

## **Press release: PM call with Prime Minister Mehdi of Iraq: 26 October 2018**

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held a telephone call with the new Prime Minister of Iraq, Adil Abdul Mehdi, this afternoon to congratulate him on taking office.

They agreed to continue to work together as Prime Minister Mehdi aimed to build a successful future for the people of Iraq.

They agreed the UK and Iraq were significant security partners, particularly in the ongoing fight against Daesh.

They noted that Iraq had an important role to play in the region.

They looked forward to meeting in the future.

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## **Speech: Facing a Grave Challenge to International Peace and Security**

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Thank you very much Mr President. Thank you to Staffan [de Mistura] and his team for briefing us today.

Mr President, I find it incredible that we should have to rehearse for the benefit of the Syrian authorities why the UN needs to be involved in Syria.

It isn't a matter of national sovereignty that there are over a million refugees.

It isn't a matter of national sovereignty that there are 400,000 dead in Syria.

This is a threat to international peace and security.

It is right that the UN is involved. The UN has been involved on the humanitarian side. It's involved on the refugee side. It's involved in the health side. It is absolutely front and centre right that it should be involved in the political process.

So I will go further than you, Staffan; you talked about a serious challenge. I think we actually face a grave challenge. We face a grave challenge to the way members of the United Nations cooperate with the United Nations. And as my American and French colleagues have said, we face a grave challenge in terms of the situation on the ground.

And there's now additionally enormous doubt over what Sochi was and what it now represents. Either Russia has given the UN and this Council assurances it has proved too weak to deliver on, or it was all a cynical smokescreen designed to divert attention and energy while Russia, Syria and Iran prosecuted the military campaign. And that military campaign has been brought to a halt only by the international outrage at the threat to three million civilians in Idlib, and then the Turks bravely stepped in and brokered an agreement designed to protect those civilians.

So I think we need five things in support of what my French and American colleagues have said. We need clarity on the status of the Sochi agreement and these new proposals from the Syrian authorities. What do they mean? What does Russia, what do Iran think about them? We need clarity on what steps need to be taken by all the players before 19 November when Staffan you've offered to come back and brief the Council, and before the end of November when you step down. We need clarity that Russia – as a P5 member, an Astana guarantor, and the Sochi convener – along with Syria and Iran – will work constructively and tirelessly with the UN.

All UN members have a responsibility to support you, Staffan, as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. We need to hear today that that promise of constructive, tireless, dedicated engagement to bring this conflict to an end is there. We need the agreement on Idlib to hold. We need that opportunity that others have mentioned to be seized. We need the Constitutional Committee to be convened and I share the views of my American and French colleagues on that. We need humanitarian access to be improved, and we need 2254 to be upheld. The Council needs to come together to support the political process. Without the political process, this dreadful conflict will never truly end, whatever happens militarily on the ground.

We look forward to further reports after the international meetings in the coming days, but I do believe Mr President that we must hear today from all Council members that they will support the UN as it tries its very best to

move the political process forward.

Thank you.

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## **Press release: Greater protection for renters thanks to plans to tighten tenant safety**

- Minister announces plans to tighten health and safety standards for rental accommodation – ensuring all tenants have a safe place to call home.
- Move to clampdown on small minority of rogue landlords who turn a blind-eye to dangerous conditions – including the possibility of minimum health and safety standards.
- Action to ensure carbon monoxide rules are fit for purpose – protecting people from the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Renters are to receive greater protection thanks to plans announced by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP which will overhaul health and safety standards for rental accommodation – helping to keep safe the minority of private tenants who currently live in unsatisfactory conditions.

While the vast majority of landlords are responsible owners who take great pride in the properties they lease to their tenants, some private renters live in sub-standard homes with problems such as inadequate heating and damp.

Under current rules, councils are required to ensure rental properties in their area meet important safety standards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and are able to force criminal landlords to take action where tenants are languishing in unsafe accommodation.

Yet the system hasn't been updated in over 12 years, and a new review of the system will consider whether it should be updated and if so, to what extent. The review will also look at whether to introduce minimum standards for common health and safety problems in rental accommodation in order to keep renters safe.

Today's measures build on government action to drive up standards in the rental sector – making sure tenants are living in safe and secure properties;

cracking down on the small minority of landlords that are renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation; and ensuring the housing market works for everyone.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has a right to feel safe and secure in their own home.

These reviews will allow us to revisit the current systems for health and safety ratings and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure that both are fit for purpose and meeting the needs of tenants.

By looking again at these rules, we can make sure that they are working as they should to keep people safe and give them peace of mind in their homes.

Ministers have also outlined further detail of the [review into carbon monoxide alarm requirements in the home](#), to help ensure people remain safe from this silent killer.

There are currently around 8 million carbon monoxide alarms in homes across England, with current rules stating that alarms must be fitted in privately rented homes with solid fuel appliances and when solid fuel stoves and boilers are installed.

The review will judge whether legislation goes far enough in keeping people safe from the risks of carbon monoxide in their homes, and whether there should be a blanket requirement to install alarms for other methods of heating, including gas and oil, and to social housing.

Ministers will also consider new research including technological improvements and the falling costs of carbon monoxide alarms and whether this supports a case to extend requirements.

The news demonstrates ongoing government work to support people to feel safe and secure in their home.

Ministers have also introduced tough new powers for councils to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties, including fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

The [Tenant Fees Bill](#), currently making its way through Parliament, will also bring an end to unnecessary, costly fees imposed by landlords or property agents – stopping tenants being charged hundreds of pounds for minor fixes to their homes and putting cash back in their pockets.

Together, the measures will make sure the housing market works for everyone by making renting fair and more transparent for all.

The [Housing health and safety rating system](#) is used by local authorities to assess health and safety in residential properties – this includes both

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## **Further information**

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## **[Press release: Further environmental checks for Grenfell site](#)**

- Additional environmental checks to reassure survivors and local residents following Grenfell Tower fire
- Past land-use assessment underway and soil testing programme proposed
- Air quality testing to date indicates that the risk to public health is very low
- Up to £50 million already committed by the NHS to fund long-term health services for survivors and local residents

Additional environmental checks are to be carried out in and around the Grenfell Tower site to provide extra reassurance to survivors and local residents.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, NHS England, Public Health England and the Environment Agency have joined forces to ensure the bereaved, survivors and wider North Kensington community receive health assurances and support.

In addition to up to £50 million committed by NHS England to carry out a 5-year health monitoring programme, as well as ongoing air quality monitoring at the site, the plans involve:

- further environmental sampling of the site, including comprehensive soil analysis to check for any signs of contamination
- water analysis will take place if required
- wider health monitoring and treatment options to reassure those affected

Secretary of State for Communities, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

We take the wellbeing of Grenfell Tower survivors and local residents extremely seriously and it's essential they have peace of mind regarding their health.

The government is asking leading experts from the Environment Agency to make sure soil surveying around the tower is comprehensive and that analysis will be provided to the public.

We recognise the concerns the community have raised with us, and we are clear that we will do whatever it takes to give them the reassurance they need and deserve.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Dr Patrick Vallance added:

I fully support the decision of the Secretary of State to commission further environmental analysis and stand ready to offer scientific advice on the process.

Public Health England's Regional Director for London, Dr Yvonne Doyle, said:

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have been working very closely with local health partners and the Grenfell community to ensure that they have access to best available public health evidence and advice.

It is not unusual to find areas of contamination in cities which is often associated with historic land use or heavy traffic. It is generally considered to be very low risk to health because people would need to be exposed to the soil over long periods of time.



We will continue to speak to local people and community groups to ensure they have all of the information they need about health.

The immediate risk to health in the aftermath of the fire was from potentially contaminated air and independent air quality monitoring was commissioned by Public Health England, which has shown the risk to public health to be consistently low.

Soil testing will determine whether there are contaminants identified beyond those which we would expect to be present in cities like London.

Many parts of the land that will be investigated are known to be former industrial sites where contamination can already exist, but the examinations that will be carried out will determine if remediation is required.

Contaminated land is generally considered to be very low risk to health, as any impact would be the result of exposure over a long period.

## **Further information**

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, health services have specifically targeted survivors, bereaved, neighbouring residents and the wider North Kensington community. This has included extended appointments and health checks, including physical and mental health, and enhanced case management. NHS England has also delivered ongoing respiratory fast track provision and community engagement on health and wellbeing to identify any unmet needs.

Advice to the public remains unchanged. Local residents who are concerned about their health should contact their GP. Further information is available on the [North Kensington Health Response website](#).

The air quality around the Grenfell Tower will continue to be monitored daily and the findings published weekly by Public Health England. See [results and general health advice](#).

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