

News story: Afghan security and stability remains top of UK agenda

The security, development and governance of Afghanistan remains crucial to reducing the terrorist threat to the UK, the Defence Secretary reaffirmed in his first visit to Afghanistan.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

A secure Afghanistan will help keep the streets of Britain safe. Building the security services that will be the foundation of stability and peace in Afghanistan remains top of our agenda and I have seen first-hand the crucial role our brave Armed Forces are playing in realising that vision.

In his meeting with Minister of Defence Bahrami, the Defence Secretary reaffirmed the UK commitment to Afghanistan, citing the continued funding for the Afghanistan National Security Forces, our support for the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) and the recent uplift of UK troops to around 650.

Mr Williamson also met with UK personnel who are based at ANAOA in Qargha, on the western outskirts of Kabul. They are helping to train the next generation of Afghanistan's military leaders through mentoring training staff and instilling the Sandhurst ethos at the academy.

More than 3,000 officers have passed out of the academy since 2013, and, this year, ANAOA has nearly as many female cadets in training as have graduated in total since the academy opened.

The Defence Secretary also met UK troops who lead the Kabul Security Force (KSF), which provides force protection for NATO staff in Kabul. In last five weeks alone, the KSF have undertaken over 2,800 protection journeys and Mr Williamson experienced first-hand the vital role they play, travelling with UK personnel in a Foxhound armoured vehicle.

He also commended their efforts in responding to some of the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul, in which the KSF supported Afghan Security Forces by evacuating guests to safety extracted of guests following the Intercontinental Hotel terrorist attack and provided first aid to Afghan soldiers following an attack on an Afghan Army compound in January.

The UK has played an important role in supporting Afghanistan over the last 16 years and is committed to continuing this in the future. Through the NATO Resolute Support Mission, the support the UK provides on issues such as security, development and governance is crucial to building a stable state and reducing the terrorist threat to the UK.