

## [Press release: Minister for the Americas statement on developments in Venezuela](#)

On 28 and 29 March 2017, the Venezuelan Supreme Court issued two rulings giving itself new powers to exercise the National Assembly's legislative powers and restrict the parliamentary immunity of MPs. This effectively limits the constitutional powers of the National Assembly, which has been democratically elected by the people of Venezuela.

The Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, said:

I am utterly shocked by the latest developments in Venezuela. The manner in which the Supreme Court of Venezuela has wrested power from the parliament represents a total breakdown in the separation of powers. Indeed, the Venezuelan Prosecutor General has herself said the decision of the Supreme Court is unconstitutional.

A strong, independent parliament is vital to any democracy and necessary to address the economic and social challenges Venezuela faces. The Venezuelan Government must therefore urgently act to restore Venezuela's democratic norms. Continued shortages of basic goods are having a detrimental impact on the lives of ordinary Venezuelan citizens. I implore President Maduro and his Government to take positive action to rectify this situation.

### **Further information**

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## Further information

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# [Approval of Somalia's new cabinet a 'green light for action,' says UN envoy](#)

31 March 2017 – Welcoming the Somali Federal Parliament's approval of a new cabinet, the United Nations envoy for the country expressed hope that the new Government will be able to address the challenges confronting the Horn of Africa nation.

"The Parliamentary approval was [a bright green light](#)," the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Michael Keating, said today in a news release.

He noted that with a healthy mix of experienced leaders and relative newcomers to the political stage, the new cabinet will make a vital contribution to the efforts of President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo and Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire.

In a recent statement, the Prime Minister had highlighted the need to eradicate poverty, build up Somalia's security services to combat the scourge of terrorism, and expedite the constitutional review process that will lay the foundations for the holding of one-person, one-vote elections in 2020.

For his part, Mr. Keating added that 27-Minister cabinet includes six women, the largest number of female ministers ever to be named to a Federal Government cabinet is a positive step towards empowering Somali women in the political affairs of the country.

“The United Nations and international partners look forward to working closely and fruitfully with the President, the Prime Minister and the new cabinet as they tackle the many political, economic, security and humanitarian tasks facing Somalia today,” he said.

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## [News story: South West Water fail to report dead fish after polluting Devon stream](#)

South West Water has been ordered to pay £89,000 in fines and costs for polluting a stream in Woodbury near Exeter. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

A court heard how large numbers of fish died following the incident at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) in September 2014 following an illegal discharge. CSOs are allowed to discharge during storm conditions to prevent the internal flooding of properties. They are not permitted to operate during periods of dry weather.

The spill was caused by a blockage that resulted in effluent being discharged into a nearby stream over one to two days. The pollution adversely affected water quality in the stream and killed more than 150 fish.

The water company must report any fish kills that occur following a pollution incident. It failed to report this important information to the Environment Agency.

Instead, a witness alerted the Environment Agency to the seriousness of the incident after seeing South West Water staff collect and remove dead fish from below the CSO discharge pipe over several days as part of its remediation work on the stream.

The discharge occurred during a period of dry weather. The dead fish included minnows, stone loach, bullhead and eels.

Pete Ball of the Environment Agency said:

It is important water companies regularly inspect and maintain their structures and assets such as CSOs to ensure they are operating in accordance with their permit and do not cause pollution.

While South West Water responded quickly to this incident, it failed to report the extent of the environmental impact of this

spill, especially the fish deaths.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court, South West Water Ltd was fined £70,000 and ordered to pay £19,023 costs after pleading guilty to breaching its environmental permit at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), Woodbury on or around 27 September 2014.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on plans for a new settlement in the West Bank**

The UK strongly condemns the Israeli government's decision to found a new settlement deep in the West Bank; the first such government decision for over 25 years. I am also disappointed that Israel plans to expropriate additional West Bank territory as 'state land', and press forward with plans for almost 2,000 housing units in spite of significant international concern.

These announcements are contrary to international law and seriously undermine the prospects of two states for two peoples. As a strong friend of Israel, and one prepared to stand up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, I urge Israel not to take steps such as these, which move us away from our shared goal of peace and security and make it harder to achieve a different relationship between Israel and the Arab world.