

Press release: UK responds to OPCW report on chemical attacks in Ltamenah, Syria

Today the OPCW confirmed that the town of Ltamenah, in northern Syria was attacked on 24 March 2017 with sarin and on 25 March 2017 with chlorine. This is confirmation of a spate of chemical attacks in the town in just one week, the OPCW having previously confirmed that a sarin attack took place on 30 March 2017.

Tragically there is still no international mechanism to attribute responsibility for these attacks on Ltamenah. Just a few days after the OPCW confirmation of sarin use on 30 March in Ltamenah, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was shut down, putting an end to their ability to investigate responsibility for such attacks.

Repeated chemical attacks within Syria in such a short space of time only serve to underline the grave threat to the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Close to 90 countries have recognised that threat, and supported a call for an urgent Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on 26-27 June. The international community should come together and strengthen the OPCW's capability to prevent the further use of chemical weapons, including by attributing responsibility for these heinous crimes.

Press release: PM's roundtable with the tech industry: 13 June 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister began by thanking the guests for their tremendous contribution to the tech community in the UK, creating jobs, supporting the economy, and driving growth.

She added that Venture Capital investment in the UK was \$7.8bn in 2017, and that the opportunities offered here are demonstrated by the fact that the UK contributes 13 of the 34 start-up companies valued at over \$1 billion in Europe.

She then invited views from around the table on how the UK can build on its position as a world-leading destination for tech investment.

Guests welcomed the announcement of the £2.5 billion Patient Capital Fund, as a means of ensuring that promising UK start-ups can access the capital they need to expand and become world-beating.

There was discussion of the strength and depth of the UK's tech industry, and the advantages associated provided by access to and partnerships with the UK's top universities.

Guests then discussed methods of addressing the skills gap and agreed on the importance of ensuring that nobody is left behind by advancements in technology and digital skills.

There was also agreement on the importance of mentoring, whereby entrepreneurs who have been through the whole cycle share their knowledge and expertise with fresh talent.

The Prime Minister concluded by reiterating the importance of the tech sector, saying that she wanted to see a continued pipeline of tech entrepreneurs coming forward and growing their businesses in the UK.

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Press release: Improved mental health support for children in care

Up to 10 pilots across the country will trial new high quality mental health assessments, that ensure young people are assessed at the right time, with a focus on their individual needs as they enter care.

Statistics show that 62 per cent of looked after children are in care due to abuse or neglect, which can have a lasting impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Currently half of all children in care meet the criteria for a possible mental health disorder, compared to one in ten children outside the care system. The pilots will identify a child's mental health and broader wellbeing needs, including whether a referral to a more specialist service is needed.

Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi, said:

Children in care are some of the most vulnerable in society and have often experienced traumatic events, so it is vital they receive care and support that is tailored to their needs.

We want to improve support for every child in care and these pilots will help to provide high-quality mental health assessments when children enter the care system and make sure the right support is in place.

The Department for Education has awarded £240,000 to a group of organisations, led by the Anna Freud Centre, to work with Action for Children, Child Outcomes Research Consortium, Research in Practice and NSPCC, to deliver up to 10 local pilots over two years. The pilot areas will also benefit from a share of £650,000 to deliver the scheme.

The programme will look at which professionals should be involved in the assessment and develop best practice that ensures the child's unique needs are at the centre of the process.

A consortium led by SQW, an economic development and social research organisation has also been awarded £150,000 to carry out an independent evaluation to look at the effectiveness and impact of the pilots.

Sheila Redfern, Head of Specialist Trauma and Maltreatment Service at the Anna Freud Centre, said:

We are delighted to have been successful with our bid for these pilots. Looked after children are a key priority for the Specialist

Trauma and Maltreatment team here at AFNCCF and we will be working with Action for Children, Research in Practice, CORC and NSPCC to bring together a wealth of expertise and experience in this area.

Looked after children are highly vulnerable to emotional and relationship difficulties, putting them at risk of long-term mental health issues and placement breakdown with their carers, so it is vital they get the right help at the right time. The assessment process at an individual level is critical to achieving this. We are very excited to have this opportunity to support improvements through the pilots.

This announcement follows the publication of the Government's Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper in December 2017. Backed by £300 million in funding, this aims to improve access to mental health services for children and young people through designated mental health leads in schools and by reducing waiting times for mental health services.

Further information:

- [Statistics](#) on looked after children, including mental health.
- The Government has pledged a total of £1.7 billion to help promote, protect and improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This includes an extra £300m to provide more support for school children.

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on military action in Hodeidah

Following the start of military action by Coalition-backed forces to take Hodeidah port back from Houthi militia, I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of civilians.

We are in regular contact with the Coalition about the need to ensure that any military operations in and around Hodeidah are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians, and do not disrupt commercial and humanitarian flows through the port. The Coalition have assured us that they are incorporating humanitarian concerns into their operational plans. It is vital to maintain the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into Yemen. For their part the Houthis must

not compromise port facilities or hinder the humanitarian response.

The ongoing Coalition intervention in Yemen came at the request of the legitimate Government of Yemen after Houthi rebels took the Yemeni capital by force in 2014. Houthi forces have consistently failed to adhere to UN Security Council Resolutions, including by launching missile attacks against Saudi Arabia and shipping in the Red Sea. They have obstructed access for humanitarian supplies leading to significant suffering among civilians.

It remains imperative to resume work towards a comprehensive political settlement. Lasting peace and stability in Yemen will require dialogue and negotiation. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is due to update the Security Council soon on his proposals for a negotiated settlement. We call upon all parties to throw their weight behind his efforts, for the sake of the Yemeni people and the security of Yemen's neighbours.

The UK is working with the UN, NGOs and the Coalition to respond to the humanitarian situation. The UK has committed £170 million to the UN's Yemen Humanitarian Appeal for the financial year 2018/2019, making the UK the 4th largest donor.