

## [News story: Home Office Minister visits Tunisia](#)

During the visit, Mr Wallace held a series of high-level meetings with senior members of the Government of Tunisia including the Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Tourism and Human Rights as well as the Secretary General of the National Security Council.

The Minister also met the tour operators and hoteliers who will be accommodating UK package holidaymakers due to return to Tunisia later this month and was shown [some](#) examples of the security improvements Tunisia has made, including some that the UK has supported.

Following his visit, Mr Wallace said:

“My first official visit to Tunisia comes at an important time for both our countries ahead of the imminent return of British holidaymakers this year. I was pleased to be able to visit some of the areas where tourists will stay and to see for myself the security improvements.

“I was delighted to meet a wide range of ministerial counterparts from the Government of Tunisia. A central theme of my meetings was our strategic security partnership in the fight against global terrorism. Countries around the world must work together by sharing information and expertise in order to combat this scourge and to mitigate the risks against all our citizens.

“I also made clear that the UK remains a steadfast partner in support of Tunisia’s remarkable democratic transition. We will continue to work hand in hand with Tunisia in the years ahead to support economic growth and prosperity as well as stability and security.”

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## [Press release: Alistair Burt: UK “deeply concerned” by chlorine attack reports](#)

The UK is deeply concerned by the three reports of chlorine attacks by Syrian regime forces in Eastern Ghouta so far in 2018. If it is confirmed that the regime has used chlorine, it would be yet another appalling example of the Assad regime’s blatant disregard for both the Syrian people and its legal obligation not to use chemical weapons.

Russia’s repeated vetoes – which ended the UN Security Council mandated Joint

Investigative Mechanism – risk sending a dangerous signal to the Syrian regime that it can use chemical weapons with impunity.

The unrelenting airstrikes and violence by the regime and its backers in Eastern Ghouta and Idlib continue to claim indiscriminately civilian lives on a daily basis and are worsening the already dire humanitarian situation.

The Asad regime must allow immediate, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance. We call on Russia and the regime's backers to exert their influence to ensure this.

At a meeting of the UN Security Council on Monday (5 February) the UK will again call on Russia and the international community to unite to hold the Asad regime to account for using these abhorrent weapons, to seek justice for the victims and to prevent further attacks.

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## **News story: Minister for Africa announces new support for Zimbabwe's democratic processes**

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin meets President Emmerson Mnangagwa in Zimbabwe

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin visited Zimbabwe on Thursday 1 February and Friday 2 February, on her first overseas visit in her new role as joint Minister for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

Minister Baldwin met with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa and Foreign Minister Sibusiso Moyo to discuss the Zimbabwean government's vision for domestic transformation and international engagement through comprehensive political and economic reforms. As a central plank of this, they discussed the importance of the elections later this year being peaceful, credible, free and fair. Minister Baldwin welcomed the President's commitment to invite international observers from the EU and UN as well as SADC and AU.

Minister Baldwin met with Finance Minister Chinamasa and Reserve Bank Governor John Mangudya to discuss the government's plans for clearing debt and normalising relations with the International Financial Institutions. Minister Baldwin welcomed the government's recommitment to the Lima plan and confirmed that the UK would continue to support the government's reform agenda. Minister Baldwin also welcomed government plans to attract more investment into agriculture through ensuring land tenure and compensation are tackled.

Speaking at an event with prominent civil society actors, including human rights activists and elections experts, the Minister announced £5 million of new UK aid funding to support the strengthening of democratic electoral processes in the run up to and following the 2018 elections.

## **Minister Baldwin reflects on her visit to Zimbabwe**

### [Minister for Africa visits Harare](#)

In a meeting with Zimbabwean business people and entrepreneurs, the Minister heard of the enormous potential of Zimbabwe and how some of the obstacles including the currency crisis can be overcome with the support of business.

Minister Baldwin visited two DFID projects to understand how UK aid is supporting some of the most marginalised in Zimbabwe. At a school for children with disabilities, the Minister was able to speak to students and teachers to see how UK support has helped enrich the children's lives and give them skills for the future. The Minister also visited a DFID-funded shelter for survivors of sexual and gender based violence. She was able to learn more about the experiences of the women and how UK aid is helping marginalised women and girls to access counselling, shelter and legal aid.

Minister Baldwin said:

I am pleased that my first overseas trip as Minister has been to Zimbabwe. The historic events the country has experienced over the last few months have created an opportunity to strengthen UK-Zimbabwe relations as part of a wider process of international engagement.

The upcoming elections are a major milestone for the people of Zimbabwe. When I met President Mnangagwa, I said my government welcomed his commitment to hold credible, peaceful, free and fair elections monitored by international observers.

I have seen for myself that Zimbabwe is a country of enormous potential. With the right leadership, the right policy environment and a vibrant democracy and civil society, Zimbabwe can undergo the transformation it so richly deserves.

## **Further information**

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[\*\*Press release: Intelligent road studs\*\*](#)

## to improve road safety

Highways England is installing around 170 of the innovative LED road studs at one of England's busiest motorway junctions – used by over 90,000 vehicles every day.

The intelligent road studs are being introduced as part of a £3 million project to improve journeys and safety at Switch Island in Merseyside, where the M57, M58 and 3 A roads all join together.

The LED road studs light up when traffic lights turn green so drivers can clearly see which lane they should follow. Cables under the road surface connect them to traffic lights through a nearby automatic controller unit.

The studs can be visible up to 1,000 metres away – far greater than traditional reflective road studs – and have been proven to help stop drivers drifting between lanes, reducing the risk of collisions.

Highways England has already installed the LED studs at Hindhead Tunnel in Surrey to guide drivers through the tunnel but the Switch Island scheme will be the first time they have been linked to traffic lights at a motorway junction.

Phil Tyrrell, Project Manager at Highways England, said:

We're always looking for new ways to further improve journeys and safety for drivers, and I hope the new intelligent road studs will help better guide drivers around Switch Island.

The innovative light-up road studs along with the other improvements we're introducing will make it much easier to navigate the junction, benefitting the tens of thousands of drivers who travel through it every day.

Construction work on the Switch Island scheme, which is being funded by the government's £220 million congestion relief programme, is due to start on Monday 5 February and is expected to take around a year to complete.

The scheme is designed to improve the flow of traffic and enhance safety, following 49 collisions at the junction in the past two years – an average of one every fortnight. New traffic lights will be installed at a height of over 5 metres – higher than HGVs and double-decker buses – so that drivers approaching the junction can clearly see when the lights are changing.

Other improvements will include changes to the road layout and lane markings, new barriers between carriageways, coloured high friction surfaces and better signs. And a new 400 metre shared cycle path will be created through the junction, which will link up with the existing cycle path alongside the A5036 Dunnings Bridge Road.

Jerry McConkey, Sefton Council's Transportation and Highway Infrastructure Service Manager, said:

We have worked closely with Highways England and Merseyside Police to look at the issues at Switch Island and develop improvement proposals.

As a result, we are delighted that these important safety measures are about to be introduced with Highways England implementing the latest technology solutions. This will further improve safety and give drivers a much higher level of confidence when negotiating this busy junction.

The new intelligent road studs which are being installed at Switch Island were designed by Oxfordshire-based company Clearview Intelligence.

Managing Director Nick Lanigan said:

The introduction of intelligent road studs, reacting to traffic light changes on a busy roundabout is a continuation of the traditional road studs legacy but takes advantage of new technology available. The new studs have been proven to reduce lane transgression by over 50% in certain conditions so it's a great way to help improve the safety for all road users.

## **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.

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## **[News story: International Trade Secretary appoints new 'HM Trade Commissioner' for China](#)**

- Richard Burn named as HM Trade Commissioner for China
- Dr Fox leads delegation of more than 50 British businesses
- Prime Minister announces £9 billion of new trade

Richard Burn is the first of 9 HMTCs to represent and promote the UK in important markets across the world.

The announcement comes during a UK trade visit to China led by the Prime Minister in which she announced around £9 billion of new deals for British companies.

Trade between the 2 countries is at record levels, worth over £59 billion annually, with British exports to China growing by more than 60% since 2010. The UK is already one of the largest European recipients of Chinese foreign direct investment.

Leading a delegation of more than 50 businesses to China, Dr Fox announced the first HMTC to head the global operations of the Department for International Trade (DIT) in China.

Each of the HMTCs will lead on export promotion, inward and outward investment, and trade policy overseas on behalf of the UK government. Their work will include developing and delivering a regional trade plan setting out DIT's priorities in important global markets.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, said:

DIT was established to deliver a new approach to trade and investment promotion and this requires a new, senior, commercial team to lead our trade work overseas.

As an international economic department, we've moved quickly to appoint the first of these important roles. With his existing wealth of trade and investment experience, Richard will provide intelligence on the ground, deciding what tailored action is required in China, and playing a vital role in our future global trading relationships.

DIT Permanent Secretary, Antonia Romeo, said:

I'm delighted to welcome Richard to this important new role in DIT, and look forward to working with him to maximise British trade with the Chinese market.

Establishing a network of HMTCs across the world is an important step in building the capability of the Department. HMTCs will be experts in their regions, providing a clear vision and direction to the department's global operations.

HM Trade Commissioner for China, Richard Burn, said:

China presents unrivalled opportunities for British companies. My role as HM Trade Commissioner for China will be to build on the

strong links already in place, as we intensify the 'golden era' of UK-China trade. My top priority will be to achieve better market access for sectors in which the UK excels.

Since the start of the visit on Wednesday, Dr Fox has witnessed the signing of a number of commercial deals and also addressed business leaders at a Digital China event promoting future collaboration opportunities between healthcare and big data providers.

Dr Fox also attended a Britain is GREAT reception, showcasing the UK's creative, consumer, tourism and hospitality sectors.

The visit culminated in today's China-UK Business Forum, bringing together hundreds of British and Chinese business leaders, including Ali Baba CEO Jack Ma.

## **About Richard Burn**

Richard Burn is currently DIT Director General in China.

Richard has extensive business experience in China, including with Diageo, APCO and Batey-Burn, a market access and investment consultancy he co-founded and ran from 1989 to 1999. Richard has worked closely with government in China and the UK, including as former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath's Private Secretary.

## **About HMTCs**

All of the new HMTCs will cooperate closely with HM Ambassadors and High Commissioners, the wider diplomatic network, and other HM Government colleagues based in countries in their region, in a joined-up and co-ordinated government effort overseas to promote UK trade and prosperity.

Two of the roles will also have Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Consul-General responsibilities in the cities where they are based.

In total, there will be 9 geographical areas that the HM Trade Commissioners will cover:

- Africa
- Asia-Pacific
- China
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia Network
- Europe
- Latin America
- Middle East
- North America
- South Asia

Further HMTCs will be appointed shortly.