

Home Secretary meeting with Masrour Barzani

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, this afternoon hosted Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for talks at the Home Office.

The meeting took place on the second day of Prime Minister Barzani's visit to the UK, during which he met Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior members of the government to discuss a variety of issues.

The Home Secretary began by welcoming the opportunity to finally meet Prime Minister Barzani in person. Both sides discussed the importance of working together on security and agreed that officials should meet to further strengthen joint efforts to address migration challenges over the coming months.

The Home Secretary thanked Prime Minister Barzani and his officials for the productive cooperation between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the UK thus far.

The Home Secretary highlighted the necessity of this cooperation to prevent further loss of life and reiterated her heartfelt condolences to those Kurdish families who lost loved ones in the tragedy in the English Channel last November.

The Home Secretary was also able to brief Prime Minister Barzani on the government's recently signed Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda and how it will help break the business model of the people smugglers behind the small boat crossings in the Channel.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I was pleased to host Prime Minister Barzani at the Home Office today.

The global nature of the migration crisis dictates that we must work with international allies both to tackle the drivers of irregular migration and to disrupt and bring to justice the evil people smuggling gangs. There is also much for us to do together in the security sphere to keep our peoples safe.

I look forward to further cooperation with Prime Minister Barzani and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the months and years ahead.

Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, added:

The relationship between the Kurdistan Region and the UK makes the

world a safer place for us and our partners. We combat terrorism and organised crime, and disrupt the political weaponisation of vulnerable families.

I also welcome our recent cooperation in disrupting international people smuggling networks. In that spirit, we agree on the importance of upholding international law.

In today's meeting, I also encouraged Home Secretary Patel to help us tackle the root causes of migration by exploring business initiatives and creating more job opportunities at home.