

Speech: “Make no mistake, this is a crisis of human creation; a crisis that South Sudan’s leaders have had six years to prevent.”

Thank you Mr President, thank you Assistant-Secretary-General Wane, thank you President Mogae for your briefings. And let me take this opportunity to reiterate the United Kingdom’s full support for your work, and for the UN Mission in South Sudan.

I wouldn’t normally take the floor before consultations but the horrifying and entrenched situation in South Sudan compels me to speak out.

Two weeks ago, the people of South Sudan should have been celebrating their young country’s independence day. They should have been celebrating six years of progress; six years of a country learning to stand on its own two feet.

But six years on, South Sudan isn’t standing. It’s barely even crawling; stifled by its leaders who would rather serve their own ends than help their country. Six years of their rule has left over half the population without enough food, six million people dependent on humanitarian assistance just to survive.

Make no mistake, this is a crisis of human creation; a crisis that South Sudan’s leaders have had six years to prevent.

But instead of helping, they have poured fuel on the fire. We need only look at the ongoing fighting across the country by the government and opposition forces. In Pagak, for example, the government offensive there has displaced thousands of civilians into Ethiopia. Aid workers have been evacuated, the already desperate humanitarian situation has been made even worse.

And yet when the government are asked about Pagak, we hear different stories from different people: some say there has been no violence there; others argue that the offensive was for self defence. So let’s be clear, the violence is happening there and it is not self defence; it is a blatant infringement of the ceasefire that Kiir declared only a few months ago.

Not content with misleading their people and the international community, the government of South Sudan have systematically clamped down on the media and on access to information. Last Friday, internet service providers in South Sudan were ordered to block media outlets with which the government disagreed. The head of state television was reported to have been arrested for failing to broadcast President Kiir’s Independence Day speech. The government say they are committed to media freedom, but their actions speak otherwise.

What the government of South Sudan says bears no relation to what it does. In June we saw humanitarian access being blocked a hundred times; the highest month in 2017 so far. In addition, ceasefire monitors have been blocked on multiple occasions by government troops from investigating incidents of reported violence. This is all in clear violation of the peace agreement and all at the cost of the South Sudanese people.

Until we see the government's actions match their words, this Council has no choice but to take measures to protect peace and security. For the United Kingdom, that means returning to the issue of an arms embargo on South Sudan once again. We must do all we can to stop the uncontrolled flow of weapons that is driving this violence.

In parallel, we should continue to work with IGAD to support their Revitalisation Forum Initiative. The first priority for this must be to bring an end to the fighting. This will require a negotiated ceasefire or cessation of hostilities agreement amongst a broad and meaningful range of armed actors. It will require national and local initiatives. And we must be clear that any actors blocking peace will face consequences.

But in truth, Mr President, we have said all of this before. In this Chamber back in May I said that we were not yet fulfilling our responsibilities as a Council to the people of South Sudan. Two months on that, I'm afraid, is still the case. The parties continue to put violence before peace.

This cannot continue. We have a unique window of opportunity before the end of the rainy season to make meaningful progress in South Sudan. Should we fail in our efforts, South Sudan will enter into a fifth year of conflict. And for a country that is only six years old, that is simply heartbreaking.

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Troika and EU Joint Statement on South Sudan

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the European Union condemn the continuing violence in South Sudan, especially the Government of South Sudan's current offensive against SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) forces near Pagak, as well as ongoing road ambushes and attacks by the SPLM-IO. The Pagak offensive is a clear violation of the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Salva Kiir on May 22, and calls into question the government's commitment to reach peace through the National Dialogue, notwithstanding the sincere efforts undertaken by the leaders of the Steering Committee.

The Troika and EU repeat and endorse the June 12 call by the leaders of the

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for President Kiir to ensure that his forces respect the unilateral ceasefire, for the armed opposition groups to reciprocate the ceasefire, and for all groups to allow the unfettered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. We also welcome IGAD's announcement of a High-Level Revitalization Forum for the South Sudan peace process. We call upon IGAD to expeditiously convene the Forum, and to include the current principal parties to the conflict. Likewise, we urge all parties to fully participate in the Forum. The Troika and EU agree with IGAD that the Forum should focus on achieving a ceasefire and resuming political dialogue that focuses on updating the agreement's timelines and other provisions that are now obsolete in light of the expansion of conflict since 2015.

The proliferation of violence, displacement, and food insecurity renders any discussion of elections in the foreseeable future as an unnecessary diversion from the primary goals of achieving peace and reconciliation. South Sudan's leaders, neighbors, and regional and international partners must first focus on achieving peace in order to create the conditions needed to hold credible elections. To achieve these urgent goals, we look forward to the prompt revitalization of an inclusive and credible peace process by IGAD; such progress would be required in order for the Troika and EU to commit further resources to institutions designed to implement the agreement.

Further information

[News story: PM meeting with the new business council: 20 July 2017](#)

The Prime Minister this afternoon chaired the first meeting of the new business council at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister emphasised her desire to listen to the views of businesses, to channel their experience and to share with them the government's vision for a successful Brexit and a country in which growth and opportunity is shared by everyone across the whole of the UK.

On Brexit, the Prime Minister reiterated that the Government's overarching goal is for a smooth, orderly exit culminating in a comprehensive free trade deal with the EU, with a period of implementation in order to avoid any cliff-edges.

The Prime Minister welcomed the valuable contributions which have come from discussions with businesses at various levels of government over the past year, including on the development of a modern industrial strategy, and emphasised the need for this engagement to intensify over the period ahead.

Beyond Brexit, the Prime Minister committed to using this forum to focus on wider issues of importance to the UK economy.

The council discussed the importance of steps that can be taken to boost productivity, drive investment and keep our economy strong. They also discussed ways to build business and consumer confidence, and strengthen the positive role of business within society.

The Prime Minister looked forward to using future quarterly meetings to hear from as wide a variety of voices as possible to ensure the interests of those who work across a range of sectors can be represented.

[News story: Improving crowd resilience: apply now for innovation funding](#)

Organisations can apply for up to £2 million SBRI funding for projects reducing the threat from terrorists and explosives in public spaces.

The [Home Office](#) is to invest up to £2 million in ideas that will reduce the threat from terrorists and the use of explosives and weapons in public spaces by using the crowd as a sensor.

Funding is available for the development of technologies that will use the crowd to identify a threat by:

- detecting the crowd's conscious and sub-conscious reaction to threats
- training the public to spot threats
- enabling the crowd to report threats

This competition seeks proposals for technologies, systems and behavioural sciences.

This is a [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) and [Small Business Research Initiative](#) (SBRI) competition. It's part of the Home Office security-related science and technology programme.

This is phase 1 of a 2-phase competition.

- this competition is open now
- the application deadline is midday on 20 September 2017
- there will be an [innovation network event](#) on 27 July 2017
- SBRI is open to any type of organisation
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- up to £1 million is available for phase 1 of this competition

- up to £1 million will be available for phase 2
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[Press release: £13 million fund to increase England's woodland](#)

A £13 million fund to help landowners plant more trees to protect wildlife, boost the timber sector and reduce flood risk will soon open for applications, Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey confirmed today.

Farmers, foresters and land managers across the UK will be able to apply for up to £6,800 per hectare to plant, weed and protect more trees when application forms for the next round of the government's Woodland Creation grant are made available in September.

The fund – part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme – will help plant more than 3 million trees, creating 1,900 hectares of new woodland and contributing to the government's ambition to plant 11 million trees, with a further one million in towns and cities.

Confirmation of the next round of funding came as Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey met with some of the UK's leading forestry companies today to discuss the opportunities for the sector when we leave the EU.

Announcing the next round of funding, Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Our forests and woodlands are vital for providing timber, improving the environment and protecting our wildlife.

Today's announcement demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to the forestry sector and to biodiversity, which afforestation delivers. I hope to see as many applications as possible so this important industry can continue to thrive.

Guidance and application forms will be available in September, with the application window opening in January 2018.

A range of grants are available to support the creation of new woodland and sustainable woodland management, with Forestry Commission online advice available on the application process.

Notes to editors

- The fund opens in January 2018 and the application forms and guidance will be available for download in September.
- Under the grant annual maintenance payments are available for 10 years.