

# News story: Foreign Office minister visits Algeria, Tunisia and Iran

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt arrives in Algeria today (Monday 31 July) for the first stage of a three country trip that will also include Tunisia and Iran.

In Algeria he will meet with the Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune and other senior ministers. Libya and regional security issues will be a major focus, but the visit will also be an opportunity to discuss a range of bilateral issues – including trade. UK exports to Algeria increased by 24 per cent in 2016.

The Minister arrives in Tunisia on Wednesday 2 August for a two day visit that will include a meeting with Foreign Minister Khemaies Jhinaoui.

This will be the first ministerial visit to Tunisia since the UK changed its travel advice last week. Having carefully reviewed conditions in Tunisia, including the threat from terrorism and improvements by the Tunisian security forces, the Government no longer advises against travel to most of the country, including Tunis and the major tourist destinations. Talks will cover counterterrorism cooperation, UK support to improve the Tunisian security situation and drive economic reforms, tourism and boosting trade.

The Minister arrives in Iran on Friday 4 August and will attend the official swearing in ceremony of the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday 5 August. The Minister will have talks with senior politicians on a range of bilateral and regional issues, including our dual national detainees.

On Algeria Minister Burt said:

The UK is committed to a close relationship with Algeria and I'm excited to be visiting the country again. The partnership between our two countries in areas such as security and trade is getting stronger by the day. British businesses are thriving in many sectors – helping to build the new airport, invest in Algeria's agricultural sector and improve English language teaching.

On Tunisia Minister Burt said:

The UK is a strong partner and friend of Tunisia and I look forward to continuing our close work on security, counterterrorism, reforming the economy and trade. After a careful and thorough review we decided to no longer advise against travel to Tunisia. This is partly due to the security improvements that the Tunisian authorities have made. It is vital that our good cooperation on security matters continues and that we work together to consolidate

the progress that has been made.

On Iran Minister Burt said:

I look forward to representing the UK at President Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony, on my first visit to Iran. We hope to build further on improving UK-Iran relations during President Rouhani's second term.

The President's personal commitment to the nuclear deal is welcome and it is vital both our countries work closely together to ensure the deal continues to be successfully implemented. We are also keen to maintain dialogue on Iran's regional policies, human rights and particularly our dual national detainees. Progress in all of these areas is important to the UK.

## **Further information**