

Speech: British Ambassador to the DRC at the Queen's Birthday Party 2017

Welcome to the QBP 2017 and to this evening.

As you may know, two weeks ago today we had an election in the UK. As you will also know, two terrorist attacks took place during that election campaign period.

This evening is, then, an appropriate moment for me to say that I was touched by and am very grateful for the many messages of support and condolence here following these attacks, including from His Excellency President Kabila to The Queen. So please join me in a moment's silence for all victims of violence, in Manchester and London, in the Kasais and elsewhere in Congo. Thank you.

But these attacks did not stop the British people from voting. We have an electorate of 46 million people, and I wish the CENI all the best in enrolling a similar number of people here, to allow the full and timely implementation of the New Year's Eve agreement.

Following our election we have a government committed to making a success of Brexit and to forging a very close partnership with the rest of Europe from outside the European Union. We have a government which intends to keep the UK's position as the world's 5th largest economy, and remain one of the largest forces in diplomacy, defence and international development, with friends and allies throughout Africa and all around the world.

This will be my last national day speech as British Ambassador here. During my tenure, I have seen the grandeur and natural beauty of the Congo, experienced the incredible hard work, passion, unity and solidarity of the Congolese people. I have seen the amazing talents of Congolese entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, sportsmen and many others, and tonight we celebrate this range of talents.

No one can doubt that the Congo is a country of great potential. And the United Kingdom is supporting the DRC to fulfil this potential:

- Above all, we support dignity for the population, with \$500m worth of support each year through our bilateral development programme, regional programmes and contributions to multilateral organisations. One day, the number of Congolese people in extreme poverty will not be 50 million and rising, but falling towards zero.
- One day, the United Kingdom will no longer, for example, need to provide basic healthcare services to 9 million Congolese people, because, one day, the corruption which undermines all attempts at development will be addressed, and one day natural riches of this nation will flow into the

government treasury.

- One day, the humanitarian aid courageously supplied to millions of Congolese people, to which we are proud to contribute, will no longer be necessary.
- One day, discussions in New York and Geneva will no longer be about massacres, mass graves, and delayed elections. On day we will speak instead about all UN peacekeepers leaving this country because they are no longer needed, as will happen in Ivory Coast in exactly one week's time.

And one day, the DRC government and its development partners will focus their exchanges on co-operation, rather than sanctions, resolutions, accusations of interference, and refused visas.

In short, one day Congo's destiny as a great nation will be realised. Finally, I want to praise our wonderful embassy staff, and their families. No Ambassador could ask for a better team.

And I want to mention the efforts of one particular colleague tonight. He is the first Congolese ever in history to receive the honour Member of the British Empire, which is the equivalent of the Ordres Nationaux Congolais. He works in our embassy office in Goma, and nothing – M23 attacks, volcanic eruptions, nothing – stops him doing his job.

It just remains for me to invite you to raise a toast: – Long live Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, whom it is my privilege to represent here. – Long live the partnership between the British and Congolese peoples. – And long live all who work for a stronger Congo.

Enjoy the rest of the evening and thank you.

News story: Product recall

Guidance on how to check latest recalls, register your appliance and who to contact for more information on product safety.

If there is a problem with the safety of a product, its manufacturer is responsible for making arrangements for its repair and replacement or refund. This includes contacting the people who have purchased it where possible and publishing a notice drawing attention to the risk the product poses and what the manufacturer is doing to remedy the issue.

Further information:

News story: Crack down on terrorist and criminal financing

Businesses such as banks, estate agents, accountants and payment firms will have to carry out stringent and targeted checks to make sure that money changing hands is from a legitimate source and will not be used to fund terror acts.

Serious and organised crime costs Britain at least £24 billion every year, and recent attacks demonstrate the importance of a strong toolkit to prevent terrorist atrocities. Although the vast majority of businesses are vigilant, these new rules will ensure that they are not abused by criminals or terrorists looking to move funds or obscure assets.

The rules will improve the quality of the checks. They ensure that businesses can spot suspicious activity and report it, enabling the police to act swiftly and decisively to prevent corruption or terrorist attacks.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay, said:

We are cracking down on terrorists and criminals funnelling money through our financial system.

Terrorist financing and money laundering are significant threat to our national security, and we are determined to make the UK a hostile environment for illicit finance.

These new rules will tighten our defences, protect the integrity of our financial system and help protect the British public from terror attacks and criminal activities.

The partnership between the banking sector and law enforcement is vital in limiting abuse of the financial system by terrorists and criminals. In the recent terrorist attacks in the UK, major UK banks provided 24 hour support for an extended period to provide critical financial intelligence to support law enforcement partners.

These regulations implement the EU 4th Money Laundering Directive and complement work across government to strengthen our defences and deliver on the 2016 Action Plan for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist finance.

This includes the Criminal Finances Act, which will give law enforcement further capabilities and powers to recover the proceeds of crime, tackle money laundering, tax evasion and corruption, and combat the financing of terrorism.

[News story: Over ten metre vessel licence categories](#)

Creation of a single licence category for the over ten metre fleet segment in Scotland

You may be aware that Marine Scotland have created a single licence category for the over ten metre fleet segment in Scotland.

Different licence categories will remain in existence in England after 30 June 2017. Category B or C licence entitlements transferring from Scotland will be received as a Category B or C as they were prior to 1 July 2017.

Scottish licences created through disaggregation or aggregation in Scotland after 30 June 2017 will be tracked back to the lowest common denominator and received accordingly on transfer to England. For example a licence aggregation between an ex-Category B and an ex-Category A licence in Scotland will be received in England as a Category B licence.

[News story: Security Minister visit to Lebanon](#)

The minister met Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil and Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk, the heads of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), Internal Security Forces (ISF) and General Security, as well as other senior security staff.

The United Kingdom has committed £81 million since 2011 to supporting Lebanese security through a partnership with Lebanese security forces and the minister had the opportunity to witness UK projects which support the LAF and ISF.

At Hamat Air Base, the minister saw how the LAF are effectively countering Daesh in the Qalamoun region, discussed the UK's support in securing Lebanon's border with Syria and observed a live training demonstration on countering improvised explosive devices.

He discussed internal security matters with Director General Osman, and visited the ISF Academy where the UK is helping train officers. He also visited police stations, modelled on those in the UK, and discussed the benefits of improved and increased inspections on professionalism and

standards.

Security Minister Ben Wallace said:

It was a privilege to visit Lebanon for the first time. More than ever, the UK is committed to working with countries in this region and around the whole world to tackle the threat from terrorism and violent extremism.

We have committed £81 million of security assistance to Lebanon since 2011 to maintain security and stability and Lebanon is a strong and effective partner for the UK on security and counter-terrorism.