

Press release: UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue: Communiqué

The fourth meeting of the biannual UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue was hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom in London on 16 October 2017, co-chaired by Neil Wigan, Director for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, and Ambassador Abdelghani Elnaim Awadelkarim, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan, accompanied by delegations from both countries.

The dialogue covered bilateral issues, the peace process, human rights, development, trade and investment, migration, defence engagement, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, and regional issues.

Both sides welcomed the steps taken since the last Strategic Dialogue meeting in Khartoum in March 2017 and agreed to continue joint work over the coming months. The parties welcomed the visit to Sudan by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the recent visit by the UK's Department for International Trade's East Africa Director. The UK congratulated the Government of Sudan on the recent decision by the Government of the United States of America to permanently lift bilateral economic sanctions, and both sides discussed steps to be taken to ensure that all Sudanese citizens benefit from this decision. This included agreeing to make progress on Sudan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and an offer from the UK to provide increased support on macroeconomic reform.

Both parties discussed the reconfiguration of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2362 (2017). The United Kingdom welcomed the improved humanitarian access and operating environment and the recent decision by the Government of Sudan to extend its unilateral cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas. The Government of Sudan expressed its continued commitment to the implementation of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Roadmap. Both sides agreed to continue the regular dialogue on human rights between the two governments at all levels, including UK support for Sudan's accession to the Convention against Torture (CAT), and the subject of trafficking in people.

Both sides looked forward to celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the British Council in Sudan next year and affirmed their strong commitment to continuing cooperation on education and cultural exchanges. Both sides expressed strong concern about the ongoing conflict in South Sudan. The UK welcomed the Government of Sudan's decision to open humanitarian corridors and their continuing commitment to supporting South Sudanese refugees. Both sides agreed the importance of a politically inclusive peace process and agreed to engage constructively in support of the current IGAD led Revitalisation Forum.

The two parties also agreed to continue working together on countering

terrorism and violent extremism. They welcomed the recent exchanges of visits to share expertise and agreed to continue and broaden these exchanges in future.

The UK and Sudan reaffirmed the importance of continued progress towards our joint goals, and a continued broadening of the bilateral relationship, and agreed to hold another Strategic Dialogue in Khartoum in six months' time.

On the side-lines of the dialogue, the visiting Sudanese delegation engaged with Members of Parliament through the two All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) focusing on Sudan. The UK also hosted a technical workshop on human rights for the Sudanese delegation, including Sudan's Special Rapporteur of the Advisory Council for Human Rights. Through this workshop, the delegation engaged with representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Justice and some of the UK's independent human rights bodies to discuss issues such as accession to UN human rights treaties and the role of independent human rights bodies in monitoring and reporting.