

Press release: Foreign Secretary travels to Oman and Saudi Arabia

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson travels to the Gulf today for high-level meetings on the issues facing the region. The visit follows two days of talks on the Middle East with the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in London and international counterparts in Paris.

The Foreign Secretary will arrive in Oman on Wednesday 24th January, where his meetings will focus on making progress towards a political solution to the conflict in Yemen. He will then travel to Saudi Arabia on Thursday 25th January, where he will meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. The visit to Saudi Arabia will be an opportunity to discuss the crisis in Yemen, and countering Iran's destabilising activity in the region while reiterating the importance of the Iranian nuclear deal for our shared security interests. The Foreign Secretary will also outline how the UK can be a leading partner for Saudi Arabia's ambitious socio-economic reform programme, Vision 2030.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Oman and Saudi Arabia both have crucial regional roles, particularly in finding a political solution to the crisis in Yemen. During my meetings this week I will reaffirm that there can be no military solution to the conflict – peace-talks are the only long-term solution for the people of Yemen.

In tandem, we must continue to address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. There has been progress in recent weeks with the reopening of the Hodeidah and Saleef ports, allowing vital access for food and fuel. We also welcome the Saudi-led Coalition's new humanitarian plan for Yemen. The UK continues to play a leading role in humanitarian efforts, as the second largest donor to the UN appeal.

The UK firmly supports Saudi Arabia's socio-economic reform programme, Vision 2030, led by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. These internal reforms are diversifying the economy while delivering greater inclusivity for all Saudi citizens. As a world leader across a wide range of sectors, the UK is well-placed to help Saudi Arabia deliver these changes.