

## **Press release: Eid al-Fitr 2017: Theresa May's message**

I send my warmest good wishes to Muslims here in the United Kingdom, and right around the world, who are celebrating the festival of Eid al-Fitr.

For more than three million British Muslims, who make a huge and valued contribution to our national life, Eid is a truly special time.

Coming after the prayer and deep reflection of the holy month of Ramadan, Eid is a joyous occasion, to be celebrated with family and friends.

In the UK, we rightly take pride in being an open and diverse multi-ethnic and multi-faith democracy.

Over the last month, many British Muslims have shared with neighbours of all faiths and of none the holy practices of Ramadan – from doing charitable work to help in the local community, to coming together to break fast at the end of the day.

This spirit of fellowship and service lies at the heart of every great faith, and it is something around which we can all unite.

Sadly this month has also seen some dark and tragic events, including the truly appalling attack outside the Finsbury Park mosque.

It was the second terrorist attack on the streets of our capital city this month, and it was every bit as sickening as those which came before it.

Attacks like that seek to drive us apart, and our response to them must be to stand even closer together, united, to affirm that hatred and evil will never succeed.

So in that spirit of unity – and on behalf of the whole British people – let me wish you a happy a peaceful celebration.

Eid Mubarak.

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## **News story: A record Armed Forces Day celebrated across the country**

A record 300 plus events including parades, military displays and community fetes are taking place right across the country to say thank you to the Armed Forces community for the outstanding work they do; Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen

and women, both Regulars and Reservists are being recognised alongside the wider defence family such as Cadets and veterans past and present.

Today the National Event was held in Liverpool attended by His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex representing The Queen and the Royal Family.

Prime Minister Theresa May, who attended the event, said:

Our world-leading Armed Forces work day and night to defend our country and our way of life, both at home and abroad.

In the aftermath of the Manchester attack, military personnel played a vital role on UK streets, providing visible reassurance to our communities. And further afield they continue to take the fight to Daesh in Iraq and Syria, helping to drive the terrorists back and give ordinary people in those countries the chance to rebuild their lives.

I am proud to have attended the Armed Forces Day celebrations in the great city of Liverpool this year, joining thousands of people in expressing our gratitude to the men and women who do so much to preserve our freedom.

Other guests in Liverpool included Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger, Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson, hundreds of Service personnel, Cadets, veterans and thousands of members of the general public.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Today is a valuable opportunity to give something back to the Armed Forces community, which works so hard to keep us safe each and every day.

We have much to thank them for. In the last few years alone, our Armed Forces have fought Daesh terrorism, rescued thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean and helped protect us here at home.

I commend Liverpool for a spectacular event and thank organisers across the country for their efforts to mark Armed Forces Day.

The National Event began at 11am, with gun salutes heralding the start of the parade from St George's Hall, accompanied by a flypast from an RAF Typhoon and ending with a flypast from the Red Arrows. The military villages then opened and visitors enjoyed an afternoon of exciting displays along the Pier Head including planes, helicopters, diving tanks, inflatable boats, tanks, a field hospital, simulators and marching bands. The Royal Navy's type-23 frigate HMS Iron Duke has been docked in the city for the celebrations.

Later in Liverpool there were due to be flypasts by a Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Gun runs, Dragon boat racing and spectacular closing performance of Beat Retreat.

Liverpool's Assistant Mayor and Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Events, Councillor Wendy Simon, said:

What an incredible event! It truly is a day of celebration, and from the start it has been a sea of colour and sound – a fantastic spectacle for everyone. It was wonderful to see serving personnel, side by side with cadets and veterans marching through Liverpool, cheered on by the crowds lining the streets.

This city has risen the occasion and I'm delighted to say we are giving the armed forces the 'thank you' they deserve.

As well as the national event in Liverpool, significant events have been organised across the country including in Caerphilly, Plymouth, Bangor (Northern Ireland) and Edinburgh. A number of smaller events from fetes to film screenings will take place, some of which will be held as far afield as the Falkland Islands and Cyprus.

UK Armed Forces are currently involved in over 20 operations in more than 25 countries, from South Sudan to Iraq. But many of those back at home will be in attendance at events across the country.

Also present will be many veterans that make-up the estimated 2.56 million Armed Forces veteran community living in the UK. Young Cadets will be present too; together the Sea, Army, and Air cadets have almost 100,000 members, many of which will be at events up and down the country.

UK businesses have showed their support too. The Royal Mail is postmarking Saturday's mail with "Armed Forces Day 24 June 2017", supermarket chain Morrisons is offering free drinks to Service Personnel and Toby Carvery are offering a free meal.

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## **[Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on attempted attack in Mecca](#)**

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, said:

I condemn the evil attempt to attack the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Our thoughts are with the injured and their families at this time as well as with Saudi Arabia's security forces and first responders

who prevented an even greater tragedy. Terrorism respects no country and no religion. We all stand together in confronting it and together we will prevail.

## Further information

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# [Speech: Queen's Birthday Party 2017 in Singapore](#)

Ms Indranee Rajah, Senior Minister of State for Law and Finance, Members of Parliament Mr Ang Wei Neng and Ms Cheryl Chan, Chief of Army Maj Gen Melvyn Ong, distinguished guests, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen on behalf of my wife, Anne, and myself it is my honour and pleasure to welcome you all to Eden Hall this evening to celebrate the 91th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

This year is The Queen's Sapphire Jubilee, that is 65 years since she acceded to the throne to become our Head of State and Head of the Commonwealth. And even in her 92nd year, she continues to fulfil a schedule that would exhaust many people years younger than her a reflection of her steadfast commitment to the people of the United Kingdom and of the Commonwealth.

On behalf of the British community here in Singapore, I want to express our admiration and gratitude to Her Majesty and to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, who celebrated his 96th birthday last week and we wish him a speedy recovery.

In challenging times such as our country has experienced recently with the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester and the dreadful fire last week in west London there is no doubt that the British people find comfort and reassurance in the enduring strength and stability of our institutions, which The Royal Family embodies. And The Royal Family's particular attachment to Singapore has been among the highlights in our bilateral relationship over the last 12 months.

In November last year, HRH The Princess Royal visited Singapore for the conference of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth meeting several Ministers and supporting two charities, the Mission for Seafarers and Riding for the Disabled.

Earlier this month, HRH Prince Harry helped dispel some of the stigma that still surrounds people living with HIV/AIDS and with mental health issues when he met some remarkable young Singaporeans, committed volunteers and their supporters here at Eden Hall and he was delighted to take part in an iftar at Jamiyah's Children's home in Geylang.

And just last week, HRH The Duke of York represented The Queen at the Commonwealth Science Conference. While in Singapore he called on President Tan and ESM Goh Chok Tong, met young Singaporean entrepreneurs, and hosted the first Singapore edition of his highly successful Pitch@Palace initiative.

Of course the last 12 months has seen major changes in the United Kingdom. It is almost a year to the day since the people of Britain decided that we should leave the European Union and forge a different path for our country. No one is pretending that the negotiations on which we are now embarked will be easy there will be ups and downs along the way but our shared values, our shared commitment to free trade and tackling global economic and security challenges our shared belief in the rules-based international system make me confident that although the nature of our relationship with Europe will change, close cooperation with our neighbours will certainly continue.

And the United Kingdom's engagement with East Asia, and with Singapore in particular, will continue to strengthen too. Visits from the Chief of the Defence Staff and the First Sea Lord have underlined the close relationship between our armed forces. Our new British Defence Staff Asia Pacific has opened in Singapore. Our exchanges on cyber-security are deepening and our economic relationship continues to grow. Dyson opened a fantastic new Research and Development Centre here in March. GIC made a huge investment in student accommodation in the UK. Trade Minister Lim Hng Kiang and International Trade Secretary Liam Fox signed a revised Economic and Business Partnership in February. The Scottish Secretary, David Mundell, promoted great Scottish food and beverages.

Deputy Prime Minister Tharman was in London in January and returns this month And in May Senior Minister of State Sim Ann took part in the meeting of Commonwealth Trade Ministers. And on almost a weekly basis, officials are travelling in one direction or the other as the network of cooperation thickens.

In science and research, Singapore has probably more collaborations with researchers in the UK than with any other country. Our first Science and Innovation Strategic Dialogue in January identified new areas for cooperation. The UK Government's Chief Scientific Adviser has come to Singapore twice in the last year and in the last two weeks we have seen dozens of the UK's top scientists here for the Commonwealth Science Conference and global gatherings of life scientists.

But this evening, we have chosen to celebrate great British design. You can hardly have missed the example of great industrial design from JCB over there. The cars on display from Jaguar Landrover are the last word in elegance and engineering. And around the house you will see examples of great British architectural design and an amazing virtual reality experience from Blippar in our Imagination Room. These reflect our uncanny ability to blend technology with creativity to make products that are useful and beautiful. Because it's not Apple's technology that sells. Anyone can do that. It's Sir Jony Ive's stunning designs.

Each year it is a pleasure for us to welcome so many friends and partners to

the Queen's Birthday Party. I want to thank you for the enormous contribution you make to enhancing links between Britain and Singapore and promoting UK interests here. Particular thanks are due to our colleagues at the British Chamber of Commerce for their tremendous work in supporting British business in Singapore. And I take this opportunity to recognise the work of Brigitte Holtschneider, who is stepping down after ten years as Chief Executive. At the British Club, Sean Boyle will also be leaving after several years as General Manager and it was my honour to be able to present him earlier this year with the British Empire Medal. The British Association too continues to do great work. And there's one other group of special guests I would like to recognise this evening. Yesterday was the red carpet opening at Marina Bay Sands of the Downton Abbey Experience. An opportunity for you all to experience firsthand life at Downton Abbey. For the next few weeks you can walk through recreations of some of the rooms up and downstairs from the world famous TV series and then enjoy some great British produce in the special tearoom.

And joining us here tonight are some of Britain's most distinguished actors from the cast: Jim Carter, Phyllis Logan, Laura Carmichael, Kevin Doyle, Michael Fox, and Sophie Shearer. You may know them better as Carson, Mrs Hughes, Lady Edith, Mr Mosely, Parker and Daisy. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Senior Minister of State, Mr Ang, Ms Chan, Maj Gen Ong, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to close by thanking the people who have worked so hard to prepare this evening's event. First, our many very generous sponsors, they are listed in your programmes and I hope you are enjoying the delicious food and beverages that several of them are providing from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The Gurkha Pipes and Drums, and the Singapore National Cadet Corps Command Band. The Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. Niall McWilliam, some of whose paintings are displayed around the house. I want to thank my colleagues at the High Commission and the British Council and above all, thanks to all of you for helping us to celebrate Her Majesty's 91st Birthday this evening. Finally, thank you to Ms Joanna Paul who will now perform the National Anthem of the Republic of Singapore and shortly thereafter of the United Kingdom.

View photos from the event [here](#).

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**[Press release: Secretary of State praises role of military at Armed](#)**

# Forces Day in South Wales

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will join thousands of people at the South Wales celebrations in Caerphilly to honour the work and dedication of our brave Servicemen and women deployed around the world.

Mr Cairns will deliver a reading at the traditional Drumhead Service against the backdrop of Caerphilly Castle, before enjoying a packed programme of events which will include military displays and live music.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

On operations at home and overseas, the men and women of the armed forces work to protect the security, independence and interests of our country 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year.

In Wales we have a special connection with our Armed Forces and this annual event gives the public an opportunity to show their appreciation and pride for our soldiers, sailors and air personnel who sacrifice so much for others.

Our debt of gratitude also extends to the families they leave behind and the veterans past and present who have dedicated years of their lives to service. I am honoured to mark Armed Forces Day 2017 in their company.

## **Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, said:**

It's a huge pleasure to celebrate Armed Forces Day in Caerphilly.

The young sailors and marines under my command work incredibly hard to defend the UK and to protect our interests overseas. But they cannot do it alone. They rely on their loved ones to support them, and they need the British public to understand the commitment and sacrifices required to keep us safe in an uncertain and competitive world.

I know how proud the people of Wales are of the Royal Navy, and the Army and Royal Air Force too. Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to thank service personnel and their families, and to celebrate the contribution of reservists, veterans and the youth and cadet organisations who make such an important contribution to national life.

The Welsh Rugby Union is also showing its support for the British Armed Forces this year. Serving Members of the Army, Navy and RAF were invited to

mingle with the Wales national rugby team at their training base in the Vale of Glamorgan ahead of their departure for their summer tour to Tonga and Samoa.

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has further shown its support by flying the Armed Forces Day flag above Gwydyr House, the department's headquarters in London.

### **Notes to editors**

- The 2017 National Armed Forces Event will be held in Liverpool on 24 June.
- You can find out more about Armed Forces Day [here](#)