

News story: UK bolsters support to NATO mission in Afghanistan

100 Welsh Guards arrived in Afghanistan last week. They travelled with Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson who was in the country for a three-day visit.

The 100 troops are the first group of the additional 440 troops the Prime Minister committed to NATO's capacity building mission in Afghanistan at the NATO Summit in July. The UK plays a leading role in NATO, and this troop uplift will make the UK the third largest contributor to Afghanistan with around 1,100 personnel.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We remain absolutely committed to building an Afghanistan that is a strong security partner for decades to come. A secure and stable Afghanistan helps keep the streets of the UK safe.

The uplift of UK personnel not only underlines our commitment to Afghanistan and regional security, but also to the Alliance that has been the cornerstone of our defence for 70 years. Thousands of our personnel stand shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO allies around the world. Those here in Afghanistan are just one example of Global Britain in action.

The additional troops will bolster the UK's existing contribution to the UK-led Kabul Security Force (KSF), which plays a critical role in enabling NATO advisors in the city to undertake engagement with the Afghan Government. They will also continue to mentor the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces who are responsible for security in the capital.

The Defence Secretary also travelled to Mazar-e-Sharif where, alongside the German Armed Forces, UK personnel are supporting the expansion of the Afghan Special Police. The force has recently illustrated its increased capability in responding to the InterContinental Hotel and Kabul Military Academy attacks. He met around 40 UK advisors who have been based in the north of the country since January 2018.

He also met President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, underlining the UK commitment to a secure and stable Afghanistan.

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Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Zimbabwe in January 2019

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Melanie Robinson

Married to: Lucas Robinson

Children: Two

2015 to present World Bank Group Washington, Executive Director for the UK
2012 to 2015 Department for International Development (DFID), Addis Ababa, Head of Office
2010 to 2012 DFID, Principal Private Secretary to Secretary of State
2009 to 2010 Department for Energy and Climate Change, Head of International Climate Policy
2007 to 2009 DFID, Team Leader, Climate Change Adaptation
2005 to 2007 DFID, Private Secretary to Secretary of State
2004 to 2005 DFID, Policy Analyst, lead on UK G8 and EU Presidencies
2002 to 2004 DFID, Senior Programme Officer, Mozambique
2001 to 2002 DFID, Policy Analyst, Performance and Effectiveness Department
2000 to 2001 DFID, EU Lead, Central and South Eastern Europe Department

Further information

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Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Zimbabwe in January 2019



Ms Melanie Robinson has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe in succession to Ms Catriona Laing CB who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Ms Robinson will take up her appointment in January 2019.

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2002 to 2004 DFID, Senior Programme Officer, Mozambique
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Further information

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Press release: UK Hydrographic Office appoints new Director of Customer Division

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) is pleased to announce the appointment of Cathrine Armour as the new Director of its Customer Division.

Cathrine brings experience in leading data, science and technology-centric organisations, and will be instrumental in developing the UKHO as a leading marine geospatial information agency and hydrographic office.

Cathrine joins the UKHO from Catapult's South West Centre of Excellence in Satellite Applications, a partnership led by the University of Exeter to stimulate the data economy; helping UK businesses develop new products and solutions using satellite technology. Cathrine also led the development of the Ordnance Survey's Geovation Hub and accelerator program. An award-winning initiative, Geovation has helped many UK start-ups find innovative uses for geospatial data.

Commenting on the timing of her appointment, Cathrine explained: "More people are starting to understand the importance of our marine environment and the need to use ocean resources in a sustainable way. Marine geospatial data is essential to help unlock the value of our oceans whilst ensuring their protection for years to come.

"In its position as a leading marine geospatial agency, the UKHO has a key role to play in how this data is applied and used across our oceans. This means thinking differently about data we hold, and ensuring that, as an organisation, we can package our data in ways that meet the needs of a wide range of users."

"The potential for users, from commercial and government to philanthropic and aid, to use this data is limitless."

Cathrine is also a leading commentator on the economic power of innovation, and is a guest lecturer at the University of Exeter's Business School. In 2016, her work to facilitate international collaboration and cooperation in environmental data for sustainable development was recognised as a finalist for the WISE International Open Source Award sponsored by Bloomberg.

Cathrine explained how her belief in the power of innovation would benefit her in her new role at the UKHO: "Innovation is a powerful and compelling force for change. Be it economic, societal or environmental, data for decision-making is critical to shaping our shared future. I am looking forward to leading the UKHO's development in this area as we further strengthen our position as the authoritative marine geospatial agency and hydrographic office."