

Speech: Peace Agreement in South Sudan is the first step on a long journey

Thank you very much indeed to General Lacroix and Special Envoy Nicholas Haysom to whom we say farewell and yet look forward to seeing you very soon of course; EGAD Special Envoy Ismael Waes who I know has been working on this dossier for so long and so tirelessly; and also by thanking Ms. Grace John for the valuable human perspective that you have offered this Council.

Mr President the peace agreement signed last week gives hope to all of us, none more so than to the 12 million people of South Sudan. And we welcome very much the commitment that the region has shown on this important issue of peace and security and we have been consistent in this Council in supporting EGAD and the work it has done.

And while the peace agreement signed is a significant achievement, it is the first step on a long journey. We must continue to strive for progress. The people of South Sudan will continue to suffer if peace is not achieved and sustained. That conflict has already killed thousands and forced a third of the population to flee their homes – 2.5 million of whom to neighbouring countries. Half the population is food insecure. Of the 7 million people who need humanitarian assistance, over half are children. And these children, following the years of conflict displacement and economic collapse, are less likely to receive an education than any other children in the world.

South Sudan's leaders have seemed at times indifferent to the suffering of their people, and this is not Mr. President the result of a natural disaster or an unavoidable situation. It is manmade and so must be the solution. Starting with political stability – the peace agreement must create the conditions for a lasting end to the violence. Now as I said the region has played a vital role in bringing parties to the conflict together and I commend the much needed commitment and energy that they have invested, including states around this table.

And now is the time to build on that momentum. A peace agreement on its own will not deliver and sustain peace for South Sudan. We need to see continued engagement by all parties and ensure that words are turned into meaningful and sustainable actions.

Mr President, those of us who have been saying these things have picked up some irritation and frustration at those sorts of comments. It's been said we're not being positive enough or that we are undermining a peace process. I believe that no one will be more positive than those of us around this table if the process really means an end to the violence and a determination to put the needs of the people first. And similarly, those of us around this table have a special responsibility to bring the experience and lessons that we have from other conflicts, other peace processes and indeed from our experience of the South Sudan conflict and peace process to bear. It doesn't serve the parties to the peace agreement or the people of South Sudan if we

do not use our experience and our knowledge from other peacebuilding situations, so it is vital that we adapt and use those lessons. In countries such as Libya, we've seen how political agreements can unravel and enable a relapse into violence. From our experience in Colombia, we've seen that ongoing commitment from the parties is the key factor for successful implementation of peace agreements.

We've also seen the implementation needs support from the region and sustained determined engagement from this Council. We need to draw from all of these experiences when we consider the situation in South Sudan as well as understanding why previous peace processes have not worked in that country, and therefore focus all of our efforts on successful implementation.

We must ensure this agreement does not repeat past mistakes. The continued violence even following the most recent ceasefire agreement is extremely concerning. 19 violations were reported by the Secretary-General between June and September. The increase in humanitarian access incidents and violence against humanitarian workers are gravely concerning. 13 humanitarian workers have been killed in South Sudan this year alone. Further to this, we are deeply concerned that UNMISS peacekeepers have been repeatedly denied access to the key areas to allow them to perform their mandated responsibilities. This is unacceptable and it must end. The region and the international community must closely monitor violations and ensure those responsible are held to account. I very much support Ms. John in calling for the establishment of the hybrid court.

As the international community we must not stand by and allow individuals to undermine peace. The targeted sanctions being imposed in July are an important tool. Now just as important now this agreement has been signed. They can be used to maintain pressure on all the parties to keep the promises that they have made. The arms embargo signalled that the international community will not tolerate attempts to impose military solutions. I urge the region and the wider international community to continue to support these measures.

The United Kingdom remains committed to peace in South Sudan, but in order to be convinced of the party's commitment, we need to see significant change in approach by the parties to the conflict. They must silence their guns, allow humanitarian workers to deliver lifesaving assistance, and release political prisoners. They must show a genuine commitment to effective and accountable implementation of the peace agreement and must demonstrate that they are willing to work for the benefit of all South Sudanese, including through checks on executive majority power and the transparent use of resources.

Mr President, today the peace process stands at a crossroads. To overcome the challenges ahead, we need unity amongst the international community. We urge the region to continue to drive forward constructive progress, especially on security arrangements in step with the UN and international community. Above all, we urge the leaders of South Sudan to put aside personal interests to work together for a better future for their people. Thank you Mr President.

Press release: James Brokenshire removes commissioners from Rotherham council after 3-year intervention

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has today (18 September 2018) confirmed that he is concluding the government's intervention in Rotherham metropolitan borough council and [returning all powers to the authority](#).

The [intervention](#), which was jointly undertaken by the Ministry and the Department for Education, began in February 2015 following critical reports by Baroness Alexis Jay and Dame Louise Casey which uncovered significant failings at the council that contributed to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham.

Mr Brokenshire confirmed that following strong progress by the council he will return control of all services to them on Monday 24 September, including children's social care, and withdraw all 3 commissioners.

He added that this was on condition that the council commissions an independent progress review of delivery of services to be completed by 18 February 2019, before the directions expire on 31 March 2019.

The action follows the gradual return of selected functions to the council on 4 separate occasions since the intervention began in February 2015.

Communities Secretary, The Rt Honorable James Brokenshire MP said:

Vulnerable young people who should have been protected were repeatedly failed by Rotherham council, which is why the government stepped in to ensure these errors can never occur again.

I am pleased that strong progress has now been made at the council with the support of the commissioners.

The return of all powers to Rotherham council is not a decision that I take lightly, but I am satisfied that the council has learnt the lessons of the past and is now able to provide the services its residents deserve and expect.

Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi MP said:

Every child, wherever they live, needs to have access to the right care and support so they can flourish in life. For too long the

people of Rotherham were let down by the authorities in charge of protecting them.

The handing back of local children's services to the council marks an important step for this town. I am pleased that vulnerable children in Rotherham are now getting the help they need when they need it, and I hope to see continuing improvements through the independent review next year.

Further information

The then-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the then-Secretary of State for Education exercised their intervention powers on 26 February 2015 as Rotherham metropolitan borough council was failing to comply with its best value duty. These Directions expire on 31 March 2019.

Three commissioners have been working with Rotherham council. They are:

- Mary Ney (Lead Commissioner)
- Patricia Bradwell (Children's Social Care Commissioner)
- Julie Kenny CBE, DL (Supporting Commissioner)

There were originally 5 commissioners sent to Rotherham council, led by Sir Derek Meyers, who was also supported by Stella Manzie CBE and Malcolm Newsam with Mary Ney and Julie Kenney CBE acting as supporting Commissioners. Patricia Bradwell replaced Malcolm Newsam in May 2016 and Stella Manzie CBE left the council in February 2016. Mary Ney was appointed Lead Commissioner in place of Sir Derek Myers in March 2017.

Selected functions were returned to the council on 11 February 2016, 12 December 2016, 21 March 2017 and 12 September 2017.

The Secretary of State considered representations on his 'minded to' decision, which was announced on 23 July, until 16 August before a final decision.

As part of the decision-making process on the announcement, Mr Brokenshire and Mr Zahawi met with Rotherham's MPs on Monday, July 16 who indicated their support to conclude the intervention.

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[Press release: Sentence increase for man who sexually assaulted girls for 25 years](#)

A Cambridge man who repeatedly raped 2 young girls and sexually assaulted 2 others has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it to the Court of Appeal for being too low.

Sazzad Miah, now 83, carried out his abuse over a 25 year period. His first victim was abused between the ages of 4 and 15. His later victims were aged between 4 and 13.

In June this year, Miah was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment with a 1 year extended licence period at Cambridge Crown Court. Today, this has been increased to 25 years imprisonment with a 1 year extended licence period after the Solicitor General referred the case for being unduly lenient.

Commenting on the sentence increase, the Solicitor General said:

“I am pleased the Court of Appeal has agreed that Miah’s sentence deserved to be higher. To subject four vulnerable children to such horrific sexual assaults is an abhorrent crime which will undoubtedly have lasting impacts on

the victims, and I hope today's outcome will provide them with some comfort."

[News story: Have your say on the UK's future trade negotiations](#)

You can now have your say on our prospective trade negotiations.

[Take part in the online consultations](#)

For the first time in over 40 years, the UK will be able to determine who we trade with and the public will have a say on the terms of these trading agreements.

We want to maximise our trade opportunities globally and across all countries – both by boosting our trading relationships with old friends and new allies, and by seeking a deep and special partnership with the EU.

In 6 month's time, the UK will have the opportunity to begin negotiating, signing, and ratifying Free Trade Agreements to bring them into force from January 2021.

In preparation for this, the UK Government is consulting with members of the public, businesses, trade experts, and any other interested organisations to help inform this work. This initial consultation process will inform our overall approach to our future trade relationship.

There are 4 online consultations:

- [Consultation on trade negotiations with the United States](#)
- [Consultation on trade negotiations with Australia](#)
- [Consultation on trade negotiations with New Zealand](#)
- [Consultation on the UK potentially seeking accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#)

These agreements could:

- enable increased trade and investment
- secure access for UK exporters to the key markets of today and the future
- give consumers access to a greater range of products at lower prices
- make the UK more innovative, competitive and prosperous.

At the launch event International Trade Secretary Liam Fox said:

These consultations are about how we position ourselves as Global Britain. To build the export markets, investment opportunities and trading relationships of the future.

Trade affects us all – whether it is through the prices and availability of product on our supermarket shelves, to the resources available for our public services, to the jobs and investment on which we all rely.

Watch our video to find out more

[How will the consultations work?](#)

The benefits of trade agreements

- Boosting economic growth in the UK by encouraging more competition, investment and innovation.
- Contributing to global prosperity, by boosting economic growth in countries that the UK does business with through international supply chains.
- Increased global prosperity supports social cohesion within and between countries, and in turn political stability, which is one of the building blocks of our collective security.
- Some trade agreements can particularly benefit developing countries – trade can be a vital tool in boosting developing countries' economic growth and reducing poverty, while also providing UK consumers and businesses with goods at competitive prices.
- Trade is also an instrument of foreign policy and some countries use trade policy (including trade agreements) to advance standards and values.

Trade agreements aim to reduce trade barriers between countries. Barriers can be taxes charged on goods as they cross borders (tariffs), or different rules and regulations that can add to trade costs (non-tariff measures). Trade and investment barriers make it more difficult and costly to trade or invest overseas. Reducing these barriers can help the flow of goods, services and money for investment between countries, and help businesses to access markets they previously weren't able to. Consumers can benefit from access to a greater variety of products at lower prices.

Trade agreements do not prevent governments from regulating as they see fit, and they also do not require governments to privatise any services. The UK Government is committed to maintaining our high standards for consumers, workers and the environment, and to protecting our public services, in any future trade agreements that we conclude.

[Take part in the online consultations](#)

News story: Qatari jet export deal swings into action

The deal, worth around £5bn includes the aircraft and a bespoke support and training package. Qatar is now buying nine Hawk trainers, rather than six, which will also be welcome news for BAE Systems' factories in Warton and Brough which make the jets.

Welcoming the news, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This monumental, multi-billion-pound deal is now officially in place, and those from across government and industry who have worked so hard on it together can be extremely proud to see it reach this stage. It's a massive boost to the British defence industry, helping to support thousands of jobs, and it will help us further build the trust between the UK and Qatar to tackle the challenges we both share, support stability in the region and deliver security at home.

UK Export Finance's (UKEF) £5bn package of support was vital to securing the deal, including by providing financing and insurance. UKEF's role is to support UK exports including by providing export finance to enable overseas buyers to purchase goods and services from the UK, and export insurance for companies selling overseas.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

The UK Government is proud to be a part of this hugely significant export contract, supporting BAE Systems, its nearly 35,000 employees and the 9,000 companies in its supply chain.

This support from UK Export Finance will sustain jobs in one of the UK's key industrial sectors, support economic growth, and strengthen our own defence capabilities as well as those of a key strategic ally.

BAE Systems Chief Executive, Charles Woodburn said:

This contract, effective today, represents a significant step in BAE Systems' long-term relationship with the State of Qatar, as it becomes the ninth country to choose Typhoon. The proven combination of Typhoon and Hawk will provide the Qatari Armed Forces with the most advanced and flexible multi-role combat aircraft on the market

today, along with best in class support and training.

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and his Qatari counterpart, Dr Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah, oversaw the signing of the deal in Doha in December. Deliveries of the first Typhoon aircraft are expected to commence in 2022.

The deal also involves a package of training and co-operation between the British and Qatari Air Forces which will see them working closely together in the future. A new UK-based Typhoon joint squadron, reformed as No.12 squadron, will comprise both Qatari Emiri Air Force and RAF personnel, including pilots and ground-crew based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire ahead of the delivery of the aircraft. It represents a unique initiative, with the RAF not having formed a squadron with another nation since the Second World War and the Battle of Britain.

The UK and Qatar share mutual interests in countering violent extremism, and ensuring stability in the region, and the deal further reinforces those ties by helping to prevent terrorism from spreading and protecting the prosperity and security of the UK at home.

Qatar is the ninth country to purchase the Typhoon, with the deal sustaining thousands of UK jobs. The MOD continues to bang the drum for the UK's world-leading aerospace industry, with sales of defence equipment to foreign customers surging by 53% last year to £9bn.

The UK is a world-leader in the combat air sector, with a mix of skills and technologies unique in Europe, supporting over 18,000 highly skilled jobs. The sector delivers a turnover of more than £6bn a year and has made up over 80% of defence exports from the UK over the last ten years.

The support follows the launch of the Government's Export Strategy, which sets out how the government will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.