

Speech: Call to Redouble Efforts to Defeat Daesh

Thank you Mr President,

And thank you Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for your briefing and for the Secretary-General's report.

Mr President,

Since 2014, Daesh has lost 98% of its territory and the Global Coalition has liberated more than 7.7 million people from Daesh's rule in Iraq and Syria. The UK is proud of the role we've played, conducting more than 1,600 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, training more than 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces, and supporting counter-Daesh operations with nearly 1,400 UK personnel in the region.

In addition to winning the war, we are working to win the peace by supporting stabilisation and the humanitarian response. The UK has committed \$3.4 billion to the Syrian crisis since 2012. In Iraq, we have committed \$320 million in humanitarian aid, \$418 million in loan guarantees through the World Bank to support fiscal stability and economic development, and nearly \$35 million to support stabilisation.

But, Mr President, we cannot afford to be complacent.

As the Secretary-General's report highlights, Daesh is weakened and fragmented, but around the world we continue to face a grave threat from individuals and cells affiliated to Daesh, or those inspired by them. The continued threat of terrorism is unfortunately something we've felt personally in the UK.

As we think of the victims of terrorism around the world, we must redouble our efforts to defeat Daesh for good.

First, we must continue and step up our efforts to tackle terrorist misuse of the internet. We are already making strides in this fight online. The event last September, led by Prime Minister Theresa May, alongside President Macron and Prime Minister Gentiloni, was a landmark achievement bringing states and industry together to tackle the threat. Daesh propaganda output has fallen by more than half since its peak and sympathizer accounts are being taken down faster than ever before. The UK's first-of-its-kind terrorist content referral unit has worked with tech companies to take down over 300,000 posts. But we need to do much more to make sure that we have the tools and technology to remain ahead of the terrorists.

Building on the establishment of the global internet forum to counter terrorism, we are seeking to encourage tech companies to take responsibility themselves for terrorist content uploaded to the internet. Terrorist content must be taken down rapidly, limited in circulation and prevented from being

made available to users in the first place. Larger companies need to support and spread best practice to smaller companies.

Second, we must strengthen our collective ability to counter the threat of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, rightly highlighted by the Secretary-General's report, and a focus of UNSCR 2396. We are encouraged that more than 60 countries are now working to build upon INTERPOL's global database, currently tracking 43,000 fighters. But there is more that states around the globe must do to strengthen border security, including work on Advance Passenger Information, Passenger Name Records, and biometrics. We must also do more work on developing effective prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies, paying special attention to the particular challenges posed by women and children returnees.

Third, the UK remains committed to enhancing aviation security to counter terrorism, building on this council's resolution 2309 in 2016. To do this, the UK is investing in the development of new technology, as well as working with partners around the world. We also welcome the agreement of ICAO's new Global Aviation Security Plan last October and we call on ICAO and all states to ensure that it is fully implemented.

Finally, I want to reiterate the UK's support for the Secretary-General's reform of the UN counter-terrorism architecture and for the Office of Counter Terrorism under the leadership of Under Secretary-General Voronkov. We welcome the initial steps taken to enhance coherence within the UN system, especially the commitment to work closely with CTED and Executive Director Coninx. We look forward to OCT developing greater ability to support states, in particular in areas where the UN can add unique value, such as in the prevention of violent extremism.

In conclusion, Mr President, as this report outlines, the threat of terrorism is pervasive and evolving. But in the same way the Global Coalition brought so many of us together against a common enemy in Daesh, we must remain united to meet these new threats. This is a global threat, and it will require global action.

Thank you.

Press release: Government delivering on pledge to give back British expats the right to vote

The government will today (8 February) restate its commitment to ending the current 15 year time limit on British expats registering as overseas electors.

As well as removing a time limit on the right to vote for UK citizens living abroad, the government intends to enfranchise any British expats who was previously resident or registered to vote in the UK. This is part of the government's wider ambition to strengthen the foundation of democracy and continually increase voter registration by ensuring every voter's voice is heard.

Combined, these changes will mean millions of UK citizens overseas will be eligible to register to vote. British expats – under existing laws – have the lowest level of voter registration of any group.

The government published the policy statement [“A democracy that works for everyone: British citizens overseas”](#) in October 2016 asking for views on its detailed plans to introduce votes for life. It set out how it would scrap the rule that bars British citizens who have lived abroad for more than 15 years from voting in UK Parliamentary Elections, as set out in the government's manifesto.

The response to the consultation about the votes for life policy statement will be published on GOV.UK today, ahead of the second reading debate in the House of Commons on 23 February of Glyn Davies MP Private Members' Overseas Electors Bill.

The policy statement attracted a range of responses from the electoral community and the public.

Minister for the Constitution Chloe Smith said:

Participation in our democracy is a fundamental part of being British, no matter how far you have travelled from the UK. It is right that we should remove the 15-year time limit on voting rights of British citizens living overseas and allow those who previously lived in the UK the chance to participate in our democracy.

Expats retain strong links with the United Kingdom: they may have family here, and indeed they may plan to return here in the future. Modern technology and cheaper air travel has transformed the ability of expats to keep in touch with their home country.

Following the British people's decision to leave the EU, we need to strengthen ties with countries around the world and show the UK is an outward-facing nation. Our expat community has an important role to play in helping Britain expand international trade, especially given two-thirds of expats live outside the EU.

Press release: Record road investment plans in the South West are set to achieve key milestones

Highways England's plans for the improved A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down will be on show at a series of public events starting on Friday.

The consultation, which runs until 6 April, will outline for the first time initial designs for the scheme and how it will restore the tranquil environment and setting of the Stonehenge monument and surrounding landscape by removing the sight and sound of the road.

Since the last consultation in September, Highways England has continued to work with heritage groups such as the National Trust, Historic England and English Heritage, as well as experts in the field, including the Stonehenge Scientific Committee – a body of leading independent archaeologists – to ensure a new route is built sensitively to the World Heritage Site.

The route has been carefully chosen to avoid monuments and barrow groups as well as avoiding any intrusion on views of the winter solstice from Stonehenge and reconnect the World Heritage Site, which is currently split by the A303.

Highways England is now seeking feedback from the public to help shape the scheme further before they submit an application for a Development Consent Order.

This upgrade is one of five multi-million pound road schemes aimed at boosting the economy, tourism and heritage in the South West which will reach key milestones in the first six months of 2018.

Other key milestones include consultations on the:

- A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme.
- A303 Sparkford to Ilchester.
- A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross.
- A417 Missing Link scheme.

Highways England chief executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

These upgrades in the South West will improve millions of journeys. Each of these milestones in the region is evidence of Highways England delivering major infrastructure upgrades for the whole country.

The upgrades are funded by the Government's £15 billion investment in motorways and main A roads, and being delivered by Highways England.

April will mark three years since Highways England embarked on delivering the Government's Road Investment Strategy, the biggest investment in the country's major roads since the 1970s.

Across the country almost 40 schemes are reaching key milestones in the first half of this year and will join the 18 major projects that have already opened to traffic since April 2015. In addition, a further 16 are currently in construction, the latest of which to start initial works was a major upgrade to the M49 near Bristol.

Statutory consultation for the A303 Stonehenge scheme will offer the public and all interested parties the chance to see the progressed plans, including visualisations of how the new route might look, including the Winterbourne Stoke bypass and initial designs for the junctions along the route.

Following public consultation in early 2017 and further engagement with local communities, heritage groups, archaeologists, historians and engineers, the preferred route was chosen so that the route now closely follows the existing A303 through the World Heritage Site.

For more information on the consultation and public information events, [visit the scheme 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.

[Press release: Oxford flood scheme moves a step closer](#)

The £120m Oxford flood alleviation scheme, which will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and transport in Oxford and the surrounding area, has moved a step closer.

The Oxford flood alleviation scheme partnership has just announced that it has secured the funding for the scheme, which will include at least 5 hectares of new habitat creation, 7 new bridges and 2.6 kilometres of new flood defences.

More than £65m in funding has already been committed by Government. A record

amount of partnership funding totalling over £55m has now been given by a wide range of partners. Investment has been secured from Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Thames Water Utilities and the University of Oxford.

Joanna Larmour, Project Director at the Environment Agency, said:

This is a huge scheme – one of the biggest the Environment Agency is working on – and when complete it will not only reduce flood risk to homes across Oxford but it will also protect vital infrastructure, enabling the city to keep moving during flooding. It will also benefit communities and wildlife in a number of ways, including improving existing public footpaths and creating new habitat for wildlife and improving biodiversity.

Today's fantastic news shows that working in partnership can help us get the best scheme for Oxford. We are very pleased that our partners have recognised the multiple benefits it will bring and helped us secure the funding required to progress the scheme to the next stage.

The scheme will benefit everyone who lives, works in or visits Oxford. As well as reduced property flooding, the railway and Botley and Abingdon roads will be protected keeping the city open for business during future flooding. There will also be fewer flood related electricity, telephone and internet disruptions. The scheme will allow

Oxford's successful economy to continue to thrive and also provide environmental benefits and a longterm green legacy.

County Councillor Yvonne Constance said:

The flood relief channel has been a hope for many people for a long time. Now we are at the stage where it has the funding it needs to be made into a reality there will be thousands of homes and businesses protected from the devastating effects of flooding.

Clearly there is still much work to do, but this funding announcement means we can continue to work in partnership to move forward to the next stage.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council, said:

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme will bring huge benefits to householders in West and South Oxford, and to all parts of the business community. I am delighted that we have been successful in our application for this final tranche of funding.

HM Treasury approved the outline business case for the scheme in November 2017. This detailed that full funding for the scheme had to be committed before it could move to the next stage. This has now been confirmed, thanks to increases in contributions from the scheme partners.

The total amount covers the design and construction costs to deliver the scheme. The project team will now work on the Full Business Case, which will be submitted to HM Treasury later this year. Partners will continue to work together on ongoing negotiations with external companies for future investment in the scheme.

The Environment Agency will submit the planning application for the Oxford flood alleviation scheme in March. It will take approximately 3 years to build the scheme, which is designed to work with the natural floodplain west of Oxford.

Press release: Knighthood and Damehoods conferred: February 2018

The Queen has been pleased to approve that the honour of Knighthood be conferred upon Timothy Miles Fancourt, QC and that the honour of Damehood be conferred upon Christina Caroline Lambert, QC, on their appointment as Justices of the High Court.

Notes for editors

Timothy Miles Fancourt was called to the Bar in 1987 and took Silk in 2003. He was appointed as a Recorder in 2009.

Christina Caroline Lambert was called to the Bar in 1988 and took Silk in 2009.