

# News story: False Caliphate faces collapse as UK marks three year tackling Daesh

Daesh fighters are being pinned down by the Royal Air Force in their former stronghold of Raqqa as the UK marks three years of tackling the barbaric cult in Iraq and Syria.

Royal Air Force aircraft destroyed 17 targets in Syria in a single day last week as the air campaign intensifies, forcing Daesh to splinter and retreat from areas it ruled when the UK voted to begin air strikes in September 2014.

British aircraft have struck Daesh 1,340 times in Iraq and 262 times in Syria. In that time the group has lost territory, finances, leaders and fighters as the 73-member coalition has liberated cities in both countries.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

Britain has made a major contribution to the campaign that has crippled Daesh since 2014, forcing this miserable cult from the gates of Baghdad to the brink of defeat in Raqqa. By air, land and sea UK personnel have played a tireless role in striking targets and training allies.

As the second largest contributor to the Global Coalition's military campaign, the UK has flown more than 8,000 sorties with Tornado and Typhoon jets and Reaper drones, providing strikes, surveillance and reconnaissance, refuelling and transport.

Since 2014 the UK has hit Daesh with over 1,500 strikes, bombarding targets including heavy machine-gun positions, truck-bombs, mortar teams, snipers and weapons stores.

RAF Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers have hounded Daesh day and night, striking from Raqqa and Dayr az Zawr in Syria to Qayyarah and Al Qaim in Iraq.

Air Chief Marshal, Sir Stephen Hillier, said:

This has been an immense effort by RAF airmen and airwomen over the last three years of continued operations, countering Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. However, the tempo continues with RAF aircraft destroying 17 targets in Syria in a single day last week.

Three years ago Daesh was barely an hour from the gates of Baghdad, but today

it has lost more than 73 per cent of the territory it occupied in Iraq and 65 per cent of its former territory in Syria.

The Royal Air Force has played an essential role to allies, helping Syrian Democratic Forces engaged in ground close combat and the Iraqi Security Forces who continue their advance having liberated Mosul and Ninewah province.

More than 5.5 million people have been freed from Daesh's rule and over 2 million displaced Iraqi civilians have returned to their homes. In Mosul alone, it is estimated that over 265,000 people have returned.

On the ground, around 600 British soldiers are in Iraq, helping to train that country's forces. UK troops have so far helped train over 58,000 Iraqi Security Forces in battle winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills.

Recognising the valuable contributions made by many serving military personnel, Sir Michael announced an Iraq and Syria Operational Service Medal during his recent visit to Iraq.

The UK's commitment from all three Services to the fight against Daesh across the region now numbers just over 1,400 military personnel, with the latest uplift of 44 Royal Engineers announced in September demonstrating the UK's contribution to the campaign.

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## [News story: Help to Buy supports over 320,000 people in buying their own home](#)

The government's [Help to Buy](#) schemes have continued their success, supporting over 320,000 people across the UK to buy a home. [Over 1 million Help to Buy: ISAs have now been opened by first time buyers](#), offering government bonuses of up to £3,000 towards the cost of a first home.

[Help to Buy statistics](#) released today (Thursday 28 September) show that:

- over 320,000 completions have taken place using one or more of the Help to Buy schemes
- over 275,000 first time buyer households are now on the housing ladder thanks to Help to Buy
- the average house price across the schemes is £196,092, below the average UK house price
- over 90% of completions across the Help to Buy schemes have taken place outside of London

Stephen Barclay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

Help to Buy supports people who want to turn their dream of owning a home into a reality. The schemes have now helped over 275,000 first time buyers across the country achieve home ownership.

This government is determined to help hardworking people across the UK get on in life and climb the housing ladder.

Housing and Planning Minister Alok Sharma said:

This government is committed to fixing the broken housing market and to help more people find a home of their own, with the support of a range of low cost home ownership products.

Our Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme continues to make home ownership a reality for thousands of households, right across the country.

Stewart Baseley, executive chairman of the Home Builders Federation said:

These latest figures are yet another sign that Help to Buy is achieving its objectives to support first time buyers, increase housing supply and boost the economy.

This help for first time buyers is encouraging builders to invest, with permission being granted for more new homes than ever before. This investment by home builders is not just only giving tens of thousands of families a place to call home, it's generating jobs and driving local economic growth in communities around the country.

More than 130,000 completions have now taken place through the [Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme](#), which offers buyers up to 20% in an equity loan so they only need to provide a 5% deposit.

The most completions using the [Help to Buy: ISA](#) have taken place in the North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, and West Midlands. In total, 83,686 completions have taken place across the UK using the ISA bonus since its launch in December 2015.

The London Help to Buy scheme provides an equity loan of up to 40% for buyers in the capital with a 5% deposit. It has helped over 4,500 buyers in the capital across 33 boroughs purchase their own property between February 2016 and June 2017.

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## News story: Fishing industry in 2016 statistics published

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has published its annual UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2016.

It includes details on the UK fleet, the number of fishermen, the quantity and value of UK landings, international trade, worldwide fishing and the state of key stocks.

- the quantity and value of sea fish (which include shellfish) landed by UK vessels has decreased by 1 per cent and increased by 21 per cent respectively on 2015
- UK vessels landed 701 thousand tonnes of sea fish into the UK and abroad with a value of £936 million
- the increase in value was primarily driven by large increases in market prices, in particular, for key pelagic and shellfish species. Pelagic landings are still far higher than they were a few years ago. Mackerel and herring accounted for 44 per cent of UK fleet landings but a lower share in value (26 per cent)
- the Scottish fleet caught mainly pelagic fish. Demersal fish account for the highest share of the English fleet's catch and shellfish are predominately caught by the Welsh and Northern Irish fleets in 2016
- the UK fishing fleet remained seventh largest in the EU in terms of vessel numbers, with the second largest capacity and fourth largest engine power
- seventy two per cent of the quantity landed by the UK fleet was caught by vessels over 24 metres in length which accounted for 4 per cent of the total number of UK vessels. These vessels tend to catch lower value pelagic fish
- around 11,800 fishermen were active in the UK. Approximately 2,300 were part-time
- Scottish vessels accounted for 65 per cent of the quantity of landings by the UK fleet while English vessels accounted for 29 per cent.
- Peterhead remained the port with the highest landings – 145 thousand tonnes with a value of £158 million
- Newlyn had the highest quantity of landings in England – 14,100 tonnes with a value of £28 million, closely followed by Brixham with 13,300 tonnes but with the higher value of £31 million
- exports of fish were little changed at 441 thousand tonnes. Imports rose by 7 per cent to 730 thousand tonnes
- world figures for 2015 showed that China caught the largest amount of fish, 15.5 million tonnes. Indonesia had the second largest catch at 6.0 million tonnes

## Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ)

In addition to the annual report there will be a further breakdown of landings by Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ).

The report highlights that in 2016, the:

- UK caught the majority of its fish, 81% by quantity, in its own EEZ. With other EU member states' EEZs being the next most important zone of capture, at 11% by quantity
- UK fleet landed 571,000 tonnes of fish worth £774 million from the UK EEZ with Mackerel, Nephrops and King Scallop landings accounting for 43% of this total value
- Northern North Sea (ICES Area Iva), worth £308 million, was the most valuable fishing area for UK vessels in the UK EEZ

We are continually working with the fishing industry to improve day-to-day management with accurate catch limits and forecasts that secure longer fisheries, while safeguarding the welfare of fish stocks.

### Further information

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## [News story: Call for evidence: teacher involvement in developing exam papers](#)

Please contribute your views to Ofqual's review by 31 October 2017.

PDF, 215KB, 3 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [publications@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:publications@ofqual.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

We are conducting a review into current teachers being involved in the development of exams, such as writing papers or questions.

As part of this review we would like to hear from anyone who has relevant insights or experiences to share – your response will be treated in confidence.

We particularly wish to hear from people who:

- have been involved with developing exam materials
- have taught alongside colleagues who had access to confidential assessment materials before the exams were taken
- were taught by teachers who knew, or said they knew, what was going to be included in specific exams

We would particularly like to hear your views on:

- the relative benefits and risks of teacher involvement in developing exams for qualifications they teach
- the effectiveness of the safeguards used to prevent disclosure
- the ability of a teacher who knows the content of an exam to disregard that when preparing their students for the same exam
- how current safeguards could be strengthened

We would also like to hear from you if you have insights into, or experiences from, other sectors and/or other countries that you believe would be relevant to our review.

All information submitted in response to this call for evidence will be used only to inform our review. We will not investigate any specific complaints or allegations you raise. If you want us to look into a specific incident you should provide us with details using our normal complaints or whistle-blower procedures.

The closing date for this call for evidence is 31 October 2017 at 5pm.

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## **[Press release: UK energy statistics: statistical press release – September 2017](#)**

[Energy Trends](#) and [Energy Prices](#) publications are published today 28 September 2017 by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The publications cover new data for the second quarter of 2017.

Energy Trends covers statistics on energy production and consumption, in total and by fuel, and provides an analysis of the year on year changes. Energy Prices covers prices to domestic and industrial consumers, prices of oil products and comparisons of international fuel prices.