

Speech: Condemning attacks from Gaza into Israel and calling for direct negotiations for two-state solution

Thank you very much indeed Madam President and thank you to the Special Co-ordinator for that very sobering briefing.

Echoing Ambassador Haley's concern, I condemn without qualification, in the strongest terms, yesterday's mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and they are unjustifiable. Those that risk killing or injuring children are heinous. These attacks can't be ignored by the Council. The UK fully supports Israel's right to self-defense and the right to defend their citizens from such acts of terror. The recent spike in rocket attacks from Gaza is a stark reminder that the risk of a renewed conflict is very much present and I think the Special Co-ordinator brought that out very starkly in his briefing today. The latest attacks follow the deaths of over a hundred Palestinians in recent weeks of protests, and the Council has addressed that previously. Civilians live in fear and in despair. Further escalation of violence risks a devastating effect on efforts to restore the peace process and can only bring renewed suffering for the region. As Council members, we should act to ensure that this doesn't come to fruition.

The situation in Gaza, Madam President, is undeniably dangerous, it is sad and it is complex. The perpetual cycle of violence needs to end and serves no one's interests. The actions of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad represent real and concerning threat to Israeli security. Ultimately, the ongoing decisions of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to embrace violence and reject the Quartet principles lie at the heart of the Gaza situation. We should use this Council session today to demand that Hamas and other terrorist groups cease all violent and provocative actions and cease any and all actions that put civilian lives at risk.

At the same time, we do not ignore the significant contribution that restrictions on movement and access imposed on Gaza have on the dire humanitarian situation that we witness. The United Kingdom continues its support for the full return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza, and we encourage further progress on reconciliation.

An end to this violence requires a tangible path for changing Gaza and what the Special Coordinator had to say about the plan was very interesting. We believe it's the responsibility of the international community to work together to find a way to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Gaza. We welcome the proposals that Mr Mladenov has made, and these include commitments to advance urgent infrastructure and economic development projects to improve access and movement and to support the Egyptian-led reconciliation process.

We stand ready as the United Kingdom to do everything that we can to support these efforts. The people of Gaza are in urgent and they're in desperate need. Yesterday, my government committed to providing a new package of over two million dollars of lifesaving support. The funding will support work by the International Committee of the Red Cross Red Crescent in keeping hospitals open and functioning at a time when the healthcare system in Gaza is under huge strain.

But ultimately Madam President, peace will come only through fresh negotiations between the parties, supported by the international community. Every day makes it more critical that both Israelis and Palestinians return to direct negotiations and urgently prioritise steps to resolve the situation in Gaza. This is the only way that we will be able to achieve a two-state solution: a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. Those who seek to undermine this, including through unjustified acts of violence, deserve the rightful condemnation of this Council, but also the condemnation of the whole world.

Thank you Madam President.

[Speech: Karen Bradley toasts success of NI Commonwealth Games Team](#)

Good evening.

It is my great pleasure, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to welcome you all to Stormont House this evening to celebrate the success of the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games squad.

It was a magnificent achievement on the world stage and as a passionate supporter of sport I only wish I could have been there in person to cheer you on!

You even managed to bring some of the Australian sunshine along with you tonight, even if it is a few degrees cooler than what you experienced on the Gold Coast!

For a small country we have once again excelled and shown that big is not always best -, securing a total of 12 medals across a range of disciplines. It is fantastic to see some of those on display here this evening.

This was of course our best ever medal haul for a Games hosted outside the United Kingdom and matched our second best ever medal tally.

Special mention goes to Rhys McClenaghan for his fantastic Gold medal winning performance in the Men's Pommel event – a feat made all the more remarkable

by the fact that he beat reigning Olympic and World Champion, Max Whitlock from England.

Congratulations also goes to Kirsty Barr and Gareth McAuley for their respective Silver and Bronze medals in shooting and Leon Reid for his impressive bronze in the men's 200 metres.

And of course, we cannot forget all of those who carried on our proud tradition of medal winning in boxing with Brendan Irvine, Kurt Walker, Aidan Walsh, Kristina O'Hara, Carly McNaul, Michaela Walsh, Stephen Donnelly and James McGivern securing an impressive haul of eight silver and bronze medals.

Beyond those medal-winners, let me congratulate every one of you who were selected to be part of this team. I want to take an opportunity to acknowledge the long years of preparation and dedication that went into that achievement. And for those of who have supported, advised and trained our athletes every step of the way, we thank you too.

Above all, your achievements will help inspire a generation of young people to follow their own sporting dreams and believe that nothing is impossible. In my former role, I was Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport – a role which left me with an enduring passion for the impact sport has on individual lives. It teaches valuable life-lessons, encourages confidence and self-discipline, but above all – it encourages you to be the very best that you can be. Your achievements have left a lasting legacy and you should feel enormously proud of that contribution to the wider society.

Congratulations once again on your fabulous achievements. I look forward to meeting you all and hearing about your own individual performances and experiences during the course of this evening.

Thank you.

[Press release: PM meets European Roundtable of Industrialists: 30 May 2018](#)

The Prime Minister welcomed representatives from the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) to Downing Street and set out the Government's desire to hear views from businesses in the UK and across Europe as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

She spoke about the need to ensure our future economic partnership with the EU is ambitious and comprehensive, going beyond existing models, as she set out in her Mansion House speech. EU Exit Secretary David Davis then provided

an update on progress in the negotiations.

On customs, the Prime Minister explained the work that was underway on the two customs models and underlined the importance of ensuring that our future trading arrangements with the EU are as frictionless as possible, delivering on the commitments to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and allowing the UK to pursue an independent trade policy.

The PM recognised the necessity of providing certainty for businesses, pointing to the agreement of an implementation period at the European Council in March to provide time to allow businesses to prepare for the new arrangements.

The attendees discussed regulatory standards, with the Prime Minister and David Davis reiterating the UK's commitment to maintain high standards.

There was consensus that reaching a robust agreement on data-sharing is vital to our future economic and security relationship with the EU.

The PM finished by thanking ERT members for an open and productive discussion, and they agreed to continue the dialogue on the issues discussed.

Attendees

Carl-Henric Svanberg Chairman, ERT, Chairman, BP
Vittorio Colao Vice-Chairman, ERT, Chief Executive, Vodafone Group
Svein Richard Brandtzaeg President and CEO, Norsk Hydro
Paul Bulcke Chairman, Nestlé
Ignacio Galán Chairman and CEO, Iberdrola
Moya Greene Chief Executive Officer, Royal Mail Group
Paul Hermelin Group Chairman and CEO, Capgemini
Frans van Houten President and CEO, Royal Philips
Harald Krüger Chairman of the Board of Management, BMW Group
Rafael del Pino Chairman, Ferrovial
Tony Smurfit Group Chief Executive, Smurfit Kappa Group
Johannes Teysen Chairman and CEO, E.ON
Brian Ager Secretary General, ERT

[Press release: Statement on Assad regime's recognition of Abkhazia and](#)

South Ossetia as independent states

Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan said:

It is utterly unacceptable that the Assad regime has recognised the so-called “independence” of the breakaway Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Russian military intervention in Georgia in 2008 and its subsequent recognition of the breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as so-called “independent states” was an unacceptable violation of the sovereign rights of Georgia. Russia’s actions continue to undermine Georgia’s rightful territorial integrity.

This move will do nothing to bring peace closer. Once again, both the Syrian regime and Russia are aggressively trying to undermine the rules-based international order.

The British Government reiterates its full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and to UN Security Council Resolution 1808 which reaffirms the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[News story: First plot stone unveiled at new service accommodation site in Wiltshire](#)

Lieutenant General Nick Pope CBE, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, together with Mr John Leary, Lovell's Major Projects Director unveiled the stone with representatives of the Army Basing Programme (ABP), Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Lovell in attendance.

Work is well underway across the Salisbury Plain Training Area to prepare for the Service personnel returning from Germany in 2019 under the ABP. A critical construction activity is the provision of Service Family Accommodation. This constitutes the building of 917 new homes at 3 sites on Salisbury Plain; Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall. In addition, ABP has purchased 100 homes of open market housing at Tidworth. The build of new homes represents a significant investment on Salisbury Plain and is critical to enable the final units to relocate to Wiltshire from Germany and within the UK in 2019.

General Pope said:

The new homes that Lovell are providing on behalf of the Army Basing Programme is testament to the Army's commitment to invest in our estate providing 21st century living and working facilities for our soldiers and their families.

Since Ministry of Defence contracted with Lovell in November 2017, work is now well underway across all 3 sites. At Bulford, where 225 new homes are being built, the Roads & Sewers works are largely complete and over a third of the foundations have already been laid. The Bulford programme is the most advanced of the SFA sites and timber frame installations have commenced.

Alongside the groundworks element, Lovell has also been undertaking enabling works including 2 new section 278 access junctions and the installation of its administration/welfare facilities and storage compound. These facilities coupled with strong supply chain relationships will allow Lovell to deliver this prestigious project at the fast track rate required in order to ensure homes are ready for the returning Service personnel and their families.

Mark Duddy, ABP Programme Director said:

I am really impressed with the speed of delivery and the amount of progress that has been made since the contract was signed in

November; we remain firmly on track to deliver the required new homes to enable the units to return from Germany in 2019. This project is an excellent example of how we are updating the estate by providing first class living accommodation for our Service personnel.

John Leary said:

Lovell were delighted to host today's event to mark the commencement of superstructure works on our SPTA scheme. We were honoured to welcome Lieutenant General Nick Pope CBE to unveil our commemorative stone, representing a significant milestone at the Bulford site and for the SPTA SFA project as a whole. We look forward to continuing to work with the ABP, WYG and our supply chain partners to ensure timely delivery of high quality SFA for our Service families.'