

# Foreign Secretary visits the Gulf to boost economic and security ties, October 2021

She touches down in Saudi Arabia this morning, where she will meet Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud to discuss closer cooperation on regional security, development, human rights and counter-terrorism, and how the two nations can build economic links as part of the Kingdom's plan to diversify its economy.

Truss then flies to Qatar to meet His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Top of the agenda will be cooperation on Afghanistan and security in the wider region. She will visit the Park View Compound, a facility housing people who have left Afghanistan in recent weeks.

Qatar has played a critical role in supporting safe passage for those seeking to leave Afghanistan, including over 100 British nationals since the UK's evacuation operation ended in late August.

The latest flight arrived in Doha on Monday carrying 17 British nationals.

Truss will also launch a Strategic Dialogue with Qatar as part of the visit, which will form the basis for deeper cooperation on security, development, trade and investment between the two countries.

The Foreign Secretary sees both Saudi Arabia and Qatar as important partners in deepening the UK's economic, technology and security and defence ties with friends and allies around the world.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

Closer security and economic ties with Gulf allies will help us deliver jobs and opportunities for people back in the UK and ensure as friends and partners that we are operating from a position of strength in the world.

I want a closer trading and investment relationship with the Gulf and for us to collaborate more closely on issues like intelligence sharing, development, security and defence.

The UK recently fired the starting gun on a free trade deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Trade with the GCC is already worth more than £30bn and a free trade deal

would boost that further by creating new opportunities for UK exporters and closer two-way investment ties.