

Press release: PM statement with President Erdogan

President Erdogan, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Downing Street today.

The UK-Turkey relationship is indispensable.

The issues we have discussed underline just how important it is that we work ever more closely together to make our people safer and more prosperous.

I'd like to start by addressing the troubling situation in Gaza and the West Bank, which President Erdogan and I have discussed today.

The loss of life we have seen is tragic and extremely concerning.

Such violence is destructive to peace efforts and we call on all sides to show restraint.

There is an urgent need to establish the facts of what happened yesterday through an independent and transparent investigation, including why such a volume of live fire was used and what role Hamas played in events.

Palestinians have the right to protest, but these protests must be peaceful. We are concerned that extremist elements are seeking to hijack legitimate protests to further their own objectives.

And while we do not question the right of Israel to defend its borders, the use of live fire and the resulting loss of life is deeply troubling. We urge Israel to show restraint.

It is in everyone's interests for peace and stability to prevail in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The discussions we have had today have covered the breadth and depth of our relationship.

Allow me to say a few words on each of the key topics we've discussed.

Firstly, we are NATO allies and remain firmly committed to the Alliance as the best way of guaranteeing our collective security.

Since my visit to Ankara in January last year, both Turkey and the UK have suffered grievous attacks by terrorists.

As Daesh is defeated militarily, we are aware of the risk of foreign fighters dispersing from Syria and Iraq.

To counter this we have today agreed to take concrete steps towards measures that will formalise our information sharing.

Our intent is to agree that when Turkish authorities return a British Citizen suspected of terrorist offences to Britain, they will do so with vital evidence such as media taken from mobile devices and transcripts of interviews.

This will support our efforts to secure the convictions of those who seek to do us harm.

We have also reaffirmed our commitment to deepen co-operation between the Home Office and the Turkish Ministry of the Interior.

This commitment means that we will look at how our police, border, customs and coastguard agencies can share information more easily in order to tackle the terrorists and organised criminals involved in money laundering, drug smuggling and people and arms trafficking.

Turkey is on the frontline of many vital issues for the UK, particularly in Syria where it is an important member of the Global Coalition Against Daesh.

Today President Erdogan and I have reaffirmed our commitment to defeating Daesh and the need for a political settlement to end the war and provide stability for all of Syria, Turkey and the wider region.

We also agreed on the need to ensure humanitarian access in Syria and on the importance of compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the protection of civilians by all sides.

We reiterated our condemnation of the terrible chemical weapons attacks in Douma and on the streets of Salisbury.

While clearly the two incidents differ in order of magnitude, they are part of a pattern of disregard for the global norms that prohibit the use of chemical weapons.

Today President Erdogan and I agreed on the importance of restoring the international norm that the use of chemical weapons is abhorrent and can never be acceptable.

I underlined once again the UK position that the Salisbury attack was not just an act of attempted murder in Salisbury – nor just an act against the UK by Russia.

It was an affront to the rules based system on which we all depend.

The conflict in Syria has led to the displacement of millions of people, both within Syria and beyond.

I pay tribute to Turkey's extraordinary generosity in hosting more than three and a half million Syrian refugees and educating more than 600,000 Syrian children.

We recognise the enormous effort that the Turkish authorities are making to give those refugees the help they need.

In total the UK has committed more than £750 million both bilaterally and through the EU budget to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, in order to support those efforts.

During this visit the UK and Turkey have agreed high-level talks between our countries to explore ways in which we can work together to build capacity in the region and reduce the flow of migrants.

The importance of the UK-Turkey partnership is also demonstrated by our growing trade relationship.

Trade between the UK and Turkey has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past decade and is now worth more than £15 billion.

We continue to build on this and look to our future trade relationship once the UK leaves the EU.

During my visit to Ankara in 2017, we agreed to establish a trade working group to explore ways to liberalise and increase trade between the UK and Turkey.

Our officials continue to work together to build a solid foundation on which our relationship can flourish.

During my visit to Turkey, BAE Systems and TAI also agreed to collaborate on the pre-design phase of Turkey's new TFX fighter jet, which resulted in a contract worth more than £100 million being signed in August 2017.

This was the start of a deep and enduring defence partnership, including a new and unique government-to-government agreement that set a new framework for co-operation and dialogue, including between our defence ministries and air forces.

And today we can discuss the next phase of this project, Rolls Royce's bid to co-design the engine for the TFX fighter jet. This would support the development of aerospace engineering capability and jobs in the UK and Turkey and we look forward to continuing discussions.

Finally, the UK stood with the Turkish people when its democracy came under attack in July 2016.

It is right that those who sought to overthrow the democratically elected government are brought to justice.

But it is also important that in the defence of democracy – which has been facing extraordinary pressures from the failed coup, instability across the border from Syria and from Kurdish terrorism – Turkey does not lose sight of the values it is seeking to defend.

That is why today I have underlined to President Erdogan that we want to see democratic values and international human rights obligations upheld.

Throughout this process and in the face of the shared challenges ahead, the

UK will remain a true friend to Turkey.

So President Erdogan once again thank you for your visit and for such productive talks.

Press release: FCO statement on opening of Kerch bridge

Sir Alan Duncan said:

Crimea is part of Ukraine, and its annexation by Russia is a breach of international law.

The opening of this bridge represents yet another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, and a further example of Russia's reckless behaviour. We continue to work with partners to oppose the annexation, including by maintaining a robust package of sanctions.

The UK also remains deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Crimea, where we have seen the systematic persecution of minority groups and of those who voice their opposition to Russia's illegal annexation of the territory. We call again for Russia to release all Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and in Russia, and to allow unrestrained access for international human rights monitoring bodies to the peninsula.

Further information

- Follow Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

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Newsdesk

Press release: Unemployment levels at record low

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, said:

This Government is committed to delivering a United Kingdom that works for everyone and so I welcome today's Labour Market Statistics, which show a continued strength in the Northern Ireland economy.

The unemployment rate is down to its lowest ever level of 3.1% from over 8% in the wake of the recession and, crucially, the employment rate is up to one of the highest rates on record at 69.7%.

More than 15,000 new jobs were created over the last year, meaning more people with the security of a regular pay packet to provide for themselves and their families.

News story: The AAIB has sent a team to Hampshire

The AAIB has sent inspectors to Lasham, Hampshire, to investigate an accident involving a glider

News story: Food chain resilience in a

changing world: 2018 conference programme

Updated: Lord Henley will be giving a keynote speech and we have an updated programme for the conference. Please register for your place now.

[Lord Henley](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will be giving a keynote speech at the 2018 Government Chemist conference. The conference will be opened by the Government Chemist, and will focus on the challenges presented to the resilience of the food chain, in terms of food safety, security, authenticity and sustainability, especially as trading conditions and regulations evolve.

Conference programme – Day 1

- Welcome and introduction – Government Chemist
- Referee cases outcomes – Michael Walker, LGC
- Application of whole genome sequencing for public health interventions around foodborne pathogens – Kathie Grant, PHE England
- Keynote speech – Lord Henley, BEIS
- The role of Public Analysts in ensuring food chain resilience – Jon Griffin, Association of Public Analysts
- Regulating our future – modernising food regulation in the UK – Catriona Stewart, FSA
- The European Commission Knowledge Centre for Food Fraud and Quality – Franz Ultberth, JRC
- The Scottish Food Crime Unit: how FSS is using science to verify the authenticity of the food chain in Scotland – Lynsey Scullion and Duncan Smith, Food Standards Scotland
- Road map for the harmonisation of DNA testing for meat speciation – Tim Wilkes, LGC
- TBC – James Donarski, FERA

Conference programme – Day 2

- Are your genes to blame when your jeans don't fit? – Giles Yeo, Cambridge University
- How the food industry is preparing for EU exit – Helen Munday, Food and Drink Federation
- Food Safety Challenge – Hong Kong Perspective – Tom NG, Hong Kong Government Chemist Laboratory
- Antimicrobial resistance – Jim Huggett, LGC
- The Hand That Feeds: A musical about food crime – Kate Cooper, Birmingham City Council
- Early warning systems to detect, predict and assess food fraud – Yamine Bouzemrak, RIKILT
- Authenticity tools for detecting food fraud – Selvarani Elahi, LGC
- Accelerating rice improvement in South Asia – Katherine Steele, Bangor University

Download the conference programme and booking form



[Government Chemist Conference 2018 programme and booking form](#)

PDF, 644KB, 3 pages

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