

Press release: Minister of State for Africa Harriett Baldwin visits Rwanda to commemorate the Genocide Against the Tutsi

The UK Minister of State for Africa, Harriett Baldwin MP, arrived in Kigali on Friday to join the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

On Sunday she will join dozens of other dignitaries from across the world to mark a day of remembrance at the Gisozi memorial in Kigali.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

I am proud to be here in Kigali to represent the United Kingdom and to pay my respects to the victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The Rwandan people have shown incredible resilience and unity and I am truly inspired by the transformative progress that Rwanda has made since 1994.

The UK Government is committed to continuing to assist Rwanda's recovery from the Genocide: holding perpetrators to account and ensuring justice is achieved.

The UK and Rwanda have a deep, long-standing relationship and I look forward to continuing to work together to build a more peaceful, prosperous and stable future for all.

Minister Baldwin is also planning to visit UK aid funded programmes in Rwanda. She will talk to those who have benefitted from the Government of Rwanda's VUP social protection programme which has received £62.3 million (RWF 73.3 billion) from UK aid over the last 5 years.

The programme has helped over 242,000 of the poorest households through public works and cash transfers. This is aligned with a UK aid priority to leave no-one behind.

Minister Baldwin said:

I am looking forward to spending time in Rwanda and reaffirming the partnership with the UK.

I was last in Rwanda in 2009. This visit will allow me to see the significant development and economic growth that I know the country has experienced in the last 10 years.

As Chair In Office of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, we are looking forward to working with Rwanda as it prepares for CHOGM 2020.

Minister Baldwin will also spend some time looking at how UK aid is supporting jobs and economic growth in Rwanda.

She will visit the Africa Improved Foods factory, which is a joint venture producing highly nutritious foods used to combat malnutrition in humanitarian operations around the world.

As well as the Minimex factory which is the largest mill in the country, producing high quality maize flour sold across East Africa. With the support of UK aid, the recent investment by AgDevCo will allow it to increase its capacity and ramp up purchases from tens of thousands of maize farmers across the country.

This is part of a set of UK aid investments supporting agriculture worth £59.5 million (RWF 70.3 billion) from the UK Department for International Development over the period 2015 to 2022.

Speech: PM's words on Brexit negotiations: 6 April 2019

Delivering Brexit has been my priority ever since I became Prime Minister and it remains so today. I want the UK to leave the EU in an orderly way as soon as possible and that means leaving in a way that does not disrupt people's lives.

My strong preference was to do that by winning a majority in Parliament for the agreement the UK reached with the EU last November. I did everything in my power to persuade the Conservative and DUP MPs who form the government's majority to back that deal – including securing legally-binding changes to address MPs' concerns with it.

But that deal was rejected three times by Parliament and there is no sign it can be passed in the near future. So I had to take a new approach.

Because Parliament has made clear it will stop the UK leaving without a deal, we now have a stark choice: leave the European Union with a deal or do not

leave at all.

My answer to that is clear: we must deliver Brexit and to do so we must agree a deal. If we cannot secure a majority among Conservative and DUP MPs we have no choice but to reach out across the House of Commons.

The referendum was not fought along party lines and people I speak to on the doorstep tell me they expect their politicians to work together when the national interest demands it. The fact is that on Brexit there are areas where the two main parties agree: we both want to end free movement, we both want to leave with a good deal, and we both want to protect jobs.

That is the basis for a compromise that can win a majority in Parliament and winning that majority is the only way to deliver Brexit.

The longer this takes, the greater the risk of the UK never leaving at all. It would mean letting the Brexit the British people voted for slip through our fingers. I will not stand for that. It is essential we deliver what people voted for and to do that we need to get a deal over the line.

To achieve this I will go to Brussels this week to seek a short extension to Article 50. My intention is to reach an agreement with my fellow EU leaders that will mean if we can agree a deal here at home we can leave the EU in just six weeks.

We can then get on with building a new relationship with our nearest neighbours that will unlock the full potential of Brexit and deliver the brighter future that the British people voted for.

Press release: £2.3 billion debt relief granted in 10 years of DROs

The first Debt Relief Order (DRO) was approved 10 years ago in April 2009 with the aim of assisting people with small levels of assets and little surplus income deal with their debts*.

Since then, the Insolvency Service has approved more than 254,000 DROs to people with debts worth an average of £9,400.

People apply for a DRO through an authorised debt adviser, from organisations such as Citizens Advice, StepChange and PayPlan, who submit applications online to the Official Receiver on their client's behalf.

Approximately 99% of DROs are approved within 48 hours of the application being received into the team in Plymouth and 2018 saw the Insolvency Service issue approximately £312 million of debt relief – the largest amount for a

single year.

A DRO normally runs for 12 months after which the debts are written off and between 2009 and 2017**, while 64% of DROs were granted to women, both genders experienced similar levels of average debt – £9,200 for women compared to £9,100 for men.

In the same period, 25% of DROs were granted to people aged between 25 and 34. London experienced the lowest rate of DROs in every year since 2009 – 3 per 10,000 adults – compared to both the North East and South West where the average rate of DROs per 10,000 adults was 7.8.

Liz Thomas, Head of Debt Relief Orders for the Insolvency Service, said:

Reaching the 10-year anniversary since the first DRO was approved is a significant milestone and we are immensely proud of the role we have played in helping a substantial number of people out of debt.

DROs are a partnership with the debt advice sector who we have worked closely with during this past decade to ensure people are provided with every opportunity to lift themselves out of financial difficulties.

Paula Hogarth, DRO Service Debt Advice Centre Manager for [StepChange Debt Charity](#), said:

DROs are a good solution for people with minimal assets and low income who can't afford to repay their debts.

While it's important that people get proper debt advice, as different circumstances lend themselves to different debt solutions, those people who are eligible for DROs definitely benefit from the relative speed, simplicity and low cost of setting up the solution, as well as usually becoming debt-free a year later.

Diane Watson, Debt Relief Order (DRO) Liaison Officer at [PayPlan](#), said:

We have arranged DROs for a significant number of clients since they were introduced a decade ago and always fully assess clients before recommending debt solutions. So if a DRO is not suitable, we will work with them to help them regain control of their finances as part of a plan which is most suited to their individual circumstances.

*In October 2015, the upper limit for qualifying debt was raised from £15,000 to £20,000, and the asset limit was raised from £300 to £1,000.

**Figures for age, location and gender are based on figures produced annually with the last set [published in July 2018](#). The next set of figures are set to be published in July 2019.

Information about how to apply for a DRO is [available on GOV.UK](#), including where to [find a debt adviser](#). There are 12 competent authorities: Angel Advance, Advice UK, Christian Against Poverty, Citizens Advice, CMAS, Debt Advisory Centre, Insolvency Practitioners Association, Institute of Money Advisors, Money Advice Trust, PayPlan, Shelter and Step Change

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

For more information on [PayPlan](#) and media opportunities contact Chloe Butterick: chloe.butterick@payplan.com; 01476 518653.

For more information on [StepChange](#) and media opportunities contact Sue Anderson: sue.anderson@stepchange.org; 0207 391 4582

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Millions to benefit from pay rise and tax cuts](#)

- 32 million people in the UK will see their income tax bill reduced compared to 2015-16
- 2.1 million people are also set to benefit from this week's National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage increases

Over 30 million people are set to benefit from the increase to the personal allowance and higher rate threshold this month, as the Chancellor delivers on a manifesto commitment one year early.

Britain's workers will also benefit from the biggest increase to the National Living Wage since it was introduced, rising by almost 5% to £8.21 per hour. This inflation-busting pay rise means a full-time National Living Wage worker will earn an extra £690 over a year.

The National Minimum Wage has also increased faster than inflation. This includes increases to £7.70 per hour for 21 to 24-year olds and £6.15 for 18 to 20-year olds, with workers in the retail and hospitality sectors due to benefit the most. Taken together with the National Living Wage rise, in total 2.1 million people are set to get a pay rise.

And a fuel duty freeze for the ninth year in a row and increases to work allowances in Universal Credit will go towards helping families with the everyday cost of living.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

Thanks to our careful management of the public finances and the hard work of the British people, we can afford to cut taxes for millions, increase the wages of the lowest paid, and cut business rates for small retailers.

The economy is growing, debt is falling, and funding for public services and investment is increasing. Our balanced approach means Britain is well placed to seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride, said:

Our Budget was unashamedly for the strivers and the workers who keep the country going.

From this month we've introduced tax cuts, increased wages and boosted support for small retailers to ensure people keep more of the money they work hard to earn.

It's good news for Britain's businesses, too. The government's plan for the High Street is cutting costs by £1 billion over the next two years by giving small retailers a third off their business rates bills. Together with other rates reforms and cuts introduced since 2016 this is saving businesses over £13 billion over the next five years.

Alongside these changes, the government is increasing investment in key public services. The start of the new financial year means nearly £1.1 billion extra funding for the police, access to £1.3 billion more for local councils, and £1.1 billion extra for our schools.

This is all part of the government's balanced approach, getting debt falling while investing in vital public services and keeping taxes low for people, families and businesses.

[Press release: G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Situation in the West](#)

of Libya

G7 Foreign Ministers' statement:

"We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the EU High Representative, gathered in Saint-Malo on 5 April express our deepest concern about military operations near Tripoli, Libya. We urge all involved parties to immediately halt all military activity and movements toward Tripoli, which are hindering prospects for the UN-led political process, putting civilians in danger, and prolonging the suffering of the Libyan people.

"We firmly believe that there is no military solution to the Libyan conflict. We strongly oppose any military action in Libya. Any Libyan actor or faction that precipitates further civil conflict are harming innocent people and standing in the way of the peace that Libyans deserve.

"We reiterate our full and united support to the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Special Representative of the Secretary General Ghassan Salamé as the UN seeks to help Libyans overcome Libya's political stalemate, and help Libyans chart a path toward credible and peaceful elections as soon as possible, as agreed by the Libyan parties in Paris in May 2018 and in Palermo in November 2018. We further call on all Libyans to constructively support the UN led process and the international community to demonstrate full unity and cohesion towards the shared objective of the sustainable stabilisation of Libya."