

## SRUC Elmwood allotment club springs into action!

The allotment club at the Elmwood Campus of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is springing into action – by celebrating its third year.

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## Safety must be always be the top priority, but UK and US bans on carrying electronic devices on aircraft leaves questions unanswered – Richard Burden

**Richard Burden MP, Labour's Shadow Aviation Minister**, responding to the announcement of a cabin baggage ban on laptops on certain direct passenger flights to the UK from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, said:

“The safety and security of passengers must always be the overriding priority for Government and for airline operators. If the Government has evidence the level of security checks on passengers carrying electronic devices is of exceptional concern in the countries listed then it is right that prompt precautionary action should be taken.

“This announcement leaves a number of important questions unanswered and we are seeking urgent clarification from Ministers. It's important the Government set out clearly the precautionary steps they have taken in response to advice from security services to reassure passengers and the public. The Government must also work with airline operators to ensure all passengers are given the necessary information and flights can continue where appropriate with minimal disruption as possible.”

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## The extreme Centre

I see Mr Blair and others are out and about complaining that the centre is not strong enough. He thinks the centre ground needs reinforcing, as he dislikes the way it is assailed by Brexiteers of all persuasions, and by the Corbyn tendency in the Labour party. He still sees new Labour as ideal, as the perfect balance between "the extremes". It is high time this piece of self serving nonsense was exposed to some criticism.

The problems with New Labour were their three main extremisms.

They took an extreme view about UK intervention in Middle Eastern wars, believing we could use military force to create liberal democracies in various Middle Eastern countries. The public disagreed, and the results of their military actions despite much bravery and heroic effort by our forces were disappointing. They did not understand or manage the politics of the Middle Eastern countries well, relying too much on force.

They took an extreme view about the ability of the economy to withstand a huge build up in public and private debt and credit, before making an even more extreme judgement to bring some banks crashing down for no good reason. They told us they had abolished the boom-bust cycle, only to preside over the biggest boom-bust since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

They took an extreme view about EU integration and government. Whilst telling us each Treaty was a mild tidying up exercise with all the potency of the Beano, they signed the UK up to a comprehensive cradle of laws and controls making democratic government in the UK difficult. They always denied the public a referendum vote on their centralising tendencies, always denied their significance, and always claimed when challenged that EU laws were for the best regardless of what they said. Their EU actions led directly to the referendum which they helped lose.

Mr Blair needs to grasp that the world has moved on from New Labour. We now know their economic claims were false, as their era ended with major recession and banking crash. We know their EU policy was based on the lie that the EU was only of interest to Conservatives, and that nothing important was happening. We know their policy of favouring large corporations and encouraging cheap labour from the continent to take the low paid jobs they created was not popular with many voters.

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## Vital for Sri Lanka to send message

## that 'impunity is no longer tolerated' underlines UN rights chief

22 March 2017 – Presenting an oral update on the rights situation in Sri Lanka, the top United Nations human rights official today said that a general lack of trust in the impartiality of the justice system in the country regarding past violations and continuing “unwillingness or inability” to address impunity reinforces the need for international participation in a judicial mechanism.

“It is important for the country’s future to send the signal that impunity is no longer tolerated,” Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the UN Human Rights Council today.

“For this to be credible, [the judicial mechanism] should include a special counsel, foreign judges and defence lawyers, and authorized prosecutors and investigators,” he added, noting that national consultations had also identified international participation as a way to gain the trust of the victims.

He also said that while the design of truth and reparations processes appear to be underway, such efforts needed to be in consultation with victims and the civil society, and that the repeal of the terrorism prevention act and its replacement with legislation that complies with international human rights law is to be concluded.

Also in his remarks, the UN rights chief hailed the work of the civil society and human rights defenders in the country and underlined that they must be protected from harassment and intimidation.

Making particular reference to the reports of intimidation of members of civil society at the Palais des Nations (the UN Office at Geneva), the High Commissioner said that his office (OHCHR) would be looking into the issues closely.

He also called on the Sri Lankan Government to consult the independent commissions in the country, the Human Rights Commission, which he said play an invaluable role in strengthening good governance.

“I encourage respect for their mandate and autonomy, adequate financing, and implementation of their recommendations,” he added.

Mr. Zeid also welcomed a number of directives made by the President of Sri Lanka regarding detention but noted that reports of torture, excessive use of force and failure to respect due process are a cause for worry.

“There is clearly a need for unequivocal instructions to all branches of the security forces that any such conduct is unacceptable and that abuses will be punished,” underlined the High Commissioner.

In conclusion, the UN rights chief said that victims should be kept at the centre of the efforts in the island nation and noted that justice for them was vital to ensure sustainable peace.

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## [UN atomic agency co-hosts international meeting on cancer in developing countries](#)

22 March 2017 – Cancer can be a death warrant in some developing countries, spurring the United Nations atomic agency and the international community today to hold a high-level discussion on how to get more funding and support for treatment to parts of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

“The rising tide of cancer calls for additional human and financial resources, as well as infrastructure,” Nelly Enwerem-Bromson, Director of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy at the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said at the meeting in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. He spoke alongside Sudanese Vice-President Hassabo Mohammed Abdalrahman, who opened the meeting.

The event, co-organized by the IAEA and the Sudanese Government, brought together health and finance representatives from 16 Governments to discuss their funding proposals on how to better detect and treat breast and cervical cancer, and develop nuclear medicine and radiotherapy as part of national cancer control programmes.

Each year, 8.8 million people die from cancer, mostly in low- and middle-income countries, according to figures from the World Health Organization (WHO). The figure is so high that it accounts for two and a half times more people killed than those who die from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

Cervical cancer is particularly deadly and disproportionately affects women in developing countries, where 83 per cent of all new cases occur, IAEA reported.

One of the plans discussed proposes to establish a permanent screening centre in Cameroon, where 1,400 new women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year, and 700 die.

The meeting also reviewed a proposal to expand cancer services for low-income people in Jordan, including refugees. The only public radiotherapy facility is in the capital, Amman, which treats around 50 patients per day.

The Governments represented at today’s meeting are members of the IAEA, the

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Islamic Development Bank.

Other institutions present included the African Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the WHO.