

# Press release: UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue – April 2018 : Communique

The fifth meeting of the biannual Sudan-UK Strategic Dialogue was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Sudan in Khartoum on 24th April 2018, co-chaired by Ambassador Abdelghani Elnaim Awadelkarim, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan, and Neil Wigan, Director for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, accompanied by delegations from both countries.

The meetings covered bilateral issues, the peace process, human rights, development, trade and investment, migration, defence engagement, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, regional issues and culture. Both sides welcomed the continued progress in many aspects of the bilateral relationship since the last Strategic Dialogue meeting in London in October, and agreed to continue joint work in areas of mutual interest over the coming months.

Both sides welcomed the continued meetings between high level government officials from Sudan and the United Kingdom, including at Foreign Minister level last December. They discussed future work on macroeconomic development and reform, including technical assistance and support on improving business indicators. Both sides agreed to continue the regular dialogue on human rights between the two governments at all levels, in particular political and media freedoms in the run up to the 2020 elections, and the UK support for Sudan's accession to the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and other relevant Conventions. Both sides continued to emphasise the importance of joint work to combat trafficking in people.

On the peace process, both sides discussed the continuing reconfiguration of the UN-AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and agreed to continue to exchange views on the renewal of its mandate. Both parties welcomed the continued unilateral cessations of hostilities, and moves to open a UNAMID teamsite at Golo in Jebel Marra. They agreed to continue engaging constructively towards a negotiated political agreement to end the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas, including through the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

Both sides expressed strong concern about the ongoing conflict in South Sudan. The UK welcomed the Government of Sudan's support to the IGAD-led peace process and its continuing commitment to supporting South Sudanese refugees. Both sides agreed the importance of a politically inclusive peace process and agreed to engage constructively in support of the current IGAD led peace process.

The two parties also agreed to continue working together on countering terrorism and violent extremism. They welcomed continued exchanges of visits and agreed to consider further joint work in this field. Both sides were pleased with progress to deliver the current celebrations of the 70th

Anniversary of the British Council in Sudan and agreed to continue exchanges on cultural and educational issues, including primary and higher education, digitisation of archives and co-operation on youth strategies.

The UK and Sudan reaffirmed the importance of continued progress towards our joint goals, and a continued broadening of the bilateral relationship, and agreed to hold another Strategic Dialogue in London in October 2018.

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## **Press release: Bus operator's licence curtailed after prosecution for failing to auto-enrol staff in company pension scheme**

Traffic Commissioner says case involving Stotts Tours (Oldham) Ltd goes beyond a simple failure to comply with the law

A bus company which failed to auto enrol its staff into a company pension scheme has had its transport licence cut from 40 to 31 vehicles indefinitely.

Traffic Commissioner for the North West of England, Simon Evans, said Stotts Tours (Oldham) Ltd "manifestly brought its good repute into doubt" after director Alan Stott admitted he had buried his head in the sand about pensions requirements.

Stotts Tours (Oldham) Ltd was the first company to be prosecuted by the Pensions Regulator for failing to comply with the law on workplace pensions.

Mr Evans expressed his disappointment that as the regulator of the bus industry it was an operator in this sector who had "so clearly failed in its duty".

"That Stotts became the first company to be prosecuted casts a shadow on the industry," he added.

"My dismay is compounded because this case goes beyond a simply failure to comply with the law – since staff of companies such as Stotts are the very people whose interests an operator ought to be guarding and through the provision of pension schemes investing in their future."

The company was called to a public inquiry before the Traffic Commissioner on 27 April 2018. Alan Stott said he had buried his head in the sand regarding workplace pensions and failed to discuss it with his co-directors.

Evidence provided to the Commissioner showed the business now had a pension

scheme in place, staff had been auto-enrolled and back payments of employer contributions had been made.

Mr Evans also heard about other changes the business had made and intended to put in place from August. He also made note of the company's positive record of operating vehicles on the road with regard to safety standards.

The Traffic Commissioner ordered the company's licence to be reduced from 40 to 31 vehicles indefinitely and recorded a formal warning on its transport licence. A number of undertakings were agreed relating to the appointment of a new transport manager, financial standing and the payment of fines.

He also said the repute of the firm's transport manager, Alan Stott junior, was tarnished.

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## **Press release: Recruitment Campaigns open for Psychiatrist and retired Judicial Parole Board members**

The Centre for Public Appointments has today opened recruitment campaigns for both Psychiatrist and retired Judicial Parole Board members.

Martin Jones, CEO of the Parole Board, said:

"We are very happy to support these recruitment campaigns.

"It is an important and engaging role to be appointed as a Parole Board member, where protection of the public is the priority, and we welcome applicants who have the skills and experience to rise to that challenge."

The key task of all members of the Parole Board is to make rigorous, fair and timely risk assessments about individual cases which have the primary aim of protecting the public.

These are routine recruitment campaigns to fill positions that will be vacated by a number of current Parole Board members who are near the end of their tenure. There is the potential for up to 20 appointments per campaign.

The appointment will run for 5 years with the possibility of reappointment for a further term subject to satisfactory appraisal and at the discretion of Ministers.

The deadline for applications is 12:00 on 21 May 2018.

Go to the Centre for Public Appointments website for eligibility criteria, job specifications, and how to apply:

- [Psychiatrist Members](#)
- [Retired Judicial Members](#)

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## [Press release: DVLA sets a new challenge](#)

DVLA has once again laid down the challenge to pupils across Wales to work in teams and design a computer game, with the winning entries set to receive thousands of pounds worth of IT equipment for their schools or community centres.

The DVLA Code Challenge was first launched last year to promote Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and IT learning in primary schools and community centres in Wales.

Around 200 children and 150 adults attended the inaugural prize-giving event at DVLA's digital theatre in Swansea last December, which saw state-of-the-art IT kit given out to teams from over 50 primary schools and community groups from all over Wales. Pupils unable to attend on the day also had the chance to take part in the day's action via a live internet link, just as though they were there.

After the huge amount of interest last year, this year's competition has been opened up to include 11 to 14 year-olds, meaning pupils from secondary schools can also showcase their skills and win fantastic IT prizes for their schools or community centres.

DVLA IT Manager and STEM Ambassador Mark Jones said:

The DVLA Code Challenge was so successful that schools and sponsors enquired straight away about how they could sign up to the next competition, so we've decided to do it all over again.

This year, we are adding a new age group and opening up the competition to children aged between 7 and 11, and 11 to 14. This means that we can include both primary and secondary school pupils.

By taking part in the challenge, budding programmers can develop their coding abilities in a fun and engaging way. The competition also aims to promote teamwork and communication – these are all increasingly vital skills in the workplaces of today and tomorrow.

There will be an award day on Tuesday 4 December with fantastic educational prizes, a prize draw for all entrants, feedback on the entries from expert judges and a celebrity host.

Full information, including details of how to enter the competition, is available on the [DVLA Code Challenge website](#).

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## **[Press release: BPS 2018 applications due in the next two weeks](#)**

With two weeks to go until the deadline to submit applications, the RPA is continuing to encourage farmers to apply early to ensure their application is submitted in good time.

The RPA has received over 88% of applications online, as farmers continue to make the switch from paper forms.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

It is good to see more farmers submitting their applications online, with over 31,000 received so far. Applying online makes it easier to check and update personal and business details, as well as view and transfer land and entitlements.

I would encourage the remaining farmers who have yet to submit their application to do so early and online, so that they can be certain the RPA will receive these ahead of the deadline.

Farmers and land managers need to submit their BPS applications in the next fortnight before midnight on 15 May, in order claim for their single farm payment for 2018.

Help and support for applicants is available through our online guidance, "How to" videos and by telephone. Further information can be found on [here](#).

The RPA are getting a number of calls relating to Rural Payments service passwords.

Advice on resetting your password is available via the YouTube video below.

[RPA YouTube channel](#).