

Press release: PM call with President Sisi of Egypt: 25 Nov 2017

The Prime Minister spoke to President Sisi of Egypt earlier this evening.

The Prime Minister offered her personal condolences and the condolences of the British people for the barbaric attack that took place at al-Rawdah mosque in north Sinai yesterday.

They spoke about the attack being a terrible example of the threat Egypt faces and the Prime Minister reassured President Sisi that the UK stands ready to help in any way possible.

They agreed that terrorism was an international problem and that it was important for countries to work closely together and share expertise to counter the growing threat of terrorism around the world. They welcomed continued bilateral cooperation in this area.

Speech: Culture Secretary Karen Bradley's Cultural Relations Award speech

Thank you for inviting me here this evening. It is a pleasure to join you, in this beautiful building, designed of course by the talented late Dame Zaha Hadid.

Where better to celebrate our two countries' shared cultural heritage than in a British-designed building here in the heart of Rome?

The UK has rich and longstanding cultural ties with Italy.

Our ancient Roman heritage is found across the whole country, from Hadrian's Wall to the baths of – well – Bath. Italy provides the setting – and in two cases the title – of some of Shakespeare's greatest plays. I'll let you remember which two yourselves. It inspired our great Romantic poets, Byron, Shelley and Keats – in fact the last two are buried here in Rome – and painters from Turner to Hockney.

And these strong ties continue today. One of the highlights of the modern London skyline – in every sense – is the Shard, by an Italian architect, Renzo Piano. The great Italian fashion houses shape what we British wear, filtering down from the catwalk to the high street.

Last year, more than three million Britons chose to holiday here in Italy, such is our love for this country and its people.

And I'm pleased to say it's a two way exchange.

Two million of you visited the UK last year, and beyond that, over 600,000 Italians currently live, study and do business there.

I know much of British culture – from Shakespeare to The Beatles and beyond – is as well loved here as it is at home. Most recently, British design has shaped the tech you all use every day – particularly the iconic work of Sir Jony Ive for Apple.

Yesterday, I visited the Venice Biennale and was pleased to see the work of so many talented British artists on display.

I particularly enjoyed the work of Phyllida Barlow, selected as this year's artist for the British Pavilion, and would like to congratulate the British Council on their excellent job in managing the British Pavilion in Venice, as they have since 1938.

I'd also like to thank Her Majesty's Ambassador, Jill Morris, for such a wonderful concert at the residence last night, and for all her hard work in maintaining and strengthening cultural relations between the UK and Italy.

We want those ties to deepen. Britain may be leaving the EU, but we are not leaving Europe, nor our friends in Europe.

I met this morning with my counterpart in Italy, Dario Franceschini, and we confirmed how committed both our governments are to continued collaboration on matters of culture and heritage.

My own department in the UK has recently changed its name to become the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to reflect the growing importance of digital technologies to culture and the creative industries.

We are living through a technological revolution as profound as any that has gone before. We all know that new technologies can be disruptive, and that we need to stay aware of the challenges ahead, but this digital revolution offers enormous opportunities too, not least for the cultural and heritage sectors. For promotion, for collaboration, and perhaps most significantly to engage with a size and breadth of audience unimaginable only a few years ago.

I am well aware how privileged I am to have seen what I have seen on this trip, and that not everyone gets the chance. But there is less and less reason for our shared cultural heritage to only be available to the few.

Last year in the UK, we published a new Culture White Paper, the first comprehensive review of the sector in fifty years. It set out this Government's vision for helping the arts and culture to thrive, and put particular emphasis on widening access for people from all walks of life.

Access to the arts can be so transformative. We all know it only takes one

song to inspire a singer, one painting to inspire an artist.

But often – though, of course, not always – the most thoughtful, well crafted art is shut away in institutions that people believe are not for them, or that are simply too far away to visit.

Digitising museum collections and publishing them online opens them up to bigger, more diverse audiences than ever before. It brings once unreachable – or plain intimidating – art right to the phones people carry in their pockets.

And those who've done it, who've put their collections online, tell me that far from replacing physical footfall it actually drives up visitor numbers.

It's great for curation too, particularly now academic collaboration is becoming the global norm. Put an image of an object online, and all the world's experts can comment and share their knowledge.

So I see this as very much the road ahead. One of the greatest advantages of the digital age is better connectivity. Let's use these new technologies to aid collaboration, and to open our shared cultural heritage to everyone in our societies, so a work sited in London can be easily enjoyed in Naples, and those in Rome can be accessed from Birmingham.

This award, which it is my honour to present, is a fitting celebration of the close and fruitful cultural collaboration between the UK and Italy. I look forward to helping to strengthen that bond and to building ever closer ties, and more effective collaboration between our countries.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary welcomes Syrian opposition agreement in Riyadh](#)

Speaking following the successful conclusion of the talks in Riyadh, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I welcome the news that the Syrian opposition in Riyadh have reached agreement on a new line-up and negotiating team ahead of negotiations in Geneva next week, moving forwards with their commitment to peace in Syria.

I congratulate Nasr al-Hariri on his election as Chief of the Negotiating Committee, and Saudi Arabia on hosting a highly successful event in Riyadh to bring the Syrian opposition together. The Syrian opposition have worked hard and shown considerable flexibility in its efforts to unify and broaden their

platform. I welcome the opposition's broad commitment to engage in political negotiations without preconditions. The regime and its backers now need to show the same commitment – they no longer have any excuse for their failure to engage.

There is now an opportunity for upcoming talks in Geneva to generate serious momentum and create the inclusive political transition necessary to end this conflict.

Speech: UK is committed to eliminating violence against women and girls

Thank you for agreeing to include us – the British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata – as a partner for this event today.

I congratulate Sister Monica Suchiang – Director, Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre and her team for organising this two-day conference. And for bringing together participants from across India and overseas.

But I'm not happy that we are discussing this subject in the year 2017. It is an abhorrent crime.

Victims of human trafficking are subject to terrible mistreatment and exploitation. Those who engage in it don't recognise the dignity or worth of human beings. People are not commodities.

We should bring to justice those who perpetrate these crimes and exploit other human beings, often at the most vulnerable points in their lives, for personal or commercial gain. We should not tolerate it.

It's not just about individual human beings. Human trafficking erodes the security and cohesion of communities. It undermines the prosperity of nations.

Forced labour and human trafficking is a global problem. Traffickers respect neither borders nor jurisdictions. As such it requires a global response. It is shocking to say it but there are approximately 40 million victims worldwide.

This is not a problem for others – we estimate there are between 10,000-13,000 victims in the UK.

The UK Government is committed to the eradication of all forms forced labour and human trafficking by 2030, as unanimously adopted in the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 (SDG 8.7).

The British Prime Minister has made tackling this issue a top foreign policy

priority. She is advocating better international coordination to deliver commitments made under the UN Sustainable Development Goal.

Governments and international agencies should prioritise interventions and resources to tackle the issues and support victims.

Here in India, my government has supported a number of projects around these issues. They include:

- paralegal training programme for 660 Dalit human rights defenders in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana and Maharashtra
- capacity building of law enforcement agencies when dealing with victims of Human Trafficking
- The British Department for International Development has undertaken various programmes to support the empowerment of people who are vulnerable to trafficking and forced labour.

The Poorest Areas Civil Society programme (PACS) works through local civil society organisations to support over 9 million of the poorest people to access their entitlements, thereby reducing their risk of forced labour.

The Orissa Girls Incentive Programme supported nearly 1.3m disadvantaged adolescents (including over 600,000 girls) to stay in school and reduce their risk of early marriage and trafficking.

DFID's regional programme with the ILO, Work in Freedom (WIF), supports safe migration and government capacity building at national and state level. Over 90,000 women have benefited from training to help them make informed migration decisions, and so reduce their risk of being trafficked from India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

In India, I know there is a draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, which would set up an organised crime investigative agency to rescue and rehabilitate victims of trafficking and investigate human trafficking cases. I hope that disagreements on the scope of the bill can be resolved soon.

Human trafficking often preys on the most vulnerable in society – that is women and girls.

Today also happens to be the International day on elimination of violence against women. Violence against women and girls is an issue that the UK is committed to eliminating.

It is also the first day of the UN-led 16 Days of Activism with the theme of 'Leave no-one behind'.

What to do?

We need to continue to collaborate and cooperate with one another and together and end these abhorrent crimes once and for all.

We need to promote cooperation amongst the full range of stakeholders: the private sector, civil society, and law enforcement and other frontline agencies.

We need to improve understanding of the issues amongst the general public and amongst communities vulnerable to exploitation.

We need to work to ensure better victim safeguarding coordination to connect victims to appropriate support and reintegration services to reduce the risk of re-exploitation.

[SDG 8.7 – Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms]

Press release: The UK steps up to lead global drive to tackle violence against girls and women

Britain is leading the global push to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms around the world, announced International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt on International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Ms Mordaunt set out a new package of UK support to protect women and girls in some of the world's poorest countries from practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage and domestic and sexual violence.

This extra UK aid is expected to help around 750,000 women and girls globally over the next three years, by increasing access to crucial services like legal assistance, healthcare, counselling, safe spaces for survivors and working with communities to prevent and break the cycles of violence.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

It is truly shocking that violence against women and girls remains one of the most systemic, widespread human rights violations worldwide. The high rates of this crime across the world are a global scandal.

I am proud to say that the UK is leading international efforts

across more than 30 countries to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms – from ending Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage, to preventing and addressing domestic and sexual violence.

Today we are stepping up our leadership – working closely with women leaders and grassroots charities – to help even more survivors in some of the world's poorest countries overcome the traumas of violence and tackle the root causes of this crime.

DFID will provide up to £12 million to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF) over three years. This vital UK aid will support local, national, regional and cross-border efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender based violence in conflict areas.

Aldijana Sisic, Chief of the UN Trust Fund said:

This year's commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women comes at a unique moment coinciding with the unprecedented mobilisation of millions of voices of survivors of violence behind the #MeToo movement.

Violence against women is not inevitable and it can be ended with a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach. This is why the UN Trust Fund welcomes the renewed contribution of the UK as well as its ongoing global leadership and support for preventing and ending violence against women and girls and its root causes.

The UK is already leading international efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms. UK aid is pioneering 15 innovative approaches to prevent gender based violence across 12 countries, reaching an estimated 100,000 people. For example, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, DFID is helping support schools to better protect children. In Bangladesh, the UK is working with businesses and grassroots organisations to end harassment of women workers in garment factories.

Notes to editors:

- DFID will provide up to £12 million over three years (December 2017 – December 2020) to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF).
- Last year, the Trust Fund supported projects in 77 countries and regions around the world, which directly benefited 250,000 women and girls.
- DFID is leading international efforts across 30 countries to tackle violence against women and girls in all its forms; from ending Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage to preventing domestic abuse.
- In Uganda, UK aid is preventing and responding to domestic violence by changing stigma, discrimination and attitudes about the acceptability of violence. The Raising Voices' SASA! Programme is galvanising local

community action, providing training and establishing community charters, by-laws and protocols in churches or mosques. This is leading a transformation in efforts to stamp out domestic violence, with women in the target communities now 52% less likely to experience physical violence from a partner.

- The independent aid watchdog (ICAI) carried out a comprehensive review of DFID's efforts last year towards eliminating violence committed against women and girls. It gave DFID's performance the highest 'green' rating, recognising the crucial contribution UK aid makes around the world.