

Speech: “Lasting peace in Darfur can only be realised with the agreement of a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement”

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her 26th report on the situation in Darfur, the unwavering commitment that she and her staff have shown to this investigation and for her briefing to the Council today.

The ICC has an important role to play in global efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern and the United Kingdom fully supports its efforts to hold perpetrators to account and achieve justice for victims.

The UK welcomes the reduction of armed conflict between government forces and the armed opposition, as well as the extension of unilateral cessations of hostilities by both sides. We are also encouraged by the improvements in humanitarian access and the operational environment.

Whilst the situation in Darfur is beginning to show signs for cautious optimism, the international community would be remiss to accept the narrative that the situation has normalised. As noted in the prosecutor’s report, the security and human rights situation remains volatile and unpredictable, particularly for Darfur’s 2.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Also, of particular concern is the continued use of sexual violence in conflict, although it is noted that reported incidents have purportedly declined during this reporting period.

As we have said many times before in this chamber, lasting peace in Darfur can only be realised with the agreement of a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement that addresses the root causes of conflict. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) will be vital in this regard. We note the Government’s ongoing disarmament campaign but are concerned by the tensions and armed confrontations that have emerged as a result, and which threaten to undermine the recent improvements in the security situation.

We therefore urge the Government of Sudan to pursue a balanced DDR and security sector reform, with full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and in close cooperation with UNAMID.

With regard to the currently stalled peace process, we urge all parties to capitalise on the recent security and humanitarian improvements by re-focusing their efforts on implementing the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Roadmap.

The UK welcomes the progress that UNAMID has made in completing the first phase of its reconfiguration and the Government of Sudan's improved cooperation with the Mission. However, it is regrettable that the Government of Sudan has yet formally to agree to the opening of a temporary UNAMID base in Golo, Jebel Marra. This base is vital to ensuring a smaller UNAMID is able to focus its efforts on the Jebel Marra area, including supporting the provision of humanitarian assistance in this high need area. We therefore urge the Government of Sudan to agree formally to the opening of this base without further delay.

As UNAMID reconfiguration continues, it is crucial that the Mission and the Security Council closely monitor the impact of the reconfiguration on the situation on the ground, as well as the cooperation afforded to the Mission by the Government of Sudan. The UK therefore requests other Council members to engage constructively with the upcoming assessment of phase one of the reconfiguration and to consider carefully whether phase two remains appropriate.

Mr President, in adopting UN Security Council resolution 1593, this Council committed to support the Office of the Prosecutor in its efforts to investigate the situation in Darfur. In the twenty-six reports that have followed since, the Prosecutor has consistently reminded us of the need for state cooperation and Council support in order to make progress in this investigation.

Mr President, in this regard, we must do better. We encourage our fellow Council member to consider carefully what more we, as a Council, can do to ensure that the Court receives the necessary support. The UK will continue to call on the Government of Sudan to meet its obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1593, and to cooperate fully with the Court, to execute outstanding arrest warrants and to fulfil its international obligations.

The United Kingdom continues to be frustrated that fugitives of the Court, including Mr Al-Bashir, Mr Harun and Mr Hussein, are still travelling to certain countries unhindered. We note the Chambers findings on 6 July that vis-à-vis the Court, Sudan cannot claim the immunity of Mr Al-Bashir as Head of State in the context of a request to arrest and surrender him to the Court. For our part, the United Kingdom will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant governments, including through the European Union, as noted in the Prosecutor's report. We renew our call to all States Parties to cooperate with the ICC and abide by their obligations under the Rome Statute. We also urge them to consult the Court if they feel that they are unable to co-operate with it for any reason.

We welcome and thank the Office of the Prosecutor for its continued efforts to achieve justice for victims in Darfur, despite the fragile security situation, access restrictions and lack of cooperation. The UK also appreciates the effort that the Prosecutor's Office has put into making the most effective and efficient use of the resources it has available, while recognising that the lack of resources does impact on its investigations.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the UK's

commitment to supporting the Court, both as a State Party to the Rome Statue and as a member of this Council. We thank the Prosecutor again for her report.

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Bradford Robber has sentence increased



Solicitor General Robert Buckland

A violent robber will spend more time in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

David Berry, 32, committed a series of robberies between 29 December 2016 and 9 January 2017. On one occasion a victim was stabbed multiple times in the buttocks.

The robberies included breaking into a house, stealing a car from the driveway and stealing a delivery van and its contents. The driver was also dragged out of the van and thrown into the road. Berry then rammed two police cars in an attempt to escape capture.

In separate incidences, Berry also robbed 2 night porters who were working alone in hotels. In the second robbery, the night porter was beaten and stabbed with a knife.

Berry was originally sentenced to 8 and a half years in prison at Bradford Crown Court. He will now serve 15 years behind bars.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

These were planned robberies, involving weapons, which left a trail of destruction – including damage to two police vehicles. The

original sentence failed to take proper account of the seriousness of the offences and I am pleased the Court has now seen fit to increase the prison term.

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News story: Foreign Secretary's Chanukkah message

Wishing all in the Jewish community in the UK and around the world a Happy Chanukkah as this festival of light and liberty starts tonight!

This Jewish festival of Chanukkah is a celebration of the triumph of the Maccabees over religious persecution. The lighting of the Menorah is a reminder that even in the darkest of times we can work together we can build a brighter future.

It must spur us to rededicate ourselves to the task of building a world where freedom is a guaranteed for all, where we work for peace and security and where we fight against prejudice.

The British and Jewish people are not only connected through shared history and values, the Jewish community has contributed to every part of British life- its success shows Britain at its best; tolerant, open and welcoming to all those who want to work hard and get on in life.

As friends and family prepare to come together to celebrate the Jewish festival of lights, I send my warmest wishes for a very happy and peaceful Chanukkah to the Jewish community in the UK and around the world. Chanukkah Sameach!

Speech: UK statement to the WTO 11th Ministerial Conference by the Secretary of State for International

Trade

Mr Chairman, I congratulate Argentina for hosting this conference so efficiently and so well.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the GATT.

We have made many changes and great strides since then but we face constant challenges in keeping the multilateral system relevant.

What hasn't changed over the decades is the United Kingdom's unwavering support for free trade, for the multilateral trading system and for seeking continuous improvement in how we conduct global commerce.

I look forward to the UK taking a more prominent role in the WTO as we leave the European Union. And I pledge here to respect our existing WTO commitments and obligations to the WTO Membership as we leave the EU.

I see 3 priorities for us here in Buenos Aires.

First, we need to continue to promote trade as the main tool of development.

As the world's developing and emerging economies have liberalised their trade practices, prosperity has spread across the globe, bringing growth, opportunity and stability where once there was only poverty.

In this regard, I strongly welcome the entry into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement earlier this year.

The UK has programmed £180 million in supporting developing countries implement the TFA, between 2013 and 2022.

Second, I welcome the focus on digital trade here at MC11.

I believe that WTO Members must address digital trade issues, including through new rules. We should not wait any longer for ignoring the fast-changing digital landscape risks the credibility of this organisation.

We need to set rules for digital trade that deliver for developing and developed members alike. We need rules that offer the potential of greater participation by women in global trade. And we need rules that support e-commerce as a driver for economic growth. E-commerce and digital trade offer enormous opportunities for countries large and small, developed and developing – an empowering tool for women and SMEs in particular.

Our third priority should be regulation. As tariffs have come down and trade in services has increased, non-tariff measures are increasingly the main source of frustration for companies wanting to do business in other jurisdictions.

Predictability and access based on regulatory outcomes are what matter for

businesses and consumers. There is much useful work we could be doing in this area, such as in domestic regulation on services.

Finally, to support us in this work, we need much better data on trade – data which truly reflects what is happening in the global economy where supply chains are increasingly complex.

I strongly support the joint work of the OECD and the WTO in the area of Trade in Value Added. The UK has been and will continue to be a leading voice on this issue.

I am hopeful we will look back at the time we have spent in this beautiful city as the moment when we acknowledged the need for increased urgency in our work. I am hopeful that this urgency will, in turn, lead to a new dynamism in our collective endeavour to update and strengthen the multilateral trading system upon which we all rely.

Thank you.

Press release: Governments agree a way forward on EU powers

At the Joint Ministerial Committee in London, chaired by the First Secretary of State Damian Green MP and attended by the Scottish and Welsh governments and Northern Ireland civil service, it was agreed how 142 current EU policy areas will be dealt with as they return to the UK, with only a minority requiring a legislative framework.

The First Secretary also highlighted last week's agreement by the Prime Minister securing the rights of EU nationals living in the UK. Mr Green said that this provided reassurance to those living and working in all parts of the UK and would also be welcomed by employers.

The return of powers from the EU will lead to a significant increase in the decision making powers of the Scottish and Welsh governments and a restored Northern Ireland Executive. It had previously been agreed that some policy areas would require a common UK approach in order to protect the benefits of the UK internal market. Ministers had also agreed in October the principles that would be used to decide on the need for any frameworks.

There is now agreement in principle on how the 142 policy areas previously identified will be allocated into the following three groups:

- areas where no further action is necessary
- areas that could require new non-legislative arrangements
- areas that may require a legislative framework

Only in a minority of areas will a legislative framework be required and officials will now carry out further work in these policy areas.

Speaking after the meeting, First Secretary of State Damian Green MP said:

Today we have agreed in principle on the policy areas where legislative frameworks will and will not be required. This is a significant step forward and while there are still areas we disagree on, we will continue to work through these and find solutions.

The powers and responsibilities of the devolved administrations will be enhanced as a result of EU exit and we will continue to work closely with them so that the new framework arrangements work effectively for all parts of the UK.

The co-operation and hard work from all sides will stand us in good stead for resolving other outstanding issues in the weeks and months to come. The devolved administrations have already signed up to principles that recognise the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

The agreement reached by the Prime Minister in Brussels last week also provides reassurance to those EU nationals living in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I know from my many visits throughout the UK in recent months that this reassurance that they can continue to live and work in the UK will be welcome news to them and their employers.

The next steps will be for government officials to continue discussions on the limited number of areas where legislative frameworks may be required. A range of non-legislative frameworks will also be explored. These frameworks will protect the benefits of the UK internal market, ensure the UK can negotiate, enter into and implement new trade agreements and allow us to safeguard the security of the UK.