives and creating livelihoods.

In Herat City an entire new district, Jebrail, has been built on land cleared of landmines and has become home for 60,000 people – many of them returning refugees.

New schools and colleges have been built on the cleared land as well as several businesses and new railway infrastructure, which will allow for safer travel throughout the region.

Among Herat City's historic sites cleared of landmines are the 15th century minarets of the Husain Baiqara Madrasa.

The removal of landmines has had a major impact on Herat's potential for economic development.

Around 75 per cent of the population of the province is rural and millions of square metres of prime agricultural land were unusable because of the fear of landmines.

With UK funding, HALO has made 40 million square metres of agricultural land safe to farm, and in doing so has immeasurably improved and made more secure the futures of farming families.

- Representatives from The HALO Trust attended a handover ceremony in Herat City with Mr. Haji Kamran, Chairman of the Provincial Council of Herat Province and Mrs. Monesa Hassanzada, Deputy Governor of Herat Province. Two districts in the province, have not yet been cleared because of insecurity where they are located.
- The UK Government committed £100 million over three years to demining in April 2017. This £100m commitment comprises:
  - £12.6 million in the current financial year as an extension to the pre-existing contract of the Global Mine Action Programme, which is delivered by the Halo Trust, MAG and Norwegian People's Aid in Burma, Cambodia, South Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Laos, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
  - £20 million for Afghanistan in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.
  - £15.4 million for the Middle East including Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The remainder will be for demining programmes in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 in Angola, South Sudan, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- Last year Global Mine Action Programme ensured that more than 140,000,000 square meters of land have been released. Mine risk education programmes have reached more than 426,000 people this year, including near 360,000 women and children.
- DFID will be continuing its programming in Asia and Africa including Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Somalia and South Sudan.
- In January this year, DFID invited organisations to bid for work in Angola, South Sudan, Lebanon, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- In Afghanistan the UK has supported demining activities, through the HALO Trust in Herat (Western Afghanistan), Baghlan, Balkh and Samangan (Northern Afghanistan) since 2008, through two five year phases with a total of £20.5 million. This support to the HALO Trust in Afghanistan will end in March 2018. Through UK aid:
  - 193,650 families have benefited from cleared lands in Herat, Baghlan, Balkh and Samangan
  - 2,900 hectares have been unblocked for development purposes (agriculture, grazing, residential and road access)
  - 96% of households surveyed reported increased income as a result of mine clearance
  - 43 communities have been cleared of all known mine/ unexploded ordnance hazards

- 380 direct and 660 indirect jobs have created in all target provinces
  - Over 39,147,860 square metres of accessible minefields have been cleared in target provinces
  - Over 45,609,000 square metres of remaining area of battlefield with unexploded ordnance and ammunition are cleared in target provinces
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## **News story: Foreign Office Minister condemns Russia for NotPetya attacks**

Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad has today attributed the NotPetya cyber-attack to the Russian Government. The decision to publicly attribute this incident underlines the fact that the UK and its allies will not tolerate malicious cyber activity.

The attack masqueraded as a criminal enterprise but its purpose was principally to disrupt. Primary targets were Ukrainian financial, energy and government sectors. Its indiscriminate design caused it to spread further, affecting other European and Russian business.

### **Foreign Office Minister for Cyber Security Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:**

The UK Government judges that the Russian Government, specifically the Russian military, was responsible for the destructive NotPetya cyber-attack of June 2017.

The attack showed a continued disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty. Its reckless release disrupted organisations across Europe costing hundreds of millions of pounds.

The Kremlin has positioned Russia in direct opposition to the West yet it doesn't have to be that way. We call upon Russia to be the responsible member of the international community it claims to be rather than secretly trying to undermine it.

The United Kingdom is identifying, pursuing and responding to malicious cyber activity regardless of where it originates, imposing costs on those who would seek to do us harm. We are committed to strengthening coordinated international efforts to uphold a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace.

### **Notes to Editors:**

The UK's National Cyber Security Centre assesses that the Russian military



was almost certainly responsible for the destructive NotPetya cyber-attack of June 21<sup>st</sup> 2017. Given this is the highest level of assessment and the broader context, the UK government has made the judgement that the Russian government was responsible for this cyber-attack.

## **Further information**