

[Press release: UK responds to OPCW report on chemical attacks in Ltamenah, Syria](#)

Minister Burt said:

Today the OPCW confirmed that the town of Ltamenah, in northern Syria was attacked on 24 March 2017 with sarin and on 25 March 2017 with chlorine. This is confirmation of a spate of chemical attacks in the town in just one week, the OPCW having previously confirmed that a sarin attack took place on 30 March 2017.

Tragically there is still no international mechanism to attribute responsibility for these attacks on Ltamenah. Just a few days after the OPCW confirmation of sarin use on 30 March in Ltamenah, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was shut down, putting an end to their ability to investigate responsibility for such attacks.

Repeated chemical attacks within Syria in such a short space of time only serve to underline the grave threat to the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Close to 90 countries have recognised that threat, and supported a call for an urgent Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on 26-27 June. The international community should come together and strengthen the OPCW's capability to prevent the further use of chemical weapons, including by attributing responsibility for these heinous crimes.

Further information

- Follow Minister Burt on Twitter [@AlistairBurtUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Press release: PM's roundtable with the tech industry: 13 June 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister began by thanking the guests for their tremendous contribution to the tech community in the UK, creating jobs, supporting the economy, and driving growth.

She added that Venture Capital investment in the UK was \$7.8bn in 2017, and that the opportunities offered here are demonstrated by the fact that the UK contributes 13 of the 34 start-up companies valued at over \$1 billion in Europe.

She then invited views from around the table on how the UK can build on its position as a world-leading destination for tech investment.

Guests welcomed the announcement of the £2.5 billion Patient Capital Fund, as a means of ensuring that promising UK start-ups can access the capital they need to expand and become world-beating.

There was discussion of the strength and depth of the UK's tech industry, and the advantages associated provided by access to and partnerships with the UK's top universities.

Guests then discussed methods of addressing the skills gap and agreed on the importance of ensuring that nobody is left behind by advancements in technology and digital skills.

There was also agreement on the importance of mentoring, whereby entrepreneurs who have been through the whole cycle share their knowledge and expertise with fresh talent.

The Prime Minister concluded by reiterating the importance of the tech sector, saying that she wanted to see a continued pipeline of tech entrepreneurs coming forward and growing their businesses in the UK.

[Press release: World's Fastest 3D Microphone Array Simulation Software](#)

Based on technology originally developed for the UK Home Office, A3S gives developers the ability to dramatically reduce audio array simulation times, improve the fidelity of results, and increase performance using fewer components. Significantly decreasing simulation times during product development from eight hours to 30 seconds* (a reduction of 99.9 per cent), A3S calculates in near real-time the physical configuration of the audio array in order to achieve optimum performance.

For the first time manufacturers will be able to fully exploit the potential of audio arrays, and deliver microphone/speaker-based products which:

- Require fewer audio components and reduce device size – tests of an off-the-shelf product reduced the number of microphones by two-thirds, while improving audio performance.
- Minimise development costs – less product development time can be spent simulating and prototyping arrays. It also allows the modelling of more frequencies, resulting in a product with greater confidence in its performance, and potentially removing the need for costly redesigns.
- Are smarter – products can be optimised to cope with changing environments, as near real-time characterisation allows beamforming to be conducted on-the-fly to dynamically focus microphones and cancel out noise.
- Are less power hungry – less processing power required by fewer microphones.

Gerry Scott, Commercialisation Manager at Ploughshare Innovations, said:

A common development approach is to deploy multiple microphones and speakers in a product to achieve an acceptable level of performance. However, without full optimisation, they will still

under-perform. The developers of A3S have proven that simulations can be conducted 1,000 times faster than current approaches, allowing developers to create high performing products with more confidence. Reducing the number of components also means that high-end audio products can be created with a smaller form factor and at less overall cost, giving manufacturers potentially significant cost savings. A high-end audio experience will become more widely available to us all.

Examples of what applications could use A3S to improve audio product performance include voice recognition, smartphones, automotive, immersive audio and gaming/home cinema.

- In tests, the simulation time of a 16 microphone array was reduced from eight hours to 30 seconds. In addition, A3S simulated hundreds of frequencies – significantly more than the eight frequencies managed by the conventional method.

About Ploughshare Innovations (www.ploughshareinnovations.com)

Ploughshare Innovations is the technology transfer organisation for the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD). It turns 'swords into ploughshares' by enabling businesses to gain access to defence and security technology developed by leading government laboratories. Ploughshare ensures Government technology is put to good use and benefits the UK, society as a whole, and humanity by applying innovative technology to improve people's lives. Since its creation in 2005, the company has licensed 120 technologies and attracted £140 million of investment.

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[News story: Honorary Queen's Counsel nominations: deadline Monday 13 August 2018](#)

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is inviting nominations for appointment as

Queen's Counsel (QC) Honoris Causa, also known as honorary silk. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to MOJ by 12pm on Monday 13 August 2018.

The rank of QC is awarded to advocates (barristers and solicitors) who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy. It has been awarded in various forms for around 400 years. The rank of QC Honoris Causa is separate to these awards and are awarded to lawyers and legal academics that have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales outside practice in the courts, which has not been recognised through other forms of honours.

Honorary silks were first awarded in the late nineteenth century and it has been the practice for the monarch to appoint a small number of lawyers and legal academics for the honorary silk with each round of substantive QC appointments. The nomination and appointment of QC Honoris Causa is administered separately to the honours system.

Eligibility criteria

In making a nomination you should ensure that your nominee meets the required criteria set out below:

- the award is open only to qualified lawyers and to legal academics
- the individual should have made a 'major contribution to the law of England and Wales'
- 'Outside practice in the courts' will generally mean that the award is made for an achievement other than a person's normal practice as a lawyer or academic
- QC Honoris Causa is not a 'working rank'. It cannot be used in practice as a lawyer. QC Honoris Causa cannot be awarded as an alternative to the substantive QC rank for people who, for whatever reason, do not fit its eligibility criteria
- QC Honoris Causa is awarded only to those who have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales. There is no exact equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, this does not mean that achievements of a similar nature cannot be recognised in those jurisdictions. If you would like to nominate someone, whose work is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, for an honour you can contact the [Scottish Government](#) or the [Honours Secretariat for Northern Ireland](#).

We recognise that those who are not lawyers or legal academics make equally valuable contributions to public life, and may have done so in similar fields as legally qualified individuals. If you feel a non-legally qualified individual ought to be recognised, you can instead [nominate them for an honour](#).

If someone is nominated for QC Honoris Causa who has been nominated for an honour this year or has already been honoured in the last year, it is very unlikely that their name will be put their name forward for honorary silk.

Please note that anyone nominated may be subject to criminal record checks with ACRO Criminal Records Office.

You can see examples of previous successful nominees by viewing some [Case studies of successful nominations](#) (PDF, 109KB, 1 page)

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How to make a nomination

We welcome nominations for QC Honoris Causa from anyone, no matter what your background. If you would like to suggest someone for appointment, please complete the [Honorary QC nomination form](#) (MS Word Document, 87KB)

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When completing the form please give as much detail as possible. The more we know about a nominee, the easier it is to assess whether they meet the QC Honoris Causa criteria. If we have only a limited amount of information about someone, it is unlikely that we will be able to recommend them for appointment. You can nominate as many people as you like, but please ensure that you keep their details separate.

You need to complete the nomination form and send it to us by 12pm on Monday 13 August 2018 preferably by email or alternatively post to:

Legal Services Team

Ministry of Justice

Post Point 9.13

102 Petty France

London SW1H 9AJ

Email: honoraryqc@justice.gov.uk

Please note, we will only accept nominations which are submitted on the nomination form attached to this webpage. Letters of support for a candidate will not be accepted. In cases where more than one person wishes to nominate a single candidate, each individual must send in a separate form for the nominee. This gives a fuller representation of the candidate's suitability for QC Honoris Causa.

Timing

Please ensure that your nominations reach us no later than 12pm on Monday 13 August 2018. Nominations made after this date cannot be accepted.

Contact us

If you would like additional information on honorary silk or how to make a nomination, please feel free to contact us by email:

honoraryqc@justice.gov.uk.

[News story: The AAIB is sending a team to the Western Isles, Scotland](#)

The AAIB has sent a team of inspectors to investigate an aircraft accident that occurred in the Western Isles, Scotland.

[Read more about how we investigate aircraft accidents.](#)