

## [Press release: Foreign Secretary welcomes Qatar's commitment to combat terrorism](#)

The Foreign Secretary comments that the Emir of Qatar's commitment to combat terrorism will help resolve the dispute.

On Friday 21 July the Emir of Qatar pledged to resolve current Gulf tensions through dialogue and negotiation via Kuwaiti mediation.

The Foreign Secretary has welcomed a statement made by the Emir of Qatar, in which he outlined Qatar's opposition to terrorism, commitment to resolving differences through dialogue, and his country's support for Kuwaiti mediation.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I welcome the Emir of Qatar's commitment to combat terrorism in all its manifestations, including terrorist financing. The Emir also pledged to resolve the remaining differences with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain through dialogue, negotiation, and Kuwaiti mediation. These steps will help to resolve the dispute.

We hope that in turn Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain respond by taking steps towards lifting the embargo. This will allow substantive discussions on remaining differences to begin.

The UK will continue to engage our partners in the region to help them reach a solution, including assisting Kuwait's important efforts in whatever way we can.

### **Further information**

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## [News story: More people will be able to give blood following scientific review](#)

The government has announced changes to blood donation rules following a review by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs

(SaBT0).

As a result of the latest clinical evidence, more people will be given the opportunity to donate blood without affecting the safety of the blood supply, from early 2018.

Current blood donation rules prevent people who engage in some sexual behaviours from giving blood for a 12 month period. As a result of scientific advances and improved understanding of the tests used, the deferral period for these people will now be reduced to 3 months.

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) will also be looking at ways to allow more people to donate blood without impacting blood safety. This includes more personalised risk assessments.

<b>Deferral Criteria</b>	<b>Current deferral period/ testing regime</b>	<b>Recommended deferral period</b>
A man who has had oral or anal sex with another man (with or without condom)	12 months	3 months
Commercial sex workers	Permanent	3 months
Sex with a high risk partner	12 months	3 months
Sex with a partner who has been sexually active in areas where HIV is common	12 months	3 months

The UK has one of the safest blood supplies in the world and these rules are in place to keep blood donors and the patients who receive their blood safe.

These reductions are based on the most up to date scientific evidence and medical advances.

The government will now work with NHSBT to implement the changes to deferrals for sexual behaviours from early 2018.

SaBT0 Chair and Consultant Physician, Professor James Neuberger said:

SaBT0 has made these recommendations following a review of the latest scientific evidence. The UK now has a better understanding of infection transmission and is leading the way after this comprehensively researched and validated 3-month deferral period.

The UK has one of the safest blood supplies in the world, and experts from around the country have analysed the latest information so even more people can have the opportunity to donate blood.

Dr Gail Mifflin, Medical and Research Director at NHS Blood and Transplant said:

NHS Blood and Transplant welcomes the Department of Health's decision to amend the rules around blood donation related to specific activities. These changes will offer more people the chance to give blood.

They take into account the latest available medical and scientific evidence. This included more extensive information now available about the risk of acquiring infections that can be passed on in blood and also more evidence that supports the reliability of the blood screening tests we use.

We have one of the safest blood supplies in the world. Anyone may require a blood transfusion in the future and so it's in all our interests to ensure that we work hard to keep blood safe for patients.

This starts with selection of donors before they give blood. Everyone must answer questions on their health and lifestyle before they donate, and answering these questions correctly is crucial, in order to keep blood safe.

In addition, the government will be submitting the evidence for the committee's full recommendations on deferral periods including for acupuncture, piercing and tattooing, and flexible endoscopy as part of a wider European evidence evaluation. There will be a further announcement of the following recommendations in due course:

Deferral criteria	Current deferral period/ testing regime	Recommended deferral period
Tattooing (licensed in UK)	12 months or 4 with negative Hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	No deferral
Tattooing (non -UK or unlicensed)	12 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	3 months
Body Piercing(licensed in UK)	12 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative Hep B anti-core	No deferral
Body Piercing(non-UK or unlicensed)	12 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	3 months
Acupuncture, cosmetic (qualified practitioner in UK)	12 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	No deferral
Acupuncture, cosmetic (non UK or unqualified practitioner)	12 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	3 months
Endoscopy	6 months or 4 with negative hepatitis C test, negative hep B anti-core	No deferral

Any history of non-prescribed  
IM or IV injecting drug use,  
including body-building  
hormones and steroids

Permanent

12 months

For more information visit the [NHSBT website](#).

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary to hold trade and security talks in New Zealand**

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will hold talks on trade, foreign policy and international security issues during a two-day visit to New Zealand.

He arrives in Wellington today (Sunday 23 July 2017) ahead of meetings with New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English, Foreign Minister Gerry Brownlee and other senior politicians.

During the visit the Foreign Secretary will also:

1. Unveil a new UK War Memorial in Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, and lay a wreath to commemorate the shared sacrifice of the armed forces of both countries and honour the memory of the New Zealanders who died in conflict since World War One. The striking memorial has been designed by Weta Workshop, the design company responsible for the production design and graphic effects in the Lord of the Rings movies.
2. Promote deeper UK-New Zealand engagement on infrastructure planning, funding and delivery in an event with Minister for Infrastructure Steven Joyce and Minister for Transport Simon Bridges. The UK has world-class expertise in infrastructure investment.
3. Travel to Kaikōura with the Minister for Civil Defence Nathan Guy to thank the community who helped 200 Britons in the aftermath of the earthquake in November 2016, by providing food and shelter. He will receive a traditional powhiri Maori welcome and see the work underway to bring the town back to its pre-earthquake vibrancy.
4. Discuss the illegal wildlife trade with the New Zealand Minister for conservation Maggie Barry during a visit to the Zealandia eco-centre.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Britain and New Zealand share a long standing and historic friendship so I'm delighted to be here to see for myself how we work together on so many issues and how we can build on these links.

My visit comes just after around 25,000 Brits came here to cheer for the British and Irish Lions, and the warm welcome they received shows just how close the relationship between our people is.

Nowhere was that welcome warmer than on the South Island, so I wish a speedy recovery from the bad weather to the people of Christchurch, Dunedin and nearby towns.

Last year, the people of Kaikoura opened their homes and their hearts to British travellers who were in distress after the devastating earthquake, and I am pleased to be able to express personally our gratitude.

The Foreign Secretary's visit to New Zealand is the second stage of a three country trip. He held two days of positive talks in Japan last week and will travel to Sydney later this week.

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## **[News story: New Action to Promote LGBT Equality](#)**

New measures to deliver greater equality for the LGBT community have been announced by the Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening, ahead of the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality.

Proposals to streamline and de-medicalise the process for changing gender will be part of a broad consultation of the legal system that underpins gender transition, the Gender Recognition Act.

Currently individuals need a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and have to provide evidence that they have been in transition for at least two years before they can apply to legally change their gender.

Justine Greening also announced the launch of a national survey today (Sunday 23 July) that will ask the 1.5million LGBT people in the UK to share their views on public services to help inform Government policy.

The Government has also announced that the deferral blood donation period for men who have sex with men, will be reduced from 12 months to three months

increasing the supply of donor blood available for life-saving operations.

Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening said:

This government is committed to building an inclusive society that works for everyone, no matter what their gender or sexuality and today we're taking the next step forward.

We will build on the significant progress we have made over the past 50 years, tackling some of the historic prejudices that still persist in our laws and giving LGBT people a real say on the issues affecting them.

Since Parliament voted for the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, there has been significant progress on LGBT equality. In 2013 the law was changed to allow same-sex couples to marry. Earlier this year, Turing's Law was passed, posthumously pardoning men who had sex with men for these now abolished offences. And the recent election saw the highest number of openly lesbian, gay and bisexual MPs voted into Parliament. Today's announcement looks to build on this progress.

The consultation on the Gender Recognition Act, to be published in the Autumn, will look to improve the recognition process and reduce the stigma faced by the trans community. Proposals will include:

- Removing the need for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria before being able to apply for gender recognition. The current need to be assessed and diagnosed by clinicians is seen as an intrusive requirement by the trans community; and
- Proposing options for reducing the length and intrusiveness of the gender recognition system.

It will aim to relieve the bureaucratic and medical burdens for those who choose to change their gender.

Suzanna Hopwood, a member of the Stonewall Trans Advisory Group, said:

I am really pleased that the Government is making good on its commitment to review the Gender Recognition Act. Reform is one of the key priorities in our vision for removing the huge inequalities that trans people face in the UK. The current system is demeaning and broken.

It's vital that this reform removes the requirements for medical evidence and an intrusive interview panel, and finally allows all trans people to have their gender legally recognised through a simple administrative process. That's what we'll be calling for during this consultation, and I'm looking forward to seeing the law change soon after.

The [LGBT survey](#), launched today, will allow the Government to understand the experiences of LGBT individuals across the UK. This will help identify ways to improve public services for LGBT users, including in health and education, and to understand how individuals might face discrimination. The survey will run for 12 weeks until 15 October

Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive of Stonewall said:

We're pleased the Government recognises there is still more to be done to ensure all lesbian, gay, bi and trans people are accepted without exception, and welcome the announcement of new measures to tackle some of the remaining inequalities. The consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act is hugely encouraging.

The 2004 Act was ground-breaking in giving trans people a way to have their gender legally recognised, but the process is in dire need of reform. We need a simple process which isn't medicalised, intrusive or demeaning. We would urge the Government to ensure that all trans communities are consulted and to act quickly on their concerns.

Change to the blood donation rules are also welcome. However, while this is an important move, it's vital that this is a stepping stone to a system that doesn't automatically exclude most gay and bi men. We would like to see individualised risk assessment, and are encouraged that the Government and NHS Blood and Transplant Service are committed to exploring how to do this. And we welcome the Government's intention to better understand the inequalities LGBT people face in Britain to identify key areas for future action, and to ensure that this Government maintains the UK's impressive record as a world leader on LGBT equality.

Ethan Spibey, Founder, FreedomToDonate said:

Today's announcement from the Government marks a world-leading blood donation policy for gay and bisexual men and the other groups previously restricted. I'm so proud that the work of FreedomToDonate and our supporters will help ensure more people than ever before are allowed to safely donate blood.

I began this campaign because I wanted to repay the donor who saved my granddad's life after a major operation and this announcement means I'm closer than ever to doing that, with the invaluable help of our team of volunteers, and the charities and organisations FreedomToDonate represents.

The Government has also accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBT0) to change the deferral periods for blood donation for men who have sex with men. The usual

deferral blood donation period will be reduced from 12 months to three months for men who have sex with men. These reductions are based on the most up to date scientific evidence and medical advances, which will offer more people the opportunity to donate blood without affecting the safety of the blood supply – helping to increase the supply of donor blood and save lives. Further work on more personalised risk assessment is also under way to allow as wide a pool of donors as possible while maintaining the safety of the blood supply.

The UK has one of the safest blood supplies in the world. These rules are in place to keep blood donors and the patients who receive their blood safe. The UK Government will now work with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to implement the changes to deferrals for sexual behaviours from early 2018, and submit evidence on the other recommendations on blood donation announced today to a wider European evidence evaluation.

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## **Press release: Minister Burt statement on recent violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank**

I deplore the violence which took place yesterday in Jerusalem and across the West Bank.

I condemn the horrific attack during a Shabbat dinner last night, which led to the death of three Israelis in the settlement of Halamish.

I am deeply concerned by the deaths of three Palestinians and the large numbers injured during clashes yesterday. I urge the relevant authorities to swiftly investigate these incidents.

The increase in tensions at the Haram Al-Sharif / Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem is of serious concern. Jerusalem is a sacred place for millions of people in the world. We call upon all parties to restore calm, avoid provocation and through engagement reach a solution that ensures the safety and the security of the site and upholds the status quo.