

[Press release: Minister for Asia in Sri Lanka to discuss reconciliation and people-to-people links](#)

Mark Field, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, arrives in Sri Lanka today (5 October) for a visit that will include meetings with government and opposition figures, civil society and trade organisations.

The Minister will hold discussions with government representatives including President Maithripala Sirisena and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tilak Marapana.

He will also meet Leader of the Opposition R. Sampanthan and Joint Opposition Parliamentary Group Leader Dinesh Gunawardena, with members of civil society and the Commissioners of the Office on Missing Persons, and visit the London Stock Exchange Group.

The Minister will discuss the UK's continued support for Sri Lanka in delivering meaningful and lasting reconciliation, as well as celebrating people-to-people links with the England Cricket Team.

Minister of State Mark Field said:

I am looking forward to visiting Sri Lanka for talks with the government across the full range of our bilateral issues.

I will offer the UK's continued support to help Sri Lanka make progress on its human rights and reconciliation agenda ahead of Geneva next March, and highlight our cooperation on areas such as bilateral trade and wildlife protection.

My visit coincides with that of the England Cricket Team – and offers the opportunity to celebrate our two countries' shared love for the sport and the qualities it represents, such as fair play and respect.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[Press release: Joint statement from Prime Minister May and Prime Minister Rutte](#)

We have, with the operations exposed today, further shone a light on the unacceptable cyber activities of the Russian military intelligence service, the GRU. It has targeted institutions across the world, including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague.

This attempt, to access the secure systems of an international organisation working to rid the world of chemical weapons, demonstrates the GRU's disregard for the global values and rules that keep us all safe.

The GRU's reckless operations stretch from destructive cyber activity to the use of illegal nerve agents, as we saw in Salisbury. That attack left four people fighting for their lives and one woman dead.

Our action today reinforces the clear message from the international community: We will uphold the rules-based international system, and defend international institutions from those that seek to do them harm.

[News story: Ensuring charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and](#)

strengthen society

We have today published our new [Statement of Strategic Intent](#), which sets out our core purpose and our priorities for the five years to 2023.

That new purpose, to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society, will inform everything we do.

Our new purpose and Statement of Strategic Intent do not replace our [statutory objectives](#), which we will continue to fulfil. But we are clear that regulation is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

We must do all we can to ensure charities can show that they are being true to their purposes, demonstrate the difference they're making, and meet the high expectations the public have of charities.

These expectations include that a charity must be more than an organisation with worthy aims. It must be a living example of charitable purpose, charitable attitudes, and charitable behaviour.

Our strategy makes clear that charities and the Commission share a collective responsibility for ensuring the concept of charity survives and thrives into the future and charities reach their potential for good in our society.

Baroness Stowell, Chair of the Charity Commission, says:

From now on, the Commission is a purpose-driven regulator. We are clear not just on what we do, but about why we do it. Our purpose is deliberately positive: charity is a vital force for good in our society, and we as regulator share a responsibility with charities to help maximise the positive impact charity has, to help charity reach its potential.

Our great challenge is that charities are not always living up to the public's expectation that being a charity is about how we behave, not just what we set out to achieve. The public, quite reasonably, expect a charity to have charitable aims, and to be a living, breathing expression of charitable behaviour and attitude. By working on this together, charities and the Commission will help ensure that charities thrive, so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

Our Statement of Strategic Intent sets out and explains 5 new strategic objectives. They are:

- holding charities to account

- dealing with wrongdoing and harm
- informing public choice
- giving charities the understanding and tools they need to succeed
- keeping charity relevant for today's world

You can read more about each objective, and about how our work will be changing to meet them, in the [Statement of Strategic Intent](#).

We're now working on a more detailed road map that will translate the Statement of Strategic Intent into a plan for action. We envisage that, as we work to deliver against our purpose, we will engage in conversation, and in some cases in consultation with charities and others on specific proposals or changes to the way we regulate.

The statement replaces our previous strategic plan, which ran to 2018.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary congratulates Iraq on election of President and Prime Minister](#)

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has welcomed the news of the election of the new Iraqi president and prime minister, and of the successful elections in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The Foreign Secretary said:

I congratulate President Barham Saleh on his election by the Iraqi Parliament, and his nomination of Adel Abdul Mahdi to form the next government as Prime Minister. On behalf of the British Government, I must also express my gratitude to Prime Minister Abadi and President Masum both for their service to Iraq and for the crucial and successful collaboration with the UK in our joint determination to defeat Daesh.

I would also like to congratulate the people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on a successful parliamentary election. The formation of an effective Kurdistan Regional Government that delivers for all the people in the region will be a welcome step.

I look forward to working with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to deliver stability, security and

prosperity for all Iraqis.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy_Hunt](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[Press release: Helping residents be prepared for flooding](#)

The North East's Flood Community Engagement officer Anna Caygill will be working with schools, businesses and communities in the town and surrounding areas to prepare for severe weather.

And she is kick-starting the project by hosting an event called 'Flooding in a changing climate' which will look at the impact of changing weather patterns and how this will affect the community.

- It takes place on Thursday 25 October between 11am and 3pm at Cornerstones Community Centre, North Burns.

Chester-le-Street has a recent flood history with over 900 properties at risk of flooding from surface water, and from the River Wear and Cong Burn.

Flooding on 28 June 2012 caused widespread damage and disruption – but the flood history of the town dates right back as far as the great flood of 1771.

Engagement complements flood scheme

Anna is building on previous work by Durham County Council's Civil

Contingency Unit and working with the community to develop a Community Flood Plan and recruit more volunteer Flood Wardens – who are the eyes and ears of the community during a flood event. Anna said:

I'm working closely with Durham County Council and the town's Flood Wardens to ensure residents in the area are prepared for flooding.

The engagement complements the flood scheme currently being carried out by the council at the Market Place to reduce flood risk from the Cong Burn, as well as ongoing environmental work being done by Wear Rivers Trust.

We really want people to understand their flood risk and know what steps they can take to ensure they are prepared in the event of a flood, such as making sure they are signed up to receive free flood warnings and having a flood plan which is easy to follow.

Residents can find out if they live in an area at risk of flooding and sign up to receive free flood warnings by [visiting here](#)

For more information about the upcoming event contact Anna.Caygill@environment-agency.gov.uk