

Press release: PM to pay a nation's respects at Armistice Commemorations in Belgium and France

Prime Minister Theresa May will visit Belgium and France today (Friday 9 Nov) to pay a nation's respects and remember those who died in the First World War.

She will attend ceremonies alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel and lay wreaths to the fallen at two of Europe's most prominent war memorials.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

A century ago British forces fought side by side with our allies in Europe on the Western Front. Today in France and Belgium we reflect on our shared history, but also look ahead to our shared future, built on peace, prosperity and friendship.

At St Symphorien I will have the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of a nation at the graves of both John Parr and George Ellison, the first and last UK soldiers to die during the War. That their graves lie opposite each other is a fitting and poignant symbol that brings home the eternal bond between them, and every member of the Armed Forces who gave their lives to protect what we hold so dear.

We remember the heroes who lost their lives in the horror of the trenches. As the sun sets on one hundred years of remembrance, we will never forget their sacrifice.

The Prime Minister will start the day with a visit to St Symphorien Military Cemetery in Mons. There she will lay a wreath at the graves of John Parr, the first UK soldier to be killed in 1914, and the last, George Ellison, who was killed on the Western Front at 9.30am before the Armistice became effective at 11am.

She will be joined by Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel. The pair will then attend a reception in Mons where they will meet British and Belgian serving armed forces.

The PM will then travel to France where she will meet President Macron in Albert, an historic town at the heart of the Somme region, which suffered significant bombardment during the First World War.

The leaders will hold a private meeting and a working lunch before departing for a wreath laying ceremony at the Thiépval Memorial. The memorial is the

site of a major annual commemorative event for the Missing of the Somme and bears the names of more than 72,000 members of the Armed Forces who died in the battle.

A special wreath will be made for the occasion combining poppies and le bleu de France, the two national emblems of remembrance for Britain and France.

On Saturday, the Prime Minister will attend the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

On Remembrance Sunday, she will lay a wreath at the Cenotaph and attend the national service to mark the Centenary of the Armistice at Westminster Abbey.

[Press release: PM to pay a nation's respects at Armistice Commemorations in Belgium and France](#)

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[Speech: A Safe and Stable Libya](#)

Thank you Mr President, and let me begin by thanking SRSG Salamé for his briefing and by reiterating the UK's strong support for him and the work of all his team on the ground.

Mr President it's clear that a military solution to Libya's problems will not bring the long-term peace and stability that the country needs, and all Libyans must come together in a spirit of compromise and engage in the UN-led political process. The United Kingdom fully supports the additional clarity that SRSG Salamé has provided on next steps in implementing his Action Plan of September 2017. A Libyan-led, Libyan-owned national conference will provide an opportunity to forge greater consensus among Libyan stakeholders on the way forward on some of the key questions relating to Libya's political transition.

Let me highlight three important building blocks to help make the Libyan National Conference a success:

First, as SRSB Salamé has said, participants in the National Conference should be drawn from as broad a political, regional, tribal and ethnic spectrum as possible. It will also be vital for women to be represented.

Second, Libya's political institutions will need to work with the National Conference and take account of its outcomes. This will signal that they have the best interests of the Libyan people at heart and that they are committed to finding a durable political solution to Libya's crisis. The Libyan people will not understand if those institutions continue to fail to do what has been asked of them. And it's vital that Libya's institutions deliver the essential public services across the country for the good of the Libyan people.

Third, it is essential that the international community and this Security Council now supports SRSB Salamé and the UN Action Plan. The Italian-hosted conference in Palermo will be an important opportunity to demonstrate wider international and Libyan support for the UN-led effort, including the National Conference. And it will also offer the chance to secure important commitments from the Libyans in terms of economic reform and the establishment of more sustainable and credible security arrangements. We also look forward to seeing the Libyan delegations at Palermo that are inclusive and representative of the Libyan people. To this end, we congratulate the Presidency Council on establishing Women's Empowerment Units in the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord Ministries. These units should now be given the authority and resources that they need to be effective.

Mr President, SRSB Salamé touched on the challenging security situation in Libya. We welcome the progress on security arrangements in Tripoli since the ceasefire in September, and we thank SRSB Salamé for his efforts in securing this ceasefire. These arrangements should not just be limited to the capital; a sustainable security architecture across the country is necessary for a secure and stable Libya. The United Kingdom continues to recognize the importance of tackling terrorist threats in Libya. We again express our deep concern at the humanitarian situation, including in Derna, and recall the urgent need for humanitarian access to the civilian population. Those who violate international humanitarian law will be held to account.

On the economy, the recently introduced transaction fee on foreign exchange in Libya must now pave the way for wider work on economic reform. We must all support the work of UNSMIL and the International Financial Institutions to put in place further reforms. We also welcome the progress made towards an audit of the central bank of Libya. This should take place in parallel with work to reunify the Central Bank of Libya and the Central Bank of Libya in the east.

Finally, we welcome the Sanction Committee's recent visit to Tripoli which enabled the Committee to understand the dynamics in Libya better. We look forward to seeing how this will translate into even more targeted and effective sanctions against the spoilers. We call on the Libyan authorities to do more to ensure sanctions are implemented effectively.

Finally Mr President, SRSB Salamé told us that Libya was fast becoming the tragedy of lost opportunity. The United Kingdom calls on all parties in Libya and members of this Council to get behind the UN's efforts to ensure that we seize this opportunity for an inclusive political solution. Thank you.

[News story: Terrorism response tested in national multi-agency exercise](#)

The emergency services, other public services and the government this week undertook a three-day exercise to rehearse their response to a major terrorist attack.

The simulated incident, which involved live activity in Westcott, Buckinghamshire, on Tuesday tested the multi-agency approach to responding to an attack involving hazardous materials. It was designed to ensure the right plans are in place to respond quickly and effectively.

The UK has the capability to respond to a range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. This week's exercise simulated a chemical incident.

Security Minister Ben Wallace, who chaired a meeting of the government's emergency committee COBR as part of the exercise, said:

Exercises like these take place throughout the year to ensure that the emergency services and government are prepared to respond should an attack take place. They form one part of our comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy.

We don't conduct these exercises to cause alarm. They should be a source of reassurance that we have plans in place to deal with the diverse range of threats we face.

It is our ambition to stop attacks long before they happen and our police and security service have disrupted 13 Islamist and 4 extreme right wing plots since the beginning of 2017, however, anyone that has concerns or suspicions should report them to the police.

The exercise which involved more than 40 different agencies and more than 500 people is the largest of its kind to take place this year but is one of dozens of exercises organised annually.

Observers from police forces around the UK and representatives from governments around the world watched the exercise which showcased the UK's

well-developed response to a terrorist incident.

Thames Valley Police Deputy Chief Constable John Campbell, who is the exercise director and also the national CBRN lead for policing, said:

Sadly, our country is no stranger to terrorism and it is vital that we are prepared to respond if the worst happens. Exercising is a key part of our preparedness for any major incident and we test in extreme circumstances to ensure that our combined capabilities match whatever situation we could face.

Day to day our efforts are focused on prevention and disruption of these threats but on the rare occasion that an attack happens we need to be able to minimise the impact, protect the public from further harm and provide the necessary help and support to those affected.

Tuesday's live activity test was followed by 2 days of workshops to assess the actions necessary in the days, weeks and months following an attack to ensure that those affected continue to receive the support they need.

News about terrorism or counter-terrorism exercises can be difficult for those that have been affected in the past. There is [more information on the advice and support available on GOV.UK.](#)

[News story: Foreign Office Minister to reaffirm the UK's commitment to Hong Kong](#)

During his visit, Minister Mark Field will meet Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, to discuss trade and investment, regional security and the UK-Hong Kong relationship. He will also meet with Mr Justice Ribeiro to discuss the strength of Hong Kong's rule of law.

Mr Field will also discuss the political situation in Hong Kong with legislators and political figures from across the political spectrum and stress the UK's continued commitment to the Joint Declaration, and to the faithful implementation of the 'One Country, Two Systems' agreement, which guarantees rights and freedoms to Hong Kong's people.

While in Hong Kong, Minister Field will also meet members of the British business community and take part in Sunday's wreath laying at the Cenotaph.

Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, the Rt. Hon Mark Field MP, said:

“Hong Kong matters greatly to the UK. Our long-standing commitment to Hong Kong, as co-signatory of the Joint Declaration, and to the protection and promotion of its rights and freedoms, is as strong as ever. I am, therefore, delighted to be visiting Hong Kong for a second time in my role as Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, underlining the importance of our relationship.

“The UK remains committed to strengthening its deep and wide-ranging relationship with Hong Kong across a number of areas, including trade and investment, education, culture, innovation and technology. I look forward to discussing these issues and more during my visit.”

The visit will be the second stop of his six-day tour of South East and East Asia, which also includes [Singapore](#) and Vietnam.

Further information