

Government response: Ministerial statement on the peace process in South Sudan

The UK welcomes the resumption of peace talks in South Sudan next week and the consultations that are now underway. This is a critical moment for the peace process and we remain strongly in support of regional efforts to bring about a lasting peace.

It is disappointing that we once again find ourselves in a position where the cessation of hostilities agreement reached at the last set of talks has not held, and the talks have so far failed to generate serious commitment to compromise. Meanwhile, the people of South Sudan remain in a terrible state of conflict and humanitarian crisis. Fighting, troop movements and the rhetoric of war continues, pushing the country deeper into crisis. In recent weeks we have seen violent clashes surge in Unity, Jonglei and the Central Equatorias. This is causing immense suffering and preventing lifesaving assistance from reaching those most in need.

As no party has yet been held to account for violating the cessation of hostilities agreement, the perpetrators continue to act with impunity. This is undermining prospects for a lasting peace to be agreed at the upcoming talks. Those who have violated the cessation of hostilities agreement must face consequences for their actions. We urge the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to take immediate action in this regard, to leave the parties in no doubt of the region's commitment to peace.

Only a negotiated agreement can bring peace in South Sudan and create the conditions for elections. We believe that the High-level Revitalisation Forum remains the only platform with the scope and inclusion to deliver this.

News story: Jeremy Hunt orders urgent action on patient safety at independent hospitals

Independent hospitals must 'get their house in order and improve safety', the Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has said.

In a letter to the chief executives of independent healthcare providers, Jeremy Hunt ordered urgent action to be taken to improve patient safety.

As part of its recent report on the sector, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) – the safety regulator – raised patient safety as its biggest concern. CQC rated a third of independent hospitals as ‘requires improvement’ following examples of poor practice and unsafe care.

The Health and Social Care Secretary said:

If the sector is to partner with the NHS and benefit from our world-leading medical training, we need urgent assurances that the independent sector will get its house in order on safety, as well as a commitment to take rapid action to match the NHS’s world-recognised progress on transparency.

Mr Hunt has given the sector 2 weeks to respond and set out what action they will take.

[Read the full text of the letter.](#)

[News story: Custody-community transitions: public evidence gathering day](#)

The public evidence gathering day will take place on Friday 8 June in Central London.

The day will commence at 10am and the working group will hear presentations from a number of invited stakeholders. The public session is expected to finish at 3pm.

This evidence gathering day will be open to members of the public who wish to observe the day’s proceedings. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions of the working group.

If you would like to attend please email the ACMD secretariat to reserve a place: ACMD@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Read the [request for evidence for this working group](#).

News story: Updated Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) across England.

The changes coming into effect will include:

- new guidance on how fire and rescue authorities should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- changes in guidance to reflect recent legislative changes to allow mayors and police and crime commissioners to exercise the functions of an FRA
- provisions supporting the development and delivery of professional standards for FRAs, addressing the current lack of co-ordination of standards across England's fire services
- a workforce section which outlines how FRAs should support and develop their workforce
- changes to encourage commercial transformation by FRAs, leading to further collaboration, innovative thinking and sharing of best practice

The revised Fire and Rescue National Framework follows a [consultation on proposed changes](#) earlier this year, required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. 71 responses were received overall, with contributions from: the NFCC; the majority of FRAs; the Local Government Association and the Fire Brigades Union among others.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

The national framework provides the basis for how fire and rescue services in England should operate. The revised version we have published today should support them becoming more accountable, effective and professional than ever before and embed the government's reform programme.

The order giving effect to the revised framework has been laid before Parliament today (8 May) with the framework coming into force on 1 June 2018.

The Hackitt Review and Grenfell Inquiry may make recommendations which need to be reflected in further revisions to the national framework. We will update as required to ensure any recommendations are captured.

[News story: Immersive audience experiences: apply for funding](#)

Innovate UK has up to £17 million to invest in projects to test and generate new ideas for immersive experiences for audiences and transform the creative industries.

There are 2 parts to this competition. Up to £16 million is available for 4 demonstrator projects for immersive experiences with audiences of more than 100,000 people.

A further £1 million is available for early-stage projects that seek to understand customer needs for immersive experiences and the tools needed to deliver them.

Designing for the future audience

The funding is part of the [audience of the future programme](#) within the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

Immersive experiences such as virtual, augmented and mixed reality have the potential to revolutionise the way we interact with the world. Industries that could benefit include advertising and marketing, architecture, fashion, film and television, gaming, publishing, museums, and music and performing arts.

The UK has world-class creative industries and expertise to apply new immersive experiences and make the most of this market opportunity.

This competition is part of a wider £33 million investment that includes demonstration projects, research and development and an industry centre of excellence.

Demonstrator projects

Demonstration projects must explore new ways of communication with mass audiences using new immersive technologies and experiences that are a significant advance on the state of the art in the chosen area. They should:

- reach a public audience of more than 100,000
- show a high level of innovation and scale that could transform the sector

- generate audience and consumer information that could be used to test the viability of new business models
- show that they could be replicated across the creative industries

Areas with strong potential could include moving images, access to live sporting events, visitor experiences in museums and galleries, and music and theatre performance. You must be able to access or use globally-recognised intellectual property (IP).

Competition information

- the competition opens on 21 May 2018, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 1 August 2018
- projects must be led by a business working with other businesses or researchers and include at least one SME
- we expect total project costs to be between £5 million and £10 million and for projects to last up to 2 years
- you must start your project by 1 November 2018 and end by 31 December 2020
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a briefing event will take place on 21 May 2018

Design foundations

Early-stage projects should use human-centred design and look at audience behaviour to develop ideas for new products and services. Particular areas could include:

- advancing the state-of-the-art with immersive experiences that are desirable and fit-for-purpose
- producing high-quality immersive content cheaper, faster and in a way that is more accessible
- improving physical devices such as eyewear and controllers, or haptic feedback
- new digital platforms and services to deliver immersive content

Successful projects will have an opportunity to apply for funding in 2019 to further develop their ideas.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 21 May 2018, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 4 July 2018
- projects must be led by a business working alone or in collaboration with other businesses, researchers or cultural institutions and must include at least one SME
- we expect total project costs to be between £20,000 and £60,000 and to last between 2 and 6 months
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their costs
- a briefing event will take place on 21 May 2018