

[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

[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.

[News story: New watchdog to close money laundering and terrorist financing loopholes](#)

[OPBAS](#) marks the latest step in the government's crackdown on money laundering and terrorist financing, working in partnership with the private sector to tackle these threats.

[Respond](#) to the call for further information on the Anti-money laundering supervisory regime.

The watchdog will raise standards across the supervisory regime, and ensure supervisors and law enforcement work together more effectively to help identify and tackle criminals.

There are 25 AML supervisors in the UK, 22 of which are accountancy, estate agents and legal services providers' professional bodies. These professional bodies bring substantial benefits to the regime, but having several organisations supervising the same sectors risks inconsistencies which criminals may look to exploit. Research shows that serious and organised crime costs the UK at least £24 billion a year.

OPBAS will work with those professional body AML supervisors to help ensure consistently high standards of supervision, with resources focused on the greatest risks whilst minimising unnecessary burdens on the vast majority of legitimate businesses.

It builds on the 2017 Money Laundering Regulations (MLRs) that took effect last month, and set the standards that AML supervisors must meet.

OPBAS will have powers to help and ensure professional body AML supervisors meet those standards. These include the powers to publicly censure or recommend Treasury remove professional bodies that do not comply with their requirements in the MLRs.

There will be complementary safeguards so that professional bodies have opportunities to engage with OPBAS before any penalty is issued and, if necessary, to appeal a decision.

The Economic Secretary, Stephen Barclay, said:

The government is delivering the biggest reforms in a decade to tackle money laundering and terrorist financing.

The new watchdog will work closely with private sector, strengthening our partnership to ensure the UK remains a global leader in the fight against corruption.

We are making sure that businesses do not have to shoulder unnecessary burdens while taking the vital steps to disrupt and punish criminals.