

# [Press release: Minister Ellwood statement on the advance of Iraqi forces in eastern Mosul](#)

From:

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Part of:

FCO Minister Tobias Ellwood welcomes the progress of Iraqi forces as another step towards defeating Daesh.

Minister Ellwood said:

We welcome progress made by Iraqi forces in eastern Mosul which marks another step towards defeating Daesh.

There is still a long way to go. As Iraqi forces prepare for western Mosul, I pay tribute to their bravery and urge them to continue to put the protection of Mosul's innocent civilians at the heart of everything they do.

The UK, as part of the Global Coalition, is committed to continuing to provide the government of Iraq with political, military, humanitarian and stabilisation support, as they work to deliver the political reform, national reconciliation and basic services all Iraqis want and deserve.

## **Further information**

Follow Foreign Office Minister Tobias Ellwood on Twitter: [@TobiasEllwoodMP](#).

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## Other public services should not be expected to cover for this Tory Government's cuts to the border agency – Diane Abbott

**Diane**

**Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary**, speaking after revelations that confidential NHS patient data is being gathered by the Home Office to trace suspected illegal immigrants, said:

"This is unacceptable. We have already seen this government using schools to gather immigration data on children. Now we find they are using the NHS in the same way.

"Other public services should not be expected to cover for this Tory Government's cuts to the border agency. People could be deterred from seeking medical care because they are worried their confidential information might be passed on. This could do irreparable damage to the people concerned and it may have public health implications. It should stop now."

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## News story: Avian flu confirmed at a farm in Preston, Lancashire

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The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed H5N8 avian flu at a premises in Preston, Lancashire.

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed H5N8 avian flu in a flock of farmed breeding pheasants at a premises in Preston, Lancashire. A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone have been put in place around the infected premises to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

The flock is estimated to contain approximately 10,000 birds. A number have died and the remaining live birds at the premises are being humanely culled. A full investigation is under way to determine the source of the infection. Public Health England advise that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency is clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

[Read the latest advice and information on avian flu in the UK](#), including actions to reduce the risk of the disease spreading, advice for anyone who keeps poultry or captive birds and details of previous cases. Journalists with queries should [contact Defra press office](#).

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## [This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts' – John McDonnell](#)

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, speaking after the vote tonight on the revised Charter for Budget Responsibility, said:

“This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts', as the Chancellor has tonight abolished the OBR's ability to determine when a negative shock occurs. This represents a lack of confidence by the Chancellor in his ability to reach his own targets, as well as a rowing back of the welcome principles the OBR was created for – impartiality and credibility of fiscal policy.

“Instead of less scrutiny by the OBR, Labour would like to see more, such as our call for the Chancellor to give power to the OBR to assess short-medium term policy decisions on health spending. Given the last six years of Tory underfunding in our NHS alongside the Government's denials of the resulting crisis, we need to restore not diminish the public's faith in the Government's spending plans.

“Under this new charter the OBR will assume the role of bystander rather than arbiter of whether or not the economy is facing a negative shock. This is a huge power

grab by the Chancellor, as it means he can decide when and what such a “shock” will be, and therefore he can suspend his rules when he likes, and make up his targets as he goes along.

“This Charter also continues with the practice of lumping infrastructure spending in with day-to-day spending, meaning that there will be insufficient scope for investment in our economy, which could hinder growth and therefore our ability to reduce the national debt.

“Despite all the rhetoric of “pressing the reset button”, the Autumn Statement has shown that there would be a continuation of austerity cuts to public services. There is still no more money for the NHS and social care crisis, or for ESA and Universal Credit recipients facing cuts.

“Labour’s Fiscal Credibility Rule would provide the adequate level of investment our economy needs, underpinned by independent oversight coming from both the MPC and a beefed up OBR, which would report to parliament and not the Treasury.”

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## [Kezia Dugdale responds to Supreme Court Brexit ruling](#)



Commenting on the Supreme Court’s Brexit ruling, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said:

*“The Supreme Court has made its view clear and it’s right that the UK Parliament should get a vote on triggering Article 50. It’s clear now that this is a decision for the UK Parliament.*

*“Labour in the UK Parliament will seek to amend the Article 50 Bill to prevent the Conservatives using Brexit to turn Britain into a bargain basement tax haven off the coast of Europe.*

*“We will continue to work with the Scottish Government to get the best deal for Scotland within the UK.*

*“But both the SNP and the Conservatives are casting about for an expedient political position rather than working in the national interest. Unity cannot be achieved by a politics that sees one half of the country constantly facing*

*off against the other.*

*“We are divided enough already. That’s why there will be no support from Scottish Labour for any SNP plan for a second independence referendum.*

*“Only Labour is standing up for what the majority of Scots want – a strong Scottish Parliament within the UK and close ties with Europe.”*