

Press release: Minister for Africa calls for promises of peace in South Sudan to be put into action

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin has called for the international community to work together to ensure that South Sudan's peace agreement leads to genuine change for the people of South Sudan.

At the UN General Assembly in New York, Mrs Baldwin met with regional and international leaders, brought together by US Under Secretary of State David Hale. They agreed to work together to tackle the many risks and challenges that lie ahead in the implementation of the peace agreement.

Mrs Baldwin also pushed for progress on delivering humanitarian assistance in South Sudan's high risk environment. The Minister stressed the need for innovative and adaptive responses to the protracted crisis in South Sudan and an open and honest dialogue about the challenges the international community faces. She also called on the Government of South Sudan to make good on its commitments to allow unimpeded humanitarian access, in what is now the most dangerous operating environment for humanitarian workers in the world.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

The peace agreement signed a few weeks ago brought hope to millions of South Sudanese who have suffered the devastating consequences of conflict for far too long. This is a significant achievement, but only the first step on a long journey to peace, and even since the most recent ceasefire, violence continues.

This week, the international community has committed to tackling a culture of impunity. We are also committed to working together to face the growing number of unacceptable obstructions to the delivery of aid, including disproportionate taxes and fees which divert tens of millions of dollars, and violence against aid workers. Those who perpetuate the suffering of South Sudanese people will be held to account.

A peace agreement for South Sudan was signed on 12 September 2018. A recent study estimates that the conflict has caused 380,000 deaths and forced a third of the population to flee their homes. The violence is driving the largest refugee crisis in Africa and a man-made humanitarian catastrophe. Despite progress made in peace talks, food insecurity is at its worst in South Sudan's seven year history and violations of the most recent ceasefire continues. At least 110 humanitarian workers have been killed since the conflict began and 13 this year alone.

The UK continues to work with the region and the international community to push for effective monitoring and implementation of the peace agreement and to hold those undermining it to account. On 13 July, the UK played a leading role in securing a UN arms embargo and targeted sanctions on South Sudan.

The UK is also providing lifesaving aid. Last year we reached over 420,000 people with food assistance and over 680,000 people with access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities. We also deploy over 300 troops as UN peacekeepers to provide important engineering and medical assistance to the UN Mission in South Sudan.

Notes to Editors:

- Minister Baldwin attended the panel event “Delivering Assistance in a High Risk Environment: A Spotlight on South Sudan” hosted by Mark Lowcock, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator on 25 September.
- She attended the event “Next Steps on the Path to Peace in South Sudan” hosted by US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale on 26 September.

Further information