

Joint statement on possible annexation of areas in the West Bank



In a joint statement France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom said:

We are deeply concerned about the announcement of a possible annexation of areas in the West Bank, particularly the Jordan valley and the northern portion of the Dead Sea.

This would, if implemented, constitute a serious breach of international law. France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom will continue to call on all parties to refrain from actions in contravention of international law that would imperil the viability of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 lines, and make it harder to achieve a just and lasting peace.

We are clear about Israel's right to security and strongly condemn recent attacks on Israel from Gaza.

Further information

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UK-US-Norway statement on the anniversary of the signing of the revitalized agreement on the

resolution of the conflict in South Sudan

On the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the Troika (United States, United Kingdom, and Norway) wishes to reconfirm its support for the peace process and to underscore the need to implement the terms of the R-ARCSS in a timely manner.

We applaud President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar for engaging in direct talks in Juba on September 9-10 and for the subsequent recommitment to form a transitional government. We encourage President Kiir to continue to facilitate the dialogue necessary among South Sudan's political leaders, including Dr. Machar, to ensure the formation of a transitional, representative, national government by the November 12 deadline. In forming this government, South Sudan's leaders have the opportunity to set aside ethnic rivalries and personal interests and demonstrate the political will necessary to build a better future for the people of South Sudan.

On this anniversary, we hope that South Sudan's political leaders will demonstrate to the millions of South Sudanese who live in fear of a return to conflict that they are definitively abandoning the use of force to resolve political differences. We urge all of South Sudan's leaders to take the necessary steps to uphold a definitive cessation of hostilities and to initiate the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration process that will build a truly national security apparatus.

The Troika will continue to stand with and support the people of South Sudan, who deserve a government that respects human rights, empowers women and youth, and enables economic development through the peaceful return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. We further hope for a constructive relationship with the post-November 12 Government of South Sudan.

Jenrick fast-tracks Midlands Engine growth Package



- Commitment to new devolution deals across the Midlands
- Publication of a new Midlands Engine Strategy brought forward to this Autumn

The Midlands Engine received a major boost today as Local Government Secretary and Midlands Engine Champion the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced the Government's commitment to further devolution deals across the region.

The Secretary of State made the announcement on a tour of Bombardier's high-tech Research and Development facility in Derby.

The measures announced today include:

- A pledge to build on the huge success of Mayor Andy Street in the West Midlands and pursue new devolution deals across the Midlands so all communities receive the powers, investment and resources they need to flourish.
- A commitment to bring forward a new Midlands Engine Strategy this Autumn. This will be a roadmap for the Midlands Engine written in partnership with the region setting out how the Midlands can seize the bright opportunities ahead with investment in infrastructure, skills, technology and culture.

Local Government Secretary and Midlands Engine Champion, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, said:

Today's announcement reinforces my commitment to back the Midlands economy with a new wave of devolution deals.

We're building on Mayor Andy Street's huge success in the West Midlands by committing today to roll out more devolution. Taking back control doesn't just apply to Westminster regaining sovereignty from the EU. It means cities and counties becoming more self-governing.

We are going to give greater powers to mayors, council leaders and communities and, in doing so, we will ensure that every part of the

Midlands sees the benefits of all the prosperity and opportunity we have in the country.

This builds on the support we have provided for the Midlands Engine including £1.9 billion in Local Growth Fund investment and announcing the 30 towns from across the Midlands who will be among the first to develop multi-million pound Town Deals through our £3.6 billion Towns Fund.

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New Jordan Taskforce launched to ensure London Conference commitments

Senior representatives from international donors and financial institutions met with the Government of Jordan in Amman yesterday afternoon for the launch of the Jordan Taskforce, the global coalition led by the Government to support Jordan's ambitious plans for economic transformation.

Six months on from the high-level conference in London, hosted by the UK and Jordan governments, the Taskforce provided an opportunity for Jordan to demonstrate progress of reforms, and for the international community to report on their support in implementing Jordan's reform program.

Yesterday's event was convened by Jordan's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and State Minister for Economic Affairs, Dr Mohammad Al-Ississ. The group discussed the challenges and opportunities the Government of Jordan faces in trying to ensure growth and jobs, implement reform, and deliver financial sustainability for the country. Minister Al-Ississ provided an update on the economic situation and progress against the Government's priorities over the next five years.

The Minister also used the meeting to present a diagnosis of Jordan's macroeconomic situation, assessment of key risks and opportunities and the path to accelerating growth and job creation, including an overview of financing needs for next year.

Donors responded by setting out their commitments to Jordan and their planned support for the implementation of the key reforms outlined in the country's Five-Year Reform Matrix.

The Jordan Taskforce was formed at the London Initiative conference in February of this year to provide a robust follow-up mechanism to track and report on progress against Jordan's reform agenda, and the international

community's support to finance and implement these reforms.

The global coalition of partners will now meet quarterly at working level to ensure regular monitoring of Jordan's progress, and lay the groundwork for the first six-monthly High-Level roundtable which will take place at the World Bank Annual Meetings in October. The High-Level roundtable will agree priorities based on the analysis of the quarterly meetings to deliver outcomes under the three pillars of the London Initiative; growth and reform, debt sustainability and investment.

Commenting on the critical importance of the Taskforce in ensuring Jordan's long-term economic sustainability, Minister Al-Ississ said:

Jordan is committed to a path of accelerating growth momentum and job creation. It has successfully delivered reforms to ensure macroeconomic stability and is now keen to leverage that to attract investments and increase exports in both volume and sophistication.

The London Initiative marked an inflection point in this path and the Jordan Taskforce is a key forum to ensure the international community is focused on supporting the reform program that Jordan has developed and committed to.

UK Minister of State for the Middle East, Andrew Murrison said:

The London Initiative was an important moment in the UK's partnership with Jordan and a great opportunity to showcase the country's potential and attract investment from around the world.

But the conference was just the start. The UK is committed to work with the country in the long term, supporting the government to implement reform and attract investors to help boost its economic growth.

World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa, Ferid Belhaj added that:

While there is much talk of Jordan's challenges, including unemployment, debt and the continued impact of the situation in Syria, there are also immense opportunities. This is especially true of the country's dynamic youth population, Jordan's greatest asset. The economic transformation which Jordan is leading aims at empowering them and giving them the chance to drive Jordan's future growth.

Notes to editors

- The London Initiative conference was hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May and King Abdullah in London on 28 February 2019.
 - It launched a 5-year initiative to transition Jordan's economy through private sector-led growth, implementation of a macroeconomic reform programme and maximising the potential of Jordan's young and educated workforce.
 - The event convened the international community around Jordan's reform vision, leveraging financial and non-financial support from international partners.
 - More information is available at: <https://www.londonjordan.co.uk>
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Education Secretary visits the West Midlands

Today (12 September) Education Secretary Gavin Williamson visited Dudley College of Technology in the West Midlands to see first-hand the work they are doing to support young people to gain the skills they need to forge great careers.

As one of the first institutions to deliver new T Level qualifications next year and one of the largest apprenticeship training providers in the West Midlands, Dudley College is at the forefront of building a world class, technical education system that will deliver the workforce the country needs for the future

On the visit Mr Williamson met with Neil Thomas, College Principal, as well as full-time students and apprentices. He also experienced hands on learning and had a go at perfecting his welding skills in a state-of-the-art virtual reality welding bay – just some of the state-of-the-art equipment the college uses to train their students.

Mr Williamson's visit follows the recent announcement that the Government will provide an additional £400 million boost – the single biggest uplift since 2010 – for providers of 16-19 education for the year 2020- 21. This significant investment means colleges like Dudley will benefit from even more cash so they can continue to deliver high-quality courses, including T Levels.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It was brilliant to meet with staff, students and apprentices at Dudley College of Technology today. The college is at the forefront of delivering the skilled workforce the West Midlands and the

country needs for the future and I've been really impressed with what I've seen here today.

It is absolutely vital that we continue to grow the nations skills. The £400 million boost we have provided for colleges and sixth forms will help to get even more young people on the path to a rewarding job. This major investment will help make sure colleges, like Dudley, can continue to provide high-quality education and recruit the brilliant teachers and leaders they need.

Neil Thomas College Principal , Dudley College of Technology said:

I welcome the emphasis the Minister is placing on further education and the recognition that we are at the forefront of training the skilled workforce our economy needs. We believe first class technical education can change lives and plays a significant role in supporting our local employers as they face the skills and productivity challenges of the future. We are proud to be delivering the new T Levels and hope this attracts more young people to pursue training and careers in these rewarding sectors.

Dudley College of Technology is also the driving force behind the Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology – [one of 12 that are being established across the country](#) to specialise in delivering quality higher level technical training (primarily at Level 4 and 5) in STEM subjects, such as digital, advanced manufacturing and engineering to help close skills gaps.

While he was in the area, Mr Williamson also visited Walsall Studio School and Sixth Form, part of the Mercian Multi Academy Trust, which specialises in Business Social Enterprise and a broad range of Creative and Digital disciplines for 14-19 year olds. The school will also be among the first to offer the new T Level in Digital Production, Design and Development from September 2020. During the visit the Education Secretary met with students and staff to discuss how the new qualification will help young people in the West Midlands to secure rewarding, sort-after jobs in the digital sector.

Mr Williamson added:

Digital skills are in high-demand. Our new T Level in Digital Production, Design and Development which will be taught at Walsall Studio School from next September, will make sure more young people can gain the skills and experience they need to get ahead in their careers. It was great to meet students and staff and hear all about how they are ramping up preparations in readiness for the introduction of the new technical qualification next year.

Mr Dan Parkes, CEO The Mercian Trust said:

We are delighted to be pioneering excellence in the field of technical education as we further develop qualifications that employers value and real-world experiences for students that prepare them for their future careers. Walsall Studio School has a track record of innovation and students working collaboratively with industry professionals. The digital economy in the West Midlands has created record levels of jobs and it is our job to ensure our local young people have the skills employers need. Through Walsall Studio School the Mercian Trust aims to be at the forefront of this digital revolution.

Mr Darren Perry, Studio School Principal added

Our Digital Production, Design and Development T Level is being developed ready for September 2020 as part of our new St Matthew's Learning Campus and provides our students with even more opportunities to work closely with the creative and digital industry professionals as they prepare to meet the growing demand for higher level digital skills.

[The first three T Levels for Digital, Education and Construction will be taught from September 2020](#) by further education providers across the country. A further seven will to be taught from 2021, including three in Health and Science, with a further 15 coming on stream from 2022 onwards in sectors such as legal, financial and accounting, engineering and manufacturing, and creative & design.

Institutes of Technology will build on and complement the further and higher education on offer in the areas where they are located but will have their own distinct identity and physical presence with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. The Institutes will provide a natural progression route for young people taking T Levels or A Levels (Level 3) enabling them to take the next step up to higher level technical education and training (Level 4 or 5) – like Foundation Degrees and higher level apprenticeships in STEM subjects – helping to upskill the next generation and ensure employers can access the skills they need.