

Press release: British High Commission Abuja celebrates Queen Elizabeth II at 91

The British High Commission Abuja on Wednesday, 26th April marked the 91st birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and celebrated the strong partnership between the UK and Nigeria. More than 500 guests attended the event including Nigeria's Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, former Nigerian Vice President, Atiku Abubakar and governors of Edo, Jigawa and Kaduna States. Other guests included federal legislators, current and former ministers, business leaders, the diplomatic corps, media and sports personalities and the local community.

In his welcome remarks British High Commissioner to Nigeria Paul Arkwright thanked guests and partners for attending this year's celebration. He said:

Today we celebrate Her Majesty's 91st Birthday. In a world which seems to be changing at a bewildering pace, I'd like to pay tribute to a remarkable woman whose devotion to duty, steadfast faith and sense of service to her people is, I would say, unparalleled – and a lesson to us all. I would also like to pay tribute to all of those, including all of you here, who are striving to make Nigeria a better place, where people are treated equally; where corruption can find no hiding place; where government, the private sector and civil society organisations work together to create jobs and promote growth. In a country where over 2 million young people enter the job market every year, the task is more important than ever – and more urgent. The UK and Her Majesty's Government are playing a key role in that effort. Nigeria is our biggest and most important post in Africa, with 7 offices in the country; with over 800 people working for the British Government.

The UK is a partner to Nigeria; partners in the UN – the recent United Nations Security Council visit to Nigeria was organised and led by the UK – partners in the Commonwealth, and partners in tackling global issues such as terrorism, climate change and illegal migration

Mr Arkwright commended the warm and welcoming nature of Nigerians. He said:

In the past 18 months there have been frustrating challenges around government, and the closure of Abuja airport. But I have also experienced the warmth and joy; the spontaneity and the kindness; the resilience and the optimism. And I share that optimism. Like it

or not, this country gets under your skin. And that's because of the people here; people who embrace strangers, people who are desperate for you to appreciate Egusi soup and Tuface; and people who present a face which can only make you smile.

Highlights of the celebration included a video display showing the work of British Council and the Premier League joining up to establish the Premier Skills programme – an innovative way to engage and develop the skills of young people in Nigeria, some thrilling ball juggling by a footballer, a slideshow of numerous UK sports stars and facilities and a beautiful rendition of the UK and Nigerian national anthem by the Abuja Holy Trinity Catholic Church choir.

The theme for this year's Queen's Birthday Party celebration in Abuja is Sport is GREAT, to reflect the UK's record as a hub for sports, and to highlight the value of sports to both the UK and Nigeria. Speaking on the theme the British High Commissioner said:

For us the Queen's birthday celebration is a moment to draw on some of the strongest things that bring our unity to the surface. The UK and Nigeria are both very passionate about sports. In both our countries sports serve not only a recreational, business or entertainment purpose; it serves as a real tool for unity and the promotion of our national identity. Sport has also strengthened the friendship between our nations. Team GB draws support from millions of Nigerians when British athletes of Nigerian origin are in the contest. The Premier League is as massive in Nigeria as it is in the UK. It's widely believed some Premier League clubs have more fans in Nigeria than they do in the UK.

The celebration also featured an exhibition of photographs by Fati Gangaran from the series 'Bits of Borno', highlighting the impact of the conflict in the north east of Nigeria on women and girls.

Wednesday's celebration was the second this year by the UK mission in Nigeria in honour of the Queen's 91st birthday. On April 20, the British Deputy High Commission in Lagos hosted a party widely attended by business leaders, government officials, music and movie stars as well as traditional leaders. The Lagos QBP celebrated British and Nigerian music where guests were treated to a special music performance by the Yinka Davies Band.

[Press release: Change of Governor of](#)

Anguilla

2015 – present Home Office, Director Counter Extremism 2014 – 2015 Home Office, Director, Strategy and Private Office 2012 – 2014 Home Office, Deputy Director, National Security, Office for Security and Counter Terrorism 2010 – 2012 Cabinet Office, Deputy Director, National Security Secretariat 2009 – 2010 Deputy Head of the Department for International Development (DFID) Afghanistan 2008 – 2009 Deputy Head, Provincial Helmand Reconstruction Team, Afghanistan 2006 – 2008 Deputy Head of Stabilisation Unit 2005 – 2006 Head of DFID, Iraq 2003 – 2005 DFID, Head, Agricultural Policy Department 2001 – 2003 DFID, Deputy Head, Environment Policy Department 1996 – 2001 DFID South Africa, Natural Resources Adviser 1995 – 1996 DFID Lesotho, Natural Resources Adviser 1989 – 1993 Vanuatu Ministry of Agriculture, Principal Economist 1987 – 1989 DFID, Economist 1985 – 1987 Save the Children Fund Sudan, Programme Officer 1984 – 1985 Ministry of Finance and Planning Uganda, Economist

Press release: Avian Flu measures to be relaxed in England from 15 May

Measures currently in place to reduce the risk of Avian Influenza in England will be lifted from 15 May 2017 following the latest risk assessment from Defra, the UK Chief Veterinary Officer has announced.

The [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone \(AIPZ\)](#) currently in place will be lifted in England on 15 May 2017. From this date, keepers will no longer be required by law to follow specific disease prevention measures to reduce the risk of infection from wild birds. They should continue to follow industry standard best practice on biosecurity, including minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors.

A [ban on poultry gatherings](#) has been in place since 20 December to reduce the risk of infected poultry passing the virus to other birds. This ban will be lifted in England on 15 May 2017, meaning bird gatherings can then resume, subject to some additional identity and health checks and biosecurity measures.

The Government continually reviews disease control measures in light of new scientific evidence and veterinary advice. The [latest assessment from Defra](#) is that the overall risk in England has fallen from 'medium' to 'low', comparable with risk levels in November 2016, and should continue to fall in warmer, drier spring weather conditions.

Based on this assessment, the decision has been taken to lift measures on 15 May, provided there are no further cases in poultry or findings of H5N8 in

wild birds.

The most recent case of H5N8 in poultry in England was confirmed on 24 February 2017 and the last finding in wild birds was on 10 March 2017.

Further information

- Confidence that the risk has fallen sufficiently to lift the remaining statutory disease control measures will have increased further by 15 May if there are no more cases in domestic poultry, including those now returned to free range and thus at highest risk, or findings in wild birds. In parallel the risk from residual infection in the environment will continue to reduce as higher temperatures and light levels and drier conditions accelerate the inactivation of the virus. [Read the latest risk assessment](#).
- Members of the public should report dead wild birds – such as swans, geese, ducks, gulls or birds of prey – to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77. Defra will then collect some of these birds and test them to help us understand how the disease is distributed geographically and in different types of bird.
- Public Health England advises the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for UK consumers.
- [Find out more about avian flu](#).

[Press release: Northern Ireland Act 2017 receives Royal Assent](#)

The Act sets a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland in 2017-18 and allows an Executive to be formed before the 29 June deadline.

The Northern Ireland (Ministerial Appointments and Regional Rates) Act 2017, introduced by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland last week, has today received Royal Assent.

The [Act](#) sets a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland in 2017-18, removes a legal barrier to the formation of an Executive and provides an extension to the period in which a new Executive could be formed.

Welcoming the news, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, said:

This legislation provides the flexibility for an incoming Government to act in the best interests of Northern Ireland and the space for an Executive to be formed before the 29 June deadline.

All the parties involved recognise it is vital that devolved government, and all of the institutions established under the Belfast Agreement and its successors, resumes in Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

News story: Criminal Finances Bill receives Royal Assent

The Criminal Finances Act 2017 will give law enforcement agencies and partners, further capabilities and powers to recover the proceeds of crime, tackle money laundering, tax evasion and corruption, and combat the financing of terrorism.

The act:

- creates unexplained wealth orders which can require those suspected of serious crime or corruption to explain the sources of their wealth
- creates new criminal offences for corporations who fail to prevent their staff from facilitating tax evasion
- enables the seizure and forfeiture of proceeds of crime and terrorist money stored in bank accounts and certain personal or moveable items
- provides legal protections for the sharing of information between regulated companies and extends the time period granted to law enforcement agencies to investigate suspicious transactions
- extends disclosure orders to cover money laundering and terrorist finance investigations
- extends the existing civil recovery regime in the Proceeds of Crime Act to allow for the recovery of the proceeds of gross human rights abuses or violations overseas