

News story: Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, visits Egypt

Minister for the Middle East, Alastair Burt, will arrive in Cairo on Wednesday to meet with his Egyptian counterparts to discuss British-Egyptian cooperation and UK support to Egypt, especially economic and educational reform. He will discuss regional issues and international efforts to combat terrorism with Foreign Minister HE Sameh Shoukry, as well as meetings with the Minister of Interior, Education and business leaders. It is the Minister's first visit to Egypt since he was appointed to his new position as the first ever joint State Minister for the Middle East and North Africa for both the Foreign Office and and Department for International Development.

The visit is an opportunity to reinforce the UK's position as Egypt's top economic partner. The UK is the number one investor in Egypt: investments in the first half of 2016/17 alone amounted to \$2.9 billion.

The Minister will discuss new investments and new UK support for Egypt's economic reforms, including through providing additional technical assistance to reform policies in the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Investment, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Education. Mr Burt will oversee implementation of the \$150 million support agreed by Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson in his meeting with President Sisi in February and his visit is an opportunity to explore how best to use the loan.

Mr Burt will also discuss the importance of job creation in order for the Egyptian economy to flourish, and will meet with young Egyptian social entrepreneurs. The UK is working with the Egyptian government on licensing reform to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start their own business, which will improve the investment environment, benefiting both Egyptian companies and UK investors.

As well as the economy, he will meet with Minister for Education, Tarek Shawky, to discuss the UK's support for the Egyptian government's progressive plans to reform education, which includes technical assistance to the Ministry for Education. The UK is also supporting education in Egypt through scholarships such as the British Government's Chevening program, which gives fully-paid scholarships to study at the UK's top universities. This is a world-wide program, and Egypt is number one globally in the number of students applying for the scholarship. Both the UK and Egypt have faced senseless terrorist attacks recently, leading to the deaths of many innocent people. The visit is an important time to reinforce UK-Egyptian cooperation in facing the shared threat of terrorism, and how to combat radicalisation.

Minister Alistair Burt:

I look forward to my first visit to Egypt following my re-appointment as a UK Foreign Office Minister. The UK is a

longstanding friend of Egypt and this visit to Cairo is an ideal opportunity for me to discuss further UK-Egyptian collaboration in many areas, including education and economic reform.

Ambassador Ambassador John Casson said:

No country is doing more than Britain to support Egypt's education and economy – the pivotal issues in a pivotal country for this region and the world. The UK is Egypt's number one economic partner: the largest foreign investor in Egypt, and a strong supporter of the Government's economic reform program. And we know that alongside economic growth, education is crucial in giving dreams and opportunities for the people of Egypt. Education and economy will be at the heart of this visit to keep Britain as number one partner and take our partnership to the next level in support of the government and people of Egypt in their ambitious reform program.