

News story: Defence Secretary reaffirms commitment to fight against terror in Nigeria

In a two-day visit, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visited Maiduguri in the north east of the country to witness the impact of the conflict with Boko Haram. He also formally handed over £1million worth of counter improvised explosive device (IED) equipment to help in the fight against the terrorists.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Witnessing the suffering caused by the brutal conflict first hand made it clear why we must continue to support our Nigerian partners in the fight against violent extremism.

The work we are doing in Nigeria is vital to ensure that a corridor of terror does not open up through the Sahel and North Africa to the Middle East.

British military personnel have trained over 30,000 Nigerian troops to fight the terrorists, who are devastating the local community with kidnappings, rapes and IED attacks. The provision of new equipment will support the training of soldiers bound for the North-East.

The UK has been providing training in basic infantry skills, medical training as well as leadership and campaign planning courses at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry, the School of Military Engineering, and the Nigerian Army Depot since 2014 as well as delivering training to the Nigerian Air Force Regiment.

Whilst in Maiduguri, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also met with frontline humanitarian organisations and civil societies to understand the impact of the conflict and military operations on civilians. They discussed the effects on women and children as well as the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan that the UK helped Nigeria establish last year.

The Defence Secretary also met Nigerian Defence Minister Mansur Muhammad Dan-Ali. He commended the efforts of the Nigerian military to counter the threat of Boko Haram to the country and to the Region, and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to assist with capacity building in Nigerian military institutions.

The visit follows the Prime Minister's trip in August which focused on renewing the partnership between the UK and Africa.