

[Press release: Mark Field visits Sri Lanka to discuss reconciliation, demining and the illegal wildlife trade](#)

During his two day visit he will meet Minister of Foreign Affairs Tilak Marapana, Minister of Finance and Media Mangala Samaraweera, Leader of the Opposition R. Sampanthan, Speaker of Parliament Karu Jayasuriya and Chief Minister of Northern Province C. V. Vigneswaran.

In Colombo he will meet with families affected by enforced disappearances from both the north and south of the country, and hear of their concerns and their hopes for the Office of Missing Persons. He will also meet UK and Sri Lankan education institutions at the British Council to discuss education, and the UK's world-leading role in transnational learning.

In northern Sri Lanka, the Minister will visit a UK-funded demining operation and meet families living on land cleared of mines. He will speak with British demining charity the Halo Trust and hear how UK support for demining has enabled displaced families to return home. He will also visit the British Council teaching centre in Jaffna where he will talk with young people about their aspirations for the future and the importance of education.

Mr Field said:

The UK and Sri Lanka are long-standing friends, and we are committed to supporting Sri Lanka achieve its commitments on reconciliation and human rights. I welcome the Sri Lankan government's commitment to reconciliation and strengthening democracy. I am looking forward to talking with the government and affected communities about the additional steps that are needed to deliver long-term peace and stability for all Sri Lankans

Having hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013, Sri Lanka is an obvious partner in defining and driving a shared vision of the Commonwealth, to ensure it is fitted to deliver for all its member states into the future. The UK will host an ambitious and dynamic Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018, with the purpose of ensuring that the Commonwealth remains on a path that is relevant for the 21st century.

I commend the authorities and all those in Sri Lanka working hard to combat the Illegal Wildlife Trade, and hope to encourage plans to conserve Sri Lanka's unique and beautiful environment.

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