

# Press release: Africa Minister visits Mali as UK deepens efforts to stabilise the region

Foreign Office and DFID Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin visited Mali on 8-9 November 2018. Her visit comes as the UK is increasing its engagement with countries across the Sahel, in efforts to stabilise the region and support economic development.

During her visit, the Minister discussed security and development challenges in the country with Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga. The Minister highlighted the importance of the Government of Mali accelerating the implementation of the peace accord, as well as pursuing wider reforms to address drivers of conflict and instability.

Minister Baldwin said:

The UK works in close partnership with the Government and people of Mali on security and development, and I'm pleased we are even now increasing this commitment. The long-term stability and prosperity of the Sahel region is important to us, and we will continue to work alongside international partners to make people's lives better across the region.

British support in Mali includes providing assistance and training to the Malian security forces as well as logistical and helicopter support to Operation Barkhane and funding for the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

In addition, this year, the UK is Mali's third largest humanitarian partner, on track to provide £287 million in aid across the Sahel between 2014-2019. In a show of support for the region, the UK has also recently announced that it will increase its significant expand its diplomatic presence in Mali as well as increasing its aid funding further.

The Minister saw this British aid in action, for example seeing a nutrition centre which provides emergency support to Malians suffering from acute malnutrition.

Minister Baldwin said:

Greater investment in health and nutrition, particularly for children, is essential. This year's flooding and displacement means the numbers of Malians with severe malnourishment are shockingly high, and the Government must find a way to support people before they require life-saving interventions.

She also reaffirmed UK support to the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) in supporting the development of the Malian Armed Forces and had discussions to push for better international coordination on development, humanitarian and stabilisation efforts.

### **Further information**