

Press release: Joint statement from Prime Minister May, Chancellor Merkel and President Macron following President Trump's statement on Iran

It is with regret and concern that we, the Leaders of France, Germany and the United Kingdom take note of President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States of America from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Together, we emphasise our continuing commitment to the JCPoA. This agreement remains important for our shared security. We recall that the JCPoA was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council in resolution 2231. This resolution remains the binding international legal framework for the resolution of the dispute about the Iranian nuclear programme. We urge all sides to remain committed to its full implementation and to act in a spirit of responsibility.

According to the IAEA, Iran continues to abide by the restrictions set out by the JCPoA, in line with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The world is a safer place as a result. Therefore we, the E3, will remain parties to the JCPoA. Our governments remain committed to ensuring the agreement is upheld, and will work with all the remaining parties to the deal to ensure this remains the case including through ensuring the continuing economic benefits to the Iranian people that are linked to the agreement.

We urge the US to ensure that the structures of the JCPoA can remain intact, and to avoid taking action which obstructs its full implementation by all other parties to the deal. After engaging with the US Administration in a thorough manner over the past months, we call on the US to do everything possible to preserve the gains for nuclear non-proliferation brought about by the JCPoA, by allowing for a continued enforcement of its main elements.

We encourage Iran to show restraint in response to the decision by the US; Iran must continue to meet its own obligations under the deal, cooperating fully and in a timely manner with IAEA inspection requirements. The IAEA must be able to continue to carry out its long-term verification and monitoring programme without restriction or hindrance. In turn, Iran should continue to receive the sanctions relief it is entitled to whilst it remains in compliance with the terms of the deal.

There must be no doubt: Iran's nuclear program must always remain peaceful and civilian. While taking the JCPOA as a base, we also agree that other major issues of concern need to be addressed. A long-term framework for Iran's nuclear programme after some of the provisions of the JCPOA expire, after 2025, will have to be defined. Because our commitment to the security of our allies and partners in the region is unwavering, we must also address

in a meaningful way shared concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme and its destabilising regional activities, especially in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. We have already started constructive and mutually beneficial discussions on these issues, and the E3 is committed to continuing them with key partners and concerned states across the region.

We and our Foreign Ministers will reach out to all parties to the JCPoA to seek a positive way forward.

News story: Extension of Countryside Stewardship payment claim deadline

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) claim deadline is being extended by one month to 15 June 2018. This means CS agreement holders have an extra month to submit their CS annual claim. The original deadline for Natural England to receive these by was 15 May 2018.

The claim deadline extension does not apply to Environmental Stewardship claims or Basic Payment Scheme 2018 applications; both of these must be submitted by 15 May to avoid late claim penalties.

Farmers and land managers who are waiting for their CS agreement offer will be notified soon about whether or not their application was successful. Natural England is working to send out the remaining agreement offers by the end of May, and successful candidates will need to accept their agreements and send in a claim by 15 June.

Natural England is writing to all Countryside Stewardship agreement holders and applicants awaiting their agreement to inform them of the one month extension. The extra month also means that customers who need to make any changes to the maps on their agreement offer or raise any other queries with Natural England have time to do so.

Press release: Minister for Europe statement on election of new Armenian Prime Minister

Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan said:

I am pleased that a solution to the political situation in Armenia has been found, via negotiation and through the Parliament, and congratulate Nikol Pashinyan on his election as Armenia's new Prime Minister.

It is to the credit of all involved that events over the last three weeks have unfolded peacefully and largely without incident.

It is important that the restraint and statesmanship shown by all parties continues and that the political process moves forward, based on solid constitutional and legal foundations.

In my two visits to Armenia in the last 12 months, I have seen first-hand the country's rich history, and its huge potential. I was particularly impressed by the many young people I met, who are determined to build a bright future for Armenia.

The UK, as a longstanding friend of Armenia, stands ready to support its efforts to strengthen its democracy, deliver good governance, and improve economic opportunities for all.

Further information

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

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Government response: Ministerial statement on the peace process in South Sudan

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK welcomes the resumption of peace talks in South Sudan next week and the consultations that are now underway. This is a critical moment for the peace process and we remain strongly in support of regional efforts to bring about a lasting peace.

It is disappointing that we once again find ourselves in a position where the cessation of hostilities agreement reached at the last set of talks has not held, and the talks have so far failed to generate serious commitment to compromise. Meanwhile, the people of South Sudan remain in a terrible state of conflict and humanitarian crisis. Fighting, troop movements and the rhetoric of war continues, pushing the country deeper into crisis. In recent weeks we have seen violent clashes surge in Unity, Jonglei and the Central Equatorias. This is causing immense suffering and preventing lifesaving assistance from reaching those most in need.

As no party has yet been held to account for violating the cessation of hostilities agreement, the perpetrators continue to act with impunity. This is undermining prospects for a lasting peace to be agreed at the upcoming talks. Those who have violated the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement must face consequences for their actions. We urge the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to take immediate action in this regard, to leave the parties in no doubt of the region's commitment to peace.

Only a negotiated agreement can bring peace in South Sudan and create the conditions for elections. We believe that the High-level Revitalisation Forum remains the only platform with the scope and inclusion to deliver this.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Harriett Baldwin on Twitter [@hbaldwin](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[News story: Jeremy Hunt orders urgent action on patient safety at independent hospitals](#)

Independent hospitals must 'get their house in order and improve safety', the Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has said.

In a letter to the chief executives of independent healthcare providers, Jeremy Hunt ordered urgent action to be taken to improve patient safety.

As part of its recent report on the sector, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) – the safety regulator – raised patient safety as its biggest concern. CQC rated a third of independent hospitals as 'requires improvement' following examples of poor practice and unsafe care.

The Health and Social Care Secretary said:

If the sector is to partner with the NHS and benefit from our world-leading medical training, we need urgent assurances that the independent sector will get its house in order on safety, as well as a commitment to take rapid action to match the NHS's world-recognised progress on transparency.

Mr Hunt has given the sector 2 weeks to respond and set out what action they will take.

[Read the full text of the letter.](#)