

Press release: PM's statement on Iraq's announcement regarding Daesh: 9 December 2017

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I congratulate Prime Minister Abadi and all Iraqis on this historic moment. I pay tribute to the Iraqi Security Forces for their courage and sacrifice.

Daesh no longer hold significant territory in Iraq or Syria. This signals a new chapter towards a more peaceful, prosperous country.

I am proud that the UK, as a leading member of the Global Coalition, has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Iraq to help them open that chapter. I saw the effects of this first hand when I visited last week.

The UK, as a Coalition member, has played a leading role in supporting the Iraqi Security Forces, including the Armed Forces and the Peshmerga, in the fight against Daesh. UK aircraft have launched over 1,350 air strikes in Iraq and have trained over 60,000 members of the Iraqi Security Forces.

UK aid provides a vital lifeline to millions of Iraqis with emergency food, shelter, medical care and clean water. We are now supporting the Government of Iraq to lay the foundations for an economy that meets the aspirations of all Iraqis.

We must be clear however, that whilst Daesh is failing, they are not yet defeated. They still pose a threat to Iraq, including from over the Syrian border.

News story: The AAIB has sent a team to Hertfordshire

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB have sent a team to investigate an accident involving a microlight aircraft.

Press release: International Trade minister holds UK-Qatar talks to strengthen trade

This week, International Trade Minister, Greg Hands, met with Qatari Minister of Economy and Commerce, HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim al Thani, for the inaugural Joint Economic and Trade Commission (JETCO) between the 2 countries.

Today's talks explored opportunities to strengthen and build on bilateral trade ties. It follows a commitment made by the Qatari Prime Minister in March to invest an additional £5bn across the UK over the next 3 to 5 years. The talks concluded with both sides signing a statement outlining their mutual commitment to support small businesses in both countries and improve access to trade financing to help exporters.

Trade between the UK and Qatar was worth more than £5bn in 2016, with machinery, mechanical parts and precious stones and metals among the most popular UK goods exports to Qatar.

International Trade Minister Greg Hands said:

I am delighted to be meeting with my Qatari counterparts today as we look to strengthen our trade and investment relationship, identifying opportunities for growth and breaking down barriers to trade between our nations.

As an international economic department, we are committed to building a long and fruitful trading partnership with Qatar over the coming months and years.

During the talks, the Ministers also met UK companies working in Qatar and looked at ways to overcome market access barriers, while fresh dialogues on education and technology will create significant opportunities for important UK industries.

Notes to editors

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Qatar totalled £5.2 billion in 2016.

This was the first meeting of the UK-Qatar JETCO, which will meet every year to advance the trade and investment relationship.

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Further information

Contact the DIT Media and Digital Team on 0207 215 2000

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement ahead of visit to Iran

Iran is a significant country in a strategically important, but volatile and unstable, region which matters to the UK's security and prosperity.

My first visit is an opportunity to hold further discussions on a series of crucial issues, including how we can find a political solution to the devastating conflict in Yemen and secure greater humanitarian access to ease the immense suffering there. I will also underline the UK's continued support for the nuclear deal while making clear our concerns about some of Iran's activity in the region.

We will also discuss our bilateral relationship and I will stress my grave concerns about our dual national consular cases and press for their release where there are humanitarian grounds to do so.

While our relationship with Iran has improved significantly since 2011, it is not straightforward and on many issues we will not agree. But I am clear that dialogue is the key to managing our differences and, where possible, making progress on issues that really matter, even under difficult conditions.

I look forward to a constructive visit.

Speech: "Today I reaffirm our strong support for renewed peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians as soon as possible"

Thank you Mr President, both for giving me the floor and for scheduling this important meeting.

Nikolay, thank you for your briefing. In particular for your unequivocal support for the two-state solution and for your warnings against unilateral

measures that jeopardise the prospect of a sustainable peace for Israelis and Palestinians. From the outset, I would like to make clear that the United Kingdom's position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing: it should be determined through a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and Jerusalem should ultimately be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states. In line with relevant Security Council Resolutions, including 242, 478 and 2334, we regard East Jerusalem as part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We therefore disagree with the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and unilaterally to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel before a final status agreement. These decisions are unhelpful to the prospects for peace in the region, an aim that I know all of us in this Council remain committed to. The British Embassy to Israel is based in Tel Aviv and we have no plans to move it.

Mr President,

We share President Trump's desire to bring an end to this conflict. We welcome his commitment to a two-state solution negotiated between the parties. We note his clear acknowledgement of the importance of the final status of Jerusalem, including the sovereign boundaries within the city, which must be subject to negotiations between the parties.

We remain committed to an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that is based on 1967 borders with agreed and equal land swaps, reflecting both parties' national and religious interests; and with Jerusalem as the shared capital of an Israeli and Palestinian state. This outcome must be determined through a final status agreement, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees, that is demographically compatible with the principle of two states for two peoples.

Mr President,

We recognise that Jerusalem holds huge significance and holiness for Jews, Muslims and Christians. We reiterate the fundamental necessity of maintaining the status quo at the Holy Sites, in particular the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif and we welcome President Trump's call on the parties to maintain that status quo. Access and religious rights of both peoples must be respected. We value Jordan's important role as custodian of the Holy Sites, and remain fully supportive of their efforts to maintain calm.

We are deeply concerned by continued developments on the ground that undermine the prospects for a two-state solution. As the Quartet has made clear, settlement construction and expansion, particularly in East Jerusalem is a significant barrier to achieving that solution. Terrorism and incitement to violence constitute another crucial barrier. We will continue to press the parties to refrain from actions which make a viable peace more difficult to achieve. A just and lasting resolution to end the occupation and deliver peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. Recent developments demonstrate the urgency of progress towards peace.

Today I reaffirm our strong support for renewed peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians as soon as possible. These should be supported by the international community and should result in a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

We welcome the UN Secretary-General's intent to do everything in his power to support the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to return to meaningful negotiations and to realize this vision of a lasting peace for both peoples.

We strongly encourage the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The UK will also do everything we can to support progress and achieve the vision of a lasting peace.

To have the best chances of success, the peace process must be conducted in an atmosphere free from violence. We call on all parties to maintain calm, and work together in a spirit of commitment to this common enterprise.

On Jerusalem specifically, peace efforts need to take account of the people, not just the land and the Holy Sites. There are more than 320,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The vast majority are permanent residents whose permits can be revoked at any point. If they move away from the city, Israel often does not allow them back. If they marry, they face obstacle in bringing their spouses. If they apply for Israeli citizenship, and most do not, a high proportion of applications are rejected. Their status must not be forgotten in any peace effort.

Mr President,

If all parties can truly take bold steps in the spirit of compromise, I have no doubt that an agreement can finally be reached. This is the only way to ensure the long-term security that Israelis deserve, and the statehood and end to the occupation that Palestinians are calling out for. This is what both peoples ought to have. It has been denied to them for too long.