

# Press release: Foreign Secretary flies into Kabul to support signs of progress in Afghanistan

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson flew into Kabul today, 25 June, to show support for recent positive developments in Afghanistan. On the back of the ceasefires over Eid, which saw Government and Taliban forces talking rather than fighting in cities across the country, the Foreign Secretary held talks in Kabul with Afghanistan's President, Chief Executive, and Deputy Foreign Minister.

The Foreign Secretary underlined that Britain was fully committed to helping build a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan. He welcomed the National Unity Government's determination to achieve a peaceful political settlement to the conflict with the Taliban, including through holding timely and credible Parliamentary and Presidential elections.

He also highlighted the UK's strong support for girls' education in Afghanistan by meeting Afghan girls who are getting access to sports education through UK funding.

The Foreign Secretary also met General Nicholson, the Commander of Resolute Support, NATO's training and assistance mission in Afghanistan, and had a chance to talk to – and ride in an armoured vehicle with – some of the Welsh Guards helping to mentor the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces.

The Foreign Secretary said:

At this important moment when Afghan-led efforts towards peace and a political settlement have gained considerable impetus, I was proud and inspired to be in Kabul to see how the UK is working in support of the Afghan Government to achieve this goal.

In my meetings with President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, I welcomed their historic offer of unconditional talks earlier this year, and their determined recent efforts towards a political process with the Taliban.

I urge all countries with influence in Afghanistan, especially in the neighbourhood, to use it constructively at this crucial moment.

My visit comes just as the UK is considering the request from the US and NATO to give additional assistance to Resolute Support. I was hugely impressed by the work done by British troops as a part of this NATO mission and I believe there is still a lot the UK could contribute to this vital operation. The Government will be taking a decision very soon.

I was also delighted to meet a talented group of Afghan girls to see how excited they were about their prospects, thanks to British funding and the Afghan Government's determination to do more in this area. A good education for them will help Afghanistan's development and is a big part of the UK's commitment towards a brighter future for Afghanistan. I am proud that UK Aid has helped 300,000 marginalised Afghan girls into education and trained over 10,000 teachers over the last six years.

During his visit the Foreign Secretary met President Dr Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah, and Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai.

This is the Foreign Secretary's second visit to Afghanistan, where the UK is currently investing more than £750m in development assistance to support the Afghan people.

### **Notes to editors**

- The UK is contributing £750m in development spend between 2016 and 2020. UK Aid is helping improve access to education, services and justice for the Afghan people, offering humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable and supporting good governance and anti-corruption efforts.
- The UK has also committed £70m per year until 2020 in non-military support to help sustain the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces. Over 650 UK troops are currently serving in Afghanistan in non-combat roles as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission to help train, assist and advise the Afghan Security Forces

### **Further information**