

# **Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on the Kurdistan Regional Government's intention to hold a referendum on independence from Iraq**

In a statement the Foreign Secretary said,

We note the announcement by the government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq regarding a referendum on independence. We understand the aspirations of the Kurdish people and continue to support them politically, culturally and economically within Iraq. But a referendum at this time will distract from the more urgent priorities of defeating Daesh, stabilising liberated areas and addressing the long-term political issues that led to Daesh's rise. Any referendum or political process towards independence must be agreed with the Government of Iraq in Baghdad. Unilateral moves towards independence would not be in the interests of the people of Kurdistan Region, Iraq or of wider regional stability.

The UK supports a stable, democratic and unified Iraq, one that is able to provide the security, jobs and healthcare and education all Iraqis want and deserve. We urge all parties to engage in dialogue to deliver a better future for their people on the basis of the Iraqi Constitution.

## **Further information**

Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter: [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#).

---

## **Speech: "If we are to defeat Daesh we must hold them to account for their actions."**

Thank you Mr President, thank you Jeff for your briefing just now.

At the outset, let me express my condolences to the government and people of

Iran following the terrible attacks yesterday.

In recent weeks, the United Kingdom has stood firm through senseless terrorist atrocities that targeted innocent people in Manchester and London.

These attacks show the worst of humanity. They seek to intimidate us, to divide us, to undermine our resolve.

They fail every time. In response, ordinary people show the best of humanity. In the UK, we witnessed the men and women of our emergency services, as well as members of the public, show the greatest courage, even risking their own lives to protect others from attack. This Council has a duty now to show the same courage, the same resolve as those ordinary men and women in the face of such brutality.

That's why the UK is playing a leading role in the Global Coalition Against Daesh. Our collective efforts are bearing fruit. Daesh have lost over two thirds of the ground they once occupied in Iraq and nearly half of that held in Syria. More than 2.5 million people have now been freed from their tyrannical rule.

Make no mistake, we are defeating Daesh on the ground. In Iraq, Mosul will soon be liberated. The Iraqi Security Forces, with support of the coalition, have successfully isolated Daesh to a final holdout in West Mosul. Thanks to the valiant efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces, people are already starting to return to their homes in liberated areas. And in Syria, operations against Raqqa have now begun. It is only a matter of time before Daesh lose their so called capital.

But ultimately, Mr President, degrading Daesh effectively will take time, patience and sustained effort from the international community, including this Council. It's an effort that goes far beyond military support. And that's why the Global Coalition is supporting the Government of Iraq to restore security, governance and basic services across Iraq. Helping people rebuild their lives is the first step to winning the peace. To counter the longer-term threat of Daesh, Iraqis need political reconciliation and reform, and in Syria we need to see a long overdue national political settlement and a transition to a government for all Syrians.

The threat we face is changing. As we successfully degrade Daesh in Syria and Iraq we have seen their propaganda promote attacks elsewhere across the world. We have seen individuals inspired by these calls carry out callous attacks in the name of Daesh. As they lose their caliphate we are seeing their fighters flee. We must work together to deprive Daesh of safe spaces across the world, tackling the threat of foreign fighters travelling to new havens or returning to home countries. We must also bring an end to their havens online.

The pervasive spread of Islamist extremism online has gone on for too long. As one of the leads on the Counter-Daesh Communications effort, and in partnership with coalition countries, the UK has successfully diminished the quantity but also the quality and the impact of that hateful propaganda.

We're working with the industry so that together we take a more proactive approach to terrorist and extremist content online.

Engagement so far has resulted in companies strengthening their terms and conditions and the announcement of a shared database which will catalogue known terrorist content from the internet. We have also seen a public commitment from Google, Facebook, Twitter and Microsoft to look at options for establishing an international industry-led forum focused on this issue. There is much more to be done. So let us call on the industry to do the right thing and remove hateful extremist content from their platforms.

And finally, if we are to defeat Daesh we must hold them to account for their actions, whether online or in the real world, and seek justice for all Daesh victims around the world.

That's why the UK launched a UN-led global campaign to bring Daesh to justice; one that will show that Daesh cannot act with impunity. It will act as a deterrent both now and in the future, and help to strengthen global security.

Time is of the essence; it is vital that we act now. We must start gathering evidence before it is lost or destroyed on the battlefield.

So I welcome the discussions we've had with the Government of Iraq on this issue, and the significant statement by Prime Minister Abadi calling at the end of March for, and I quote, "the UN Security Council to issue a resolution to prosecute Daesh's crimes against civilians."

We believe the UK's proposal is the clear way forward for the Council to answer Prime Minister Abadi's call. And we look forward to working with our Iraqi colleagues so that the proposal can be finalised as soon as possible.

Thank you.

---

**Speech: "Fifteen years of violence there have shown that there can be no military solution to the conflict."**

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her 25th report on the situation in Darfur, the continued commitment of the Prosecutor and her Office to this investigation, and for her statement today.

At the outset, let me express the United Kingdom's full support for the

International Criminal Court and for its vital work challenging impunity and bringing to account those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern.

We appreciate the important role you play, often amid difficult conditions on the ground.

This is clearly the case in Darfur. Fifteen years of violence there have shown that there can be no military solution to the conflict. A lasting peace can only be realised with the agreement of a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement that addresses the root causes of the conflict.

The UK had welcomed the reduction in military confrontation between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements and the announcements of unilateral cessations of hostilities by the Government, the Sudan Liberation Army -Minni Minawi and Justice Equality Movement in recent months. We were hopeful that this signalled the parties' willingness to engage genuinely in the peace process. We are therefore deeply concerned by reports of renewed clashes between the Government and SLA-MM in recent weeks and the detrimental impact this ongoing risk of violence has for the safety of civilians and the overall stability of Darfur.

We also continue to be extremely concerned at the use of sexual violence in the conflict, although note the recent reduction in instances.

We urge all parties to show restraint, to abide by the unilateral cessations of hostilities and to focus their efforts on the peace process, under the auspices of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel.

Mr President,

On a more positive note, the UK welcomes the improvements in access for UNAMID and humanitarian actors in Darfur, particularly to Jebel Marra and urges the Government of Sudan to strive for unfettered access throughout Darfur. This will enable the Prosecutor to carry out her investigation and UNAMID to carry out its mandate to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Like the Prosecutor, we remain concerned by reports of continued attacks against internally displaced persons and that some access restrictions remain in place.

In light of the fragile security situation in Darfur, the UK urges that any changes to UNAMID during the upcoming mandate renewal are done in a manner that is gradual, flexible and retains the Mission's ability to continue to protect civilians.

Mr President,

Over the course of twenty-five reports, the Prosecutor has consistently made it clear that the Court needs the cooperation of States and the support of this Council in order to move forward on this situation. We all need to look carefully at what more we can do to ensure that the Court receives the support that it deserves. The United Kingdom will continue to call on the

Government of Sudan to meet its obligations under resolution 1593, to cooperate fully with the Court, to execute outstanding arrest warrants and to fulfil its international obligations.

The United Kingdom is frustrated that fugitives of the Court, including President Al-Bashir and Mr Hussein, continue to travel unhindered. We appreciate that States may sometimes have conflicting commitments to other regional and international organisations, but we join the Prosecutor in urging those States to consult with the Court. For our part, we will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant governments with the ultimate goal of achieving justice for the thousands of victims in Darfur. We renew our call on all States Parties to cooperate with the ICC and to abide by their Rome Statute obligations.

Mr President,

We welcome the renewed vigour with which the Office of the Prosecutor is approaching this investigation. The Office should be commended for the progress it has made on the investigation, despite the fragile security situation, the access restrictions, the continued clashes and lack of cooperation.

Finally, the United Kingdom would like to offer its appreciation of the effort that the Prosecutor's Office has put into making the most effective and efficient use of the resources it has available, and takes this opportunity to reaffirm the UK's commitment to supporting the Court, as both a State Party to the Rome Statute and as a member of this Council.

Thank you Mr President.

---

## **News story: Priti Patel reappointed as International Development Secretary**

Priti Patel is "delighted and honoured" to continue to help build a safer, healthier, more prosperous world, which protects Britain's interests.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

"I am delighted and honoured to be reappointed as Secretary of State for International Development.

"Every day UK aid helps millions of people and makes a powerful and positive statement about Global Britain's place in the world.

"Our development work helps build a safer, healthier, more prosperous world, which protects Britain's interests.

“This country leads the world when it comes to development and we will continue to show strong leadership by improving the results and value we achieve with taxpayers’ money.

“With a smart approach to aid, we can keep saving and transforming lives and tackle the big global challenges this country faces.”

---

## [Press release: DIT driving global UK tech investment during London Tech Week](#)

Over 40,000 attendees from more than 70 countries will be participating in Europe’s largest technology gathering – [London Tech Week](#) – starting today (Monday 12 June), as recent overseas investments show London retaining its dominance as a global tech hub.

The UK tech sector is ranked the second biggest global market for developing new technology. In 2016 UK digital tech investment reached £6.8 billion, 50% higher than any other European country – contributing £97 billion to the UK economy 2017 and employing 1.64 million people ([Tech Nation report 2017](#)). Tech giants such as Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft have all made significant investments since June 2016, bringing thousands of new highly skilled jobs to the UK and boosting research and innovation.

Now, the government is bringing together international investors, global household tech companies and UK businesses, to help boost exporting opportunities and encourage more investment into London’s tech hub.

The government will also provide £17 million of new research funding for robotics and artificial intelligence, as well as a £1 billion programme to strengthen digital infrastructure, including full fibre and 5G.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

We’ve got a big job to do as an international economic department with tremendous opportunities out there for the UK and we’re determined to make a success of global Britain, particularly with London as a world-leading global tech hub, second only to San Francisco.

The UK has the tech ecosystem, the confidence of investors and start-ups, and an unprecedented level of government support, to seize new international opportunities to ride the 21st century’s technological wave. All of which we will be showcasing this week

with the largest gathering of tech businesses in Europe.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) will welcome investors from countries across the world including Australia, Canada, India, Latin America, Spain, Turkey and the USA to meet London's small and medium sized tech businesses at City Hall today – along with Deputy Mayor Rajesh Agrawal.

It will also welcome some of the world's biggest technology companies, representing billions of pounds of investment in the UK, to Lancaster House on Thursday. They will be joined by international tech entrepreneurs looking to set up their businesses in the UK and UK firms looking to expand as the government commits to creating the best environment for growing future global tech firms here in the UK.

During the week, DIT will be collaborating with organisations like [Tech City UK](#) and [Sino Open Data Apps](#) to provide advice and support to companies looking to expand into global markets such as China and the USA. DIT recently led 60 UK technology companies to China, Japan and South Korea, arranging over 600 face-to-face meetings with over 300 local investors. The department helps UK companies attend over 600 global events each year to build connections and export opportunities.