

## [News story: Troika statement on declaration of AU, IGAD and UN on South Sudan](#)

From:

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Part of:

Joint statement from UK, US and Norway welcoming the joint declaration expressing concern about continued fighting and violence in South Sudan.

The UK, US and Norway have issued the following joint statement:

The members of the Troika (Norway, UK and US) welcome the 29 January joint declaration of the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the UN, on South Sudan. It expressed deep concern about the continuing spread of fighting and the risk of inter-communal violence escalating into mass atrocities, and the dire humanitarian situation in the country. We too call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in South Sudan.

We applaud the declaration's call for a political solution emphasizing inclusivity and an active role for the AU High Representative toward ensuring that result. We echo the commitment of the AU, IGAD, and the UN to the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), and to further strengthen and enhance international cooperation in support of the South Sudan peace process.

**Further information**

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## [News story: Accelerator Innovation Network Event](#)

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The Defence and Security Accelerator is holding an event in London on 23 February 2017 to provide information on the first Innovation Fund challenge

Suppliers attending the event will be able to hear presentations about the Innovation Fund challenge which is aimed at revolutionising the human-information relationship for Defence.

If you cannot attend the event, sign up for our [webinar](#) which will take place on 27 February 2017.

[The competition](#) is seeking new technologies, processes and ways of working to improve the way we analyse and exploit data. With the relationship between human and information at the centre of war-fighting we need Defence leaders to have access to the right information on critical issues to enable decision making that outpaces our adversaries.

The challenges of this Accelerator competition are to:

- free up personnel through the application of innovative use of machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence to maintain military advantage
- allow for the rapid and automated integration of new sensors
- improve operator cognitive capacity and greater human machine teaming

Up to £6 million is available in total across phase 1 and 2 of this Innovation Fund competition.

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## [NE China province reports two H7N9 cases](#)

Northeast China's Liaoning Province on Monday reported two human H7N9 avian flu cases.

The two patients, from cities of Shenyang and Chaoyang, respectively, are being treated and in stable conditions, the provincial health authorities said in a statement.

In response to the disease, authorities in the two cities have taken disease control measures.

In addition to Liaoning, human infections have also been reported in the provinces of Guangdong, Guizhou, Hubei, Henan, Hunan, Jiangxi and Shandong,

as well as in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macao.

The public are advised to avoid direct contact with poultry and see doctors timely when developing symptoms including headache, fever and coughing.

At least ten people have died from the virus since the start of the year, according to disease control centers in Henan, Guangdong and Hunan provinces.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in March 2013 in China. It is most likely to strike in winter and spring.

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## [News story: Presentation slides from the Accelerator Enduring Challenge launch event](#)

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A launch event for the Enduring Challenge was held for science and technology providers on 26 January 2017.

At the event in London, Harriett Baldwin MP, Minister for Defence Procurement, launched the Innovation Initiative's £6 million Accelerator Enduring Challenge, in her keynote speech.

The Enduring Challenge is run by the MOD's new Defence and Security Accelerator and will fast-track the best ideas by funding their development, matching suppliers with expert Innovation Partners, and boosting supplier access to defence. The competition will run regularly, with up to 12 rounds a year.

### **Enduring challenge overview**

In the [opening session](#), the Accelerator's Rob Solly introduced the Accelerator and gave an overview of the Enduring Challenge and how it differs from the previously-run Centre for Defence Enterprise enduring competition.

This was followed by the Accelerator's Jim Pennycook, who explained the transition to the Accelerator and gave an overview of proof-of-concept research funding opportunities for innovative science and technology providers.

Further detail was then provided by the Accelerator's Bruce Hardie, who explained the specifics of the challenge, how the competitions would work and the practicalities of submitting a proposal.

## **Defence and Security perspectives**

In the [second session](#), military advisers and technical experts from the security services, air, land and sea sectors gave their perspective of how the Enduring Challenge will meet the defence and security challenges.

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## **Top auditor: US\$2.6 bln environment funds not effectively used**

China's top auditor has found that 17.6 billion yuan (about 2.56 billion U.S. dollars) of fiscal funds earmarked in 2016 for pollution control and resource management was not used effectively.

The finding was part of the results released after the National Audit Office (NAO) sent inspection teams to 18 provincial regions to review the use of fiscal funds for water pollution prevention and control.

The NAO inspectors also found that a total of 397 water pollution protection projects had failed to achieve desired effect, and some environment funds were not distributed in accordance with special protection plans.

The NAO noted increasing pressure from regional water environment protection, adding that in some regions, environment protection laws were not enforced strictly.

In response to the audit, local authorities in the 18 provincial regions have improved the distribution and use of more than 3 billion yuan of environment funds, and pushed forward the progress of 77 water pollution control projects.

Meanwhile, the NAO urged local auditors in 31 provincial regions to audit the funds meant for water pollution prevention.

Chinese authorities have punished 3,229 government officials for fiscal violations found when auditing the central government's 2015 budget.