

[Press release: PM meeting with the Prime Minister of Malta: 11 February 2019](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

This afternoon, the Prime Minister met the Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat for bilateral talks at Downing Street.

Opening the meeting, the Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Muscat for the assurances on residency and rights that he has given to UK nationals living in Malta in the event of no deal.

The Prime Minister then updated Prime Minister Muscat on Brexit, including recent developments in Parliament and the legally-binding changes we are seeking on the backstop to enable Parliament to vote in support of the deal.

The Prime Minister then discussed her meetings last week with President Tusk, President Juncker and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, and the ongoing ministerial engagement on alternative arrangements to the backstop.

The leaders agreed that it is in everyone's interests for the UK to leave with a deal, and the Prime Minister reiterated her commitment to work as quickly as possible to find a solution and provide certainty for businesses and international partners.

Finally, Prime Minister Muscat thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's assistance in tackling money-laundering in Malta, and the leaders agreed to continue working together on this shared priority.

[Speech: Addressing Acts of Terrorism](#)

Thank you Mr President. And let me start by thanking very sincerely Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, and Assistant Secretary-General Michele Coninx for your presentations, for your ongoing efforts to work with member states on strengthening counter-terrorism. And we also thank the monitoring team for their contributions. And it's pleasing as ever to hear from both of you how closely you are working together and we welcome that very much, and the example that you gave Michelle on the Lake Chad Basin which I thought was comprehensive and valuable.

Mr President, the UK is proud that as a leading member of the coalition we have made a key contribution to the progress made against Daesh. However,

Daesh is still the most significant terrorist threat to the UK and therefore it remains a top counter-terrorism priority for my country. Even with the prospect of losing all territory, Daesh continues to pose a threat to international peace and security around the world. While they have transitioned into a more diffused and networked structure, they retain their leadership and capacity to inspire and encourage others to do great harm. Their attacks not only take innocent lives, they threaten the safety and cohesion of all of our communities. And I would just echo what the Russian Ambassador said about the importance of cutting terrorists off from sources of finance.

Mr President, we know this is a threat which moves fast and takes on different forms. Returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, frustrated travellers and individuals or small groups perpetrating attacks with little centralised direction all mean that we must ensure our prevention measures and responses are tailored to the current threat. No state can do all this alone and we have previously mentioned to this Council that we have invited CTED to conduct an assessment of the UK. It is not only because we hope that we have a good story to tell and good practices and experiences to share but because we also value the opportunity to learn from other states and engage in a dialogue. And we would encourage others to do the same and invite CTED to carry out assessments.

In the UK, Mr President, we have a new Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill going through our system which aims to ensure that law enforcement and intelligence agencies have the powers they need to help keep the country safe from the threat posed by terrorism and via hostile state activity. We are seeing increased concerns about violence perpetrated by groups ascribing themselves to extreme right wing ideologies. In 2016, 'National Action' became the first right wing group to be proscribed in the United Kingdom. At that time the Home Secretary said that 'National Action is a racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic organisation which stirs up hatred, glorifies violence and promotes a vile ideology. It has absolutely no place in a Britain which works for everyone.'

We've also seen the disruption that unmanned aerial systems or drones can cause and we are ramping up our efforts to ensure that our responses and the tools we have at hand keep pace with the evolving challenges.

Mr President, the Secretary-General's report highlights the roles of women. We have seen in so many places women exploited to carry out attacks, taking advantage of cultural and gender stereotypes and operational loopholes. Women are also victims of horrific acts of terrorism including, infamously, sexual violence at the hands of Daesh. And this Council has taken efforts to ensure accountability for those through UNSCR 2379. At the same time women have also been key partners in prevention and response and we know that many women's organisations are at the front lines doing important work on early warning, building resilience and rehabilitation and reintegration. We were pleased to contribute to the recent report by UNDP and ICAN, 'Invisible Women' on gender dimensions of return, rehabilitation and reintegration. All of this underscores the importance of integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue. In the United Kingdom our National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

includes strategic targets on preventing violent extremism. And we have a cross cutting counter-terrorism gender strategy. At the United Nations, we encourage both CTED and UNOCT to focus on concrete actions in this regard as outlined in resolution 2242, the UN Global Strategy and CTED's recent mandate. I just want to reiterate: this is in response to a real threat and is therefore about delivering real world counter-terrorism effectiveness.

Mr President, this Council's counter-terrorism framework lays out a carefully negotiated set of obligations and mandates to ensure that states can most effectively prevent and counter the threat. Now member states, of course, bear the primary responsibility to do so and many of the obligations are for national actors. But where additional capacity building is needed we need CTED to identify gaps and OCT and other UN partners to support efforts to fill those gaps. In doing so they should work closely with civil society, the private sector, experts, specialised UN agencies and partners, taking advantage of respective expertise and capabilities. It is so important that all work closely together, and again let me welcome Under-Secretary General Voronkov and ASG Coninx's personal leadership on this. It is also important that there is no confusion over mandates in the eyes of member states.

We welcome the active United Nations responses to the threat outlined in this report. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Office for Counter-Terrorism for its work in developing the multi-year appeal and the comprehensive and detailed information shared with member states on capacity building activities.

We all have a complicated task before us. We have just agreed a very interesting and substantive programme of work and list of activities for the Counter-Terrorism Committee and we know it is key that we remain responsive to emerging trends and dynamics. Let me reiterate our support for Executive Director Coninx and her determination to ensure that CTED continues to fulfil its mandate – handed to it by this Council in a comprehensive manner which takes into account the full spectrum of counter-terrorism issues including prevention, human rights and gender, for example, as well as legal law enforcement border security and other such matters. As terrorism adapts so too must we ensure that our responses reflect contemporary realities. And let me also support what ASG Coninx said about the Madrid Guiding Principles and the importance not only of those and themselves but also in the way they were developed in the inclusive fashion with a range of access. And of course this is also very pertinent to OCT through its strategy as endorsed by the General Assembly.

Mr President, we have much in common. We all want to protect our countries, our people and our communities and our values. All of which terrorists threaten. That threat requires a multi-dimensional response. It requires us all to work together. And we must use and improve all the tools at our disposal to meet our responsibilities and obligations.

Thank you Mr President.

[Government response: Ministry of Justice response to Public Accounts Committee: Transforming courts and tribunals](#)



Ministry of Justice response to the Committee's sixth recommendation on how the Department plans to ensure its portfolio of change is well-balanced and appropriately prioritised to enable it to respond to financial pressures.

PDF, 61.9KB, 2 pages

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Published 11 February 2019

[News story: Rail Minister reiterates northern benefits of HS2](#)

The Department for Transport's commitment to the full HS2 network remains undiminished, Rail Minister Andrew Jones said today (11 February 2019).

Speaking at the inaugural Transport for the North conference in Sheffield, the Minister set out his enthusiasm and ambition for Northern transport.

The government is delivering an unprecedented investment – £13 billion in northern transport over 5 years – while also delivering on a manifesto commitment to build HS2.

Setting out the benefits of HS2, Rail Minister Andrew Jones said:

Already there are 7,000 jobs supported by the programme; already over 2,000 businesses have HS2 contracts; and already the diggers are on the ground in Birmingham. Building has started.

And in case you have seen any recent newspaper stories claiming that the northern stages of HS2 might not be built – they are complete nonsense.

HS2 was conceived, developed and is now being delivered as a national railway – but in particular to improve links for the north and midlands.

So our commitment to HS2, the full network to Manchester and Leeds, remains undiminished. As the Secretary of State said recently, to do otherwise would be a betrayal of the north.

As part of the same conference, Transport for the North also stressed the importance of HS2 to the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

[Press release: Reduce flood risk with the Woodlands for Water scheme](#)

Expert advice on creating woodlands that will reduce flood risk and improve water quality is once again being offered in Yorkshire and North East England as part of a pioneering project run by the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency.

The Woodlands for Water project enables farmers and other land managers to benefit from the services of skilled professionals working on contract to the Forestry Commission. Advice is available in areas of land where woodland planting will most effectively reduce flood risk and/or improve water quality by reducing sediment and pollutants reaching rivers and streams.

Landowners can work with a professional advisor who can walk them through the full process from developing a planting plan to submission of the grant application.

In addition to this advice, significant grant funding is available for planting new woodlands through the Forestry Commission via the Woodland

Carbon Fund or the Woodland Creation grant (which is part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme). The Woodland Creation grant offers up to £6,800 per hectare for planting new woodlands with an additional multi-annual payment of £200 per hectare for a period of 10 years for eligible applicants.

Trees and woodland can have a significant impact on flood risk and surface water pollution. Carefully planned tree planting will slow water run-off (and limit downstream flooding), reduce land erosion, help to moderate stream temperature and aid flood risk management.

As many landowners already know, well planned new woodland planting can also deliver other significant benefits including:

- providing shelter for stock
- generating income from timber
- producing wood for use as a renewable fuel
- creating a new habitat for wildlife
- capturing carbon dioxide and so mitigating climate change.

Generating more great schemes

Crispin Thorn, Area Director of the Forestry Commission in Yorkshire and the North East said:

It's great to be working in partnership with the Environment Agency and the wider sector as part of the Woodlands for Water project.

The network of Woodlands for Water advisers across Yorkshire and the North East are available to help take forward applications for woodland creation that will benefit the water environment and bring a host of other benefits including enhancing biodiversity, reducing carbon and providing future income from timber.

This will help meet the government's 11 million tree target as well as delivering against key areas within the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Oliver Harmer, Area Director of the Environment Agency in the North East said:

I am delighted to see that through last year's Woodlands for Water project 160 hectares of new woodlands that will benefit the water environment have been approved for planting in Yorkshire and North East England.

And I am pleased that the project is up and running again this year with the advisors already working with landowners to generate more great schemes.

Woodland creation is an important part of natural flood management

and helps deliver on our mission to improve water quality. This project is a marvellous example of the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency pooling their skills and resources to great effect.