

[News story: UK and US strengthen maritime aviation cooperation](#)

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin today signed a P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) declaration with her United States counterpart, Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work to further strengthen the uniquely close defence relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 2019 the UK will receive delivery of its first Poseidon P-8A aircraft and both nations have committed to deepen their defence cooperation when operating in the North Atlantic region. Through seeking opportunities to share logistics and support bases and optimise the use of P-8A aircraft, particularly in Europe, the declaration should ensure increased value for money and operational effectiveness.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The United States is our pre-eminent Ally in global defence and collective security. This declaration is further evidence of how our two countries continue to cooperate and build mutual security, particularly in the North Atlantic region.

Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178 billion Equipment Plan, the P-8A programme will provide us with enhanced surveillance capabilities.

As leading members of NATO, the UK and US are committed to the collective defence of each other and their Allies. We have also pledged to deepen defence cooperation, bilaterally and within the Alliance, to further improve the ability to operate together in exercises and operations.

The declaration provides a new opportunity to maximise value for money for the taxpayer and continue to strengthen UK-US interoperability and to pursue efficiencies in operations and support, including at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, where the P-8A will bring some 400+ jobs. The Department of Defense and Ministry of Defence plan to cooperate closely on operation of their P-8A aircraft in the North Atlantic to ensure a coherent approach to MPA activity.

Delivering on the commitment of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the UK is purchasing nine Boeing P-8A Poseidon MPAs to be based in RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland. The aircraft will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities, including conducting anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering.



Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin meeting Bob Work in September 2016

Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work said:

Today's signing of the Declaration on P-8A Poseidon Bilateral Cooperation exemplifies the importance and strength of the US-UK partnership.

This cooperation agreement ensures and deepens our interoperability and maritime patrol capabilities. Together, the US and UK will continue to deter regional threats and maintain a robust military posture.

With the first P-8A aircraft due to arrive in the UK in 2019, the RAF has ensured that we have maintained the skills needed to operate these MPAs through the 'seed-corn' programme, which has embedded former RAF MPA operators within the MPA squadrons of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Air Commodore Ian Gale, Senior Responsible Owner for the Poseidon P-8A programme, said:

This agreement will enhance the UK's maritime patrol capability and further strengthen UK-US defence relations. The arrival of the Poseidon P-8A in 2019 will provide the UK with significantly increased capabilities and bring hi-tech employment to Scotland and

the wider UK.

This agreement follows Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon's [recent visit to Norway](#), where he also committed to cooperate on Maritime Patrol Aircraft operations, ensuring that the UK will continue to play a key role in delivering collective maritime security across the globe.

[Tory Health Minsters should be acting to address the challenges on the costs of care – Barbara Keeley](#)

Barbara

Keeley, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Social Care, commenting on an investigation by the Health Service Journal and Disability United, which reveals that Clinical Commissioning Groups are drawing up new restrictions governing care for older and disabled people, said:

"It is deeply worrying that thousands of vulnerable people could be forced to move into care homes against their will just because that is a cheaper option than living at home.

"Evicting older or disabled people from their homes due to decisions about the cost of their care is unacceptable. This could also affect people who need care at home at the end of their lives.

"Tory Health Minsters should be acting to address the challenges on the costs of care. The Government must ensure that the NHS and social care has the funding it needs."

[Notice: Downstream of Town Bridge, Peterborough to the Dog in a Doublet](#)

When: 4 February 2017 between 9am and 3.30pm

What's happening: There is a rowing event taking place on the river Nene at the locations and times stated.

Notice: Doddington Lock and Islip Lock

When: 1 February 2017 between 10am and 2pm.

What's happening: There will be a power outage at the locks during the period stated.

Fighting impunity is the best way to protect Mexico's human rights defenders – UN expert

25 January 2017 – A United Nations rights expert expressed concern today about widespread impunity for crimes against human rights defenders in Mexico, noting that the situation is inducing more violations.

“The failure to investigate and sanction aggressors has signalled a dangerous message that there are no consequences for committing such crimes. This creates an environment conducive to repetition of violations,” warned Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur with a mandate to monitor and report on the promotion and protection of defenders in the world.

Mr. Forst visited Mexico from 16 to 24 January 2017, crisscrossing from Mexico City to the states of Chihuahua, Guerrero, Oaxaca and State of Mexico. He met with more than 800 human rights defenders from 24 states, 60 per cent of whom were women.

Noting the “elevated levels of insecurity and violence facing them in the country” in the complex context of organized crime, corruption in the country, and State repression, he warned that “impunity has become both the cause and the effect of the overall insecurity of human rights defenders in Mexico.”

“Impunity feeds criminalization of defenders, which in turn fuels fear among broader civil society, undermining the general aspirations for human rights and the rule of law,” said Mr. Forst in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). “For human rights defenders, the best protection they could have is when justice is served and

perpetrators are held accountable.”

On the final day of his visit, the expert delivered a preliminary report with a series of recommendations to the Mexican authorities and other actors to improve the protection of human rights defenders and enable their important work.

“Only by joining efforts will Mexico be able to overcome the serious situation in which defenders are carrying out their work, which is core to a democratic society,” he stressed.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.