

Press release: Foreign Secretary visits Benghazi as part of drive to support Libyan political process

During his visit the Foreign Secretary met Field Marshall Heftar, the Head of the Libyan National Army, as well as members of the House of Representatives representing Benghazi.

This was the first visit by a UK government minister to Benghazi since 2011 and the first time that the Foreign Secretary has met Field Marshall Heftar. It reflects UK efforts to reach out across Libya to persuade all parties to engage in the political process and work together to bring peace and stability to Libya.

Libya is likely to feature high on the international agenda during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) week in September. Ahead of UNGA the Foreign Secretary will be working intensively with key partners to galvanise international support for a renewed effort to break the political deadlock in Libya and the UK will be at the forefront of efforts to support the new UN Special Representative, Ghassan Salamé to revitalise the political process.

Speaking from Benghazi, the Foreign Secretary said:

A secure and stable Libya, better able to deal with the threat from terrorism and the challenge of migration, is firmly in the UK interests.

The Libyan people need a stable state that can meet their fundamental economic and security needs. That requires all sides to compromise and work together. Only a united Libya can defeat the terrorists and smuggling networks who are exploiting the instability.

That's why we are reaching out to all sides in Libya in support of the United Nations work to amend the Libyan Political Agreement so that it delivers for all Libyans.

Field Marshall Heftar has a role to play in the political process. I urged him to adhere to the commitments he made during recent meetings in Paris, to respect a ceasefire, and to work with Mr Salamé in order to amend the Libyan Political Agreement.

Ultimately it will be for Libyans to decide what an acceptable compromise looks like. I have encouraged all sides to resolve their differences by dialogue, not conflict, and to respect international human rights law.

The Foreign Secretary's visit to Benghazi follows [meetings in Tripoli yesterday](#) with Prime Minister Fayyez Al-Serraj, the President of Libya's High State Council Abdurrahman Swehli and a visit to Misrata to meet with political leaders there. The Foreign Secretary met the President of the House of Representatives, Agila Salah, in Tobruk during [his last visit to Libya in May](#).

In Benghazi the Foreign Secretary also met with representatives from the Benghazi Free Zone and discussed opportunities for UK companies to help stabilise Libya. The project is designed to help diversify the city's economy and is already being supported by UK companies.

Press release: Mark Field arrives in South Korea for talks on regional and global security

The minister will reaffirm the UK's commitment to work alongside South Korea and the international community to tackle the threat to regional and global security posed by North Korea. His visit comes just three weeks after the United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed sanctions against North Korea, and during biannual US-South Korea military exercises, which also include UK participation.

He will meet with his South Korean counterpart Lim Sung-nam and South Korean parliamentarians, and pay a visit to the demilitarized zone on the border between South and North Korea.

Mark Field, Minister for Asia and the Pacific, said:

The UK has been clear that we stand alongside South Korea, and our international partners in the United Nations, in condemning the actions of North Korea and the destabilising impact the regime's pursuit of nuclear and ballistic weapons has had on this region.

I am here to express our support to South Korea in person and look forward to discussions on continuing the strong relationship between our two nations – not just on security issues, but also global political, defence and economic issues.

Mr Field is in South Korea as part of a wider visit to Asia, following on from talks in China and Hong Kong. After leaving South Korea he will travel to Singapore.

Notes to editors

1. This is Mark Field's first visit to South Korea since becoming Minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in June 2017.
2. Trade in goods and services between the UK and South Korea have increased by almost 65% to £11.1bn since 2011.
3. South Korea will host the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang in 2018 and four British companies (Aggreko, iLuka, Global Infusion and Foamhand) have already secured contracts to provide services valued at more than £50m to the organisers.
4. The UK has provided 25 personnel for the biannual US-South Korea military exercise 'Ulchi-Freedom Guardian' taking place between 21-31 August.

Follow Minister for Asia and Pacific Mark Field on Twitter @MarkFieldUK

Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter @foreignoffice

Follow the Foreign Office on facebook and Google+

Subscribe to the announcements feed or email alerts to get our latest news and announcements

[Press release: 16 Zambians awarded Commonwealth Scholarships](#)

On 24 August 2017, British Council Zambia on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) hosted a pre-departure briefing for the award recipients at the British High Commission in Lusaka.

Speaking at the event, Fergus Cochrane – Dyet OBE, British High Commissioner to Zambia said;

These sixteen, fortunate Zambians have a wonderful opportunity to study in Britain at some of the best universities in the world. The UK has considerable advantages such as English language and an open, international outlook, which means our universities attract high-calibre students from every corner of the world. Most important of all, Zambia stands to benefit from the knowledge and expertise that the sixteen will bring with them on their return home.

Wayne Harper, British Council Zambia Country Director said:

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship programme in Zambia is a truly global programme, with over 30,000 individuals across the Commonwealth having benefited over the years. The first scholar on our records from Zambia is from 1964, and over six hundred Zambians have gone to the UK under the scheme since then. These scholars represent some of the brightest and most dynamic Zambians in the country, and as the British Council we're very proud that we've been able to assist in the development of their careers and their ability to contribute to the development of Zambia.

The programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and is administered by the British Council and the Association of Commonwealth Universities in the UK (ACU). To date, over 629 Zambians have benefited from Commonwealth awards, many of them returning to contribute to Zambia's development and reaching the highest levels of their profession.

Commonwealth Scholarships, which are open to citizens of the Commonwealth, have been running for over fifty years. The scholarships are targeted at individuals with intellectual ability, leadership potential and a personal commitment to development, providing them with study opportunities in other Commonwealth countries. The scholarship programme aims to improve skills in the key sectors which drive country development and expose the beneficiaries to international networks.

The sixteen scholarship beneficiaries were congratulated at the British High Commission in Lusaka as they embark on Master's and PhD programmes at universities across the UK in a variety of disciplines including engineering, public health, economics, media & communication, education and agriculture science among others. Notably, three of the sixteen scholars have been awarded PhD scholarships, which will provide three years of full support towards the completion of a doctoral postgraduate qualification at a UK university

Further details

- The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.
- For more information, please visit the [British Council UK website](<http://www.britishcouncil.org>) and [British Council Zambia website](#)
- You can also keep in touch with the British Council through [Twitter](#), [Blog](#) and [Facebook](#).
- Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships in developing Commonwealth

countries are funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Scottish Government (for developed Commonwealth countries), in conjunction with UK universities, with the aim of contributing to the UK's international development aims and wider overseas interests, supporting excellence in UK higher education, and sustaining the principles of the Commonwealth.

- For more detail visit the [Commonwealth Scholarships website](#)

News story: Home Office publishes second report on statistics collected under exit checks programme

As part of legislation introduced through the Immigration Act 2014, carriers and port operators in the aviation, maritime and international rail industries were given the power to carry out embarkation checks. Since 8 April 2015 departure data has been collected on all scheduled commercial services departing the UK from air and sea ports and from international rail stations except those services not within the scope of the exit checks programme.

The analysis in the report focuses on individuals who had both valid leave and were identified as having entered the UK after April 2015, when the exit checks programme was introduced.

Brandon Lewis, Immigration Minister, said:

The Home Office introduced exit checks in 2015 to provide more comprehensive information on travel movements across the UK border.

This information has already been invaluable to the police and security services who have used it to help track known criminals and terrorists, supporting wider work taking place across government and law enforcement.

The report found that among the 1.34 million visas granted to non-EEA nationals which expired in 2016/17, 96.3 per cent departed in time.

Brandon Lewis said:

Today's report also gives us a more comprehensive picture of the compliance of visa holders, clearly showing that the vast majority of people are following immigration rules and that the action we're taking to clamp down on illegal immigration is working.

Exit checks is a long-term programme and the data collected will continue to be assessed and analysed to ensure that they become more robust and extensive over time.

Read the [second publication into exit checks](#).

News story: New Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser appointed

Professor Aston's role will be to ensure that departmental decisions are informed by the best science and engineering evidence and advice. The Chief Scientific Adviser offers advice directly to ministers and officials and works together with the [Chief Scientific Advisers'](#) network to advise on issues that cut across government.

Professor Aston's appointment follows the retirement of Professor Bernard Silverman earlier this year. He will join the Home Office on 4 September from the University of Cambridge, where he is Professor of Statistics.

Professor Aston specialises in applied statistics but will provide advice on a range of issues at the Home Office. He was, until recently, a trustee of the Alan Turing Institute, and has previously spent much of his career working in the United States and Taiwan.

Speaking ahead of starting his new role, Professor Aston said:

I am honoured and privileged to be joining the Home Office as its Chief Scientific Adviser. I'm looking forward to working with the scientific community to understand the issues facing the Department over the coming years and identify how science, engineering and analysis can help to overcome those challenges.

Patsy Wilkinson, Second Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, said:

Professor Aston brings with him a wealth of experience that will be of great value in ensuring the work we do to keep our country safe and secure continues to be supported by the latest scientific advice and research.

Professor Sir Mark Walport, the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, said:

Having access to high-quality expert scientific advice is critical to every government department. I am delighted to welcome someone with Professor Aston's expertise to the Chief Scientific Advisers' network and look forward to working with him.