

News story: Statement from International Development Secretary Priti Patel

“This summer I travelled to Israel, on a family holiday paid for myself.

“While away I had the opportunity to meet a number of people and organisations. I am publishing a list of who I met. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office was aware of my visit while it was underway.

“In hindsight, I can see how my enthusiasm to engage in this way could be mis-read, and how meetings were set up and reported in a way which did not accord with the usual procedures. I am sorry for this and I apologise for it.

“My first and only aim as the Secretary of State for International Development is to put the interests of British taxpayers and the world’s poor at the front of our development work.”

Background

From 13 to 25 August 2017, the Secretary of State for International Development visited Israel on a family holiday paid for by herself.

While there on holiday, she took the opportunity to meet a number of people and organisations, including a range of politicians, businesses, tech start ups, and humanitarian NGOs. These meetings were an opportunity to learn about the Israeli approach to technology and development.

The meetings were arranged by the Conservative Peer, Lord Polak CBE. He also attended the meetings, with the exception of the meeting with Dr Aliza Inbal.

The FC0 were aware of the visit while it was underway, but were not informed about it in advance.

On her return from Israel, the Secretary of State commissioned Departmental work on humanitarian and development partnership between Israel and the UK, and on disability.

The FC0 are clear that UK interests were not damaged or affected by the meetings on this visit.

On Friday 3rd November, the Secretary of State was quoted in the Guardian newspaper as follows:

“Boris knew about the visit. The point is that the Foreign Office did know about this, Boris knew about [the trip].”

This quote may have given the impression that the Secretary of State had informed the Foreign Secretary about the visit in advance. The Secretary of

State would like to take this opportunity to clarify that this was not the case. The Foreign Secretary did become aware of the visit, but not in advance of it.

“The stuff that is out there is it, as far as I am concerned. I went on holiday and met with people and organisations. As far as I am concerned, the Foreign Office have known about this. It is not about who else I met, I have friends out there.”

This quote may be read as implying that the Secretary of State was saying that the meetings that had so far been publically reported were the only ones which took place on her visit. The Secretary of State would like to take the opportunity to correct this impression: she is clear that other meetings also took place on her visit, in addition to those which had been publically reported at the time of her making these statements. These meetings are outlined below.

The Secretary of State regrets the lack of precision in the wording she used in these statements, and is taking this opportunity to clarify the position.

List of those the Secretary of State met

Prime Minister Netanyahu

Introductory meeting. Discussion of:

- the Secretary of State’s family background – parents who fled Uganda in the 1970s, her experience growing up in an area of the UK with a thriving Jewish community, her political journey
- the Israeli domestic political scene
- India, given the Secretary of State’s family background
- the PM’s forthcoming visit to the UK
- prospects for closer collaboration between Israel and the UK on development and humanitarian issues.

Yuval Rotem – Israeli Foreign Ministry

General introduction on the Secretary of State’s background, discussion of British politics, Israel’s approach to development and humanitarian issues, and prospects for partnership work between Israel and the UK on development and humanitarian issues.

Gilad Erdan – Minister for Public Security, Information and Strategic Affairs

General introduction on the Secretary of State’s background. Discussion of British politics, growing anti-Semitism within the British political scene, and a cultural festival in London.

Yair Lapid – Leader of Yesh Atid

General introduction. Discussion of backgrounds, families and careers to date. General discussion of British politics, including the growing anti-Semitism within UK politics.

IsraAID – emergency humanitarian aid NGO

General introduction to their work, at the home of Hilda Worth.

Dr Aliza Inbal – Pears Programme for Global Innovation

General introduction to their work.

Dinner organised by the Pears Programme with Sivan Ya'ari – Innovation Africa, Glenn Yago – Milken Institute, Yosef Abramovitz – Energiya Global Capital, Mandie Winston – American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

General introduction to and discussion of the work of these organisations.

Haim Taib – Mitrelli Group

Presentation on their work, on water, farming, solar and hospital projects in Africa.

Visit to Save a Child's Heart

Visit to a hospital to meet children and their families from Gaza and Africa who had been given life-saving heart surgery.

Dr Hirschfeld, Shimon Hefetz – Galilee International Management Institute

General introduction to their work.

Meeting with a group of startups with a focus on Africa: Vital Capital, MobileODT, Equatel Health, Cassit Orthopedics, Ltd, NUFiltration Ltd, Fair Planet.

Introduction and demonstration of new technologies for development – e.g. mobile cancer screening, water filtration, splints and supports for people with disabilities.

Jean Judes – Beit Issie Shapiro, and Pablo Kaplan – Wheelchairs of Hope

Visited a charity dedicated to disability and social inclusion internationally. Visited a sensory playground for children living with disability and discussed wheelchair technology for children.

[Speech: Secretary of State's Speech to the European Policy Centre](#)

It's a great pleasure to be here in Brussels today ... and I'm grateful for the opportunity to update you on the current situation in Northern Ireland.

During my visit today I am taking the opportunity to brief senior members of the Commission along with MEPs as the UK Government continues its negotiations to leave the EU in 2019.

And of course part of my role ... working with the Prime Minister and the Secretary for Exiting the EU ... is to ensure that we secure an agreement deal that delivers for all parts of the UK, including Northern Ireland.

Everyone here knows that Northern Ireland has unique circumstances which need to be recognised in the final withdrawal treaty to leave the EU ... and making progress on the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland is essential in moving negotiations to the next phase.

But before I talk specifically about Northern Ireland in the context of leaving the EU I thought it would be useful to give an overview of the current political, economic and security situations there.

Because as I stand before you today, nearly a quarter of a century after the terrorist ceasefires and twenty years after the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, it's easy to assume that everything in Northern Ireland has been solved.

And you could easily be forgiven for thinking that's the case.

Northern Ireland today is in so many respects unrecognisable from where it was in the early 1990s.

Until the beginning of this year we had seen a decade of devolved government in Northern Ireland led by the Democratic Unionists and Sinn Fein ... the longest such period of uninterrupted devolved government since the 1960s.

The kind of terrorism that I used to see growing up in the 1970s and 1980s is no longer a daily fact of life ... along with the military presence to deal with it.

Northern Ireland today is the most popular destination outside of London for foreign direct investment into the UK. And of course relations between Northern Ireland and Ireland ... and between the United Kingdom and Ireland ... are at their strongest ever.

So there are so many positives to take about Northern Ireland.

The beautiful scenery and countryside.

The industrial heritage.

The exciting new opportunities.

Our thriving creative industries.

The quality of life.

The warmth and friendliness of people who live there.

And of course the example that Northern Ireland has shown the world as to how it is possible to emerge from a period of terrible suffering and conflict to a new era of peace, stability and greater prosperity.

In that context I would like to pay tribute to the European Union ... including Michel Barnier ... for the support you have given to Northern Ireland ... backing the peace process, encouraging economic growth and providing vital funding for programmes designed to bring communities together.

The EU can be very proud of the role that it has played in Northern Ireland over decades ... and both the UK and Irish Governments are very grateful for that.

But for all of this progress significant political, economic and security challenges remain ... and I would like briefly to take each of these in turn.

Politically, Northern Ireland has been without a functioning devolved government since the beginning of this year. Civil servants have been able to spend money but key decisions over local services that require political input have not been taken.

Crucially, a budget for the current financial year has yet to be set.

This is putting public services under strain ... and very soon both the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service assess that Northern Ireland will begin to run out of resources.

Earlier this year I had to step in and legislate to set some local taxes so that local councils could continue to carry out their functions.

We have now reached the point at which it is unlikely that an Executive could be formed in time to pass a budget for Northern Ireland by the end of this month.

In those circumstances I am left with no option but to legislate at Westminster to enable the Northern Ireland civil service to continue spending money to already agreed totals.

This would not be my budget ... it would be one prepared by the Northern Ireland civil service on the basis of the previous Executive's priorities.

Should an Executive be formed the budget could be amended or changed ... and indeed if an Executive were formed with sufficient time left under expedited procedures to pass the budget bill in the Assembly ... I would clearly wish to proceed instead with legislation to enable that to happen.

I'm clear ... introducing and passing a budget in Westminster does not mean that we are introducing direct rule, any more than legislating for local taxes did earlier this year.

And needless to say, the UK Government will only take this step with the greatest reluctance ... not because we want to but because we have to.

But it would be a dereliction of duty to see the public services on which people rely begin to disintegrate before us.

Of course I still hope we can avoid this step.

The UK Government ... along with the Irish Government ... is working tirelessly to bring about an agreement between the main Northern Ireland parties that would enable an Executive to be re-formed.

And we will stick at it, because . . . as President Clinton's visit to Northern Ireland last month, nearly 20 years after his key role in the Belfast Agreement, prompted many of us to reflect . . . we have come so far.

But ultimately we have a responsibility to provide good governance in Northern Ireland ... and we will not shirk our responsibilities.

The next area where we have a great deal more work to do is in strengthening the economy and building a stronger society.

Northern Ireland's economy continues to grow.

Unemployment is still falling ... while in the past twelve months employment has hit record levels. As I said earlier we continue to attract significant foreign direct investment.

And we have some world beating businesses.

But the economy is still far too dependent on government spending.

And we need to rebalance the economy in a measured and sensible way.

Levels of worklessness and welfare dependency are still far too high.

So we are looking at things like City Deals that have proven very successful in other parts of the UK.

And we remain committed to the devolution of Corporation Tax so that Northern Ireland is better able to compete for investment with its nearest neighbour, Ireland.

But for that to happen Northern Ireland needs a functioning devolved government.

Alongside strengthening the economy, we need to tackle deep seated social divisions.

In Northern Ireland today over 90 per cent of public housing is segregated along sectarian lines.

Over 90 per cent of children in Northern Ireland are educated separately.

It is regrettable that additional so-called peace walls ... or interface barriers ... have been erected since the signing of the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and still divide communities today.

Indeed some independent estimates put the cost of division in Northern Ireland at around £1.5 billion.

So bringing people together ... and building a stronger, more shared society has to be an urgent priority.

Most of the responsibility for tackling this rests in the devolved sphere.

And the previous Executive had made a start ... for example with programmes under its strategy called Together: Building a United Community.

For our part the UK Government has provided significant financial support ... for example in helping to fund schemes to promote greater shared housing and more shared and integrated education.

But clearly much more needs to be done.

It requires significant political will and drive if we are to overcome decades ... some might say centuries ... of division and build a stronger more united community.

And that needs to come primarily from local politicians working together for the good of the whole community. So there's another reason why it's so important to have a functioning Executive back up and running.

The community divisions that still exist in Northern Ireland can, on occasion, still fuel tensions and public disorder ... though on a much reduced scale than in previous years.

And they can also be exploited by paramilitary and terrorist groups that continue to exist and operate in Northern Ireland.

The threat level from dissident republican terrorists remains severe in Northern Ireland... meaning that an attack is highly likely.

Even though they are relatively small in numbers, they retain lethal capability and intent.

The fact that you don't hear more about them is primarily down to the superb efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, our security services and An Garda Síochána.

And the levels of co-operation that currently exist between the PSNI and the Garda ... and between the UK and Irish Governments ... must be preserved, and where possible enhanced, following Brexit.

In addition to the continuing threat from terror too many communities in Northern Ireland are held in the grip of paramilitary groups ... criminals who prey on society primarily to line their own pockets.

They engage in gangsterism and carry out brutal attacks ... often by appointment ... on people within their own community to exert fear and control.

Following the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement the Executive ... working with and supported financially by the UK Government ... devised a strategy for tackling paramilitary groups with the aim of putting them out of business for good.

There was never any justification for the existence of paramilitary and terrorist groups in Northern Ireland ... and there is none today.

But if the strategy for tackling paramilitary activity is going to be at its most effective ... and that will only be seen through results on the ground ... then it needs to be led locally.

And that's another reason why Northern Ireland needs a properly functioning Executive.

Finally, Northern Ireland needs a fully functioning Executive to ensure that its voice is fully heard as the UK leaves the EU.

As I have said before ... we joined the Common Market in 1973 as one United Kingdom and we will leave the European Union in 2019 as one United Kingdom.

And as the Prime Minister has made clear ... leaving the EU will mean that we leave both the single market and the customs union.

I find it difficult to imagine how Northern Ireland could somehow remain in ... while the rest of the country leaves.

But as we have made equally clear we are determined to find bespoke solutions to Northern Ireland's unique circumstances ... not least as the only part of the UK to share a land border with an EU member state.

We need to deliver an outcome that works for all parts of the United Kingdom.

We fully recognise the extent to which the Northern Ireland economy, while an integral part of the UK economy, is also fully integrated with that of Ireland particularly in areas like the agri-food sector.

We fully recognise the flow of traffic across the border on a daily basis for people going about their business be it to work, study, shop or simply visit friends and relatives.

And we fully recognise those ties of family and shared history that exist between people on the island of Ireland as well as between Ireland and Great Britain.

All of this requires creative and imaginative thinking by the UK and Irish Governments along with negotiating partners in the EU. But I believe solutions can be found ... and it is in that positive sense that the UK Government has approached the current phase of negotiations and we will continue to do so.

And the Northern Ireland and Ireland position paper published by the UK Government in August set out clearly and positively where we stand.

We want to ensure that the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement is fully protected ... including the constitutional principles that underpin it, the political institutions it establishes and the citizens' rights it guarantees.

We want to preserve the Common Travel Area ... and, yes, ensure that we have as frictionless and seamless a border as possible between Northern Ireland and Ireland with no physical infrastructure at the border.

We want to protect the single electricity market that operates across the island of Ireland to ensure continuity of supply for the benefit of business and domestic consumers.

At the same time we need to ensure that nothing is done that undermines the integrity of the UK single market ... Northern Ireland companies sold four times as much into Great Britain than to Ireland in 2015.

And of course no border between Great Britain and Northern Ireland or anything that fractures the internal market of the United Kingdom, which benefits Northern Ireland hugely.

Of course none of this was ever going to be easy.

But I believe that with a positive attitude on all sides it is achievable.

As both the Prime Minister and the Secretary for Exiting the EU, David Davis, have set out to the House of Commons in recent days, significant progress has been made in the negotiations so far.

Within the Northern Ireland-Ireland Dialogue, we have agreed that the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement should be protected in full, including its constitutional arrangements.

We have proposed that the UK and the EU seek to agree text for the Withdrawal Agreement that recognises the ongoing status of the Common Travel Area...and have already developed joint principles with the EU on this.

We have also mapped out areas of cooperation that function on a North-South basis to ensure this continues once the UK has left the EU.

And we are determined to press on so that we can move to the next phase of negotiations as we deliver on the democratic wishes of the people of the UK as set out in the June 2016 referendum.

During this speech I have deliberately set out some of the big challenges that face us in Northern Ireland. But I want to end on a positive note.

Nearly twenty years on from the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement Northern Ireland is immeasurably in a better place.

Huge progress has been made.

What have often looked like insurmountable problems have been overcome.

We've seen commitment, courage and above all leadership on all sides.

And we've seen enormous international goodwill and support ... including from the EU.

But we can't just rest on what has been achieved.

We need to tackle today's challenges in order to build a better tomorrow.

For our part the UK Government ... along with our partners in Ireland ... are determined to do just that...

As we strive to build a stronger, more prosperous Northern Ireland for everyone. And a Northern Ireland that can look to the future with confidence and optimism.

Thank you.

Press release: Rare Ben Jonson book at risk of leaving the UK

Arts Minister John Glen has placed a temporary export bar on a rare book with unique annotations to provide an opportunity to keep it in the country.

Workes, an annotated collection of writings by Ben Jonson, is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the asking price of £48,000.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) is hailed as the most important writer of the English Renaissance after Shakespeare, having lived and worked in an age of great social change that produced some of the finest works of English literature.

This extraordinarily rare volume is the only known example of a document showing how a play by Ben Jonson was prepared for performance. Material that tells us about the performance of pre-Restoration plays is extremely scarce.

This volume occupies a unique place among surviving materials because of the nature and range of its annotations to *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* – including stage directions, details of props, and textual corrections – which collectively do not fall into any category previously known to scholars of seventeenth-century theatre. The volume is therefore of outstanding interest to the study of English theatrical history.

A product of a period when plays were seen not as finished pieces, but as perpetual works in progress, this volume has the potential to change scholars' understanding of how plays were transmitted from the page to the stage and back again.

Arts Minister John Glen said:

This fascinating book shows how Ben Jonson's works evolved and were translated to the stage.

I hope that we can keep it in the UK to enrich the study of English theatrical history and learn more about the performances of his work.

The decision to defer the export licence follows a recommendation by the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest \(RCEWA\)](#), administered by The Arts Council.

RCEWA member Peter Barber said:

The annotations in this volume shed uniquely detailed light on how one of the hit comedies of the seventeenth century might actually have been performed.

Samuel Pepys thought *The Silent Woman* 'the best comedy that ever was wrote' and this book enables us to go the theatre with him. It must remain in this country.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the annotated volume's outstanding significance for the study of English theatre in the seventeenth century and, in particular, for the study of Ben Jonson's plays in performance.

The decision on the export licence application for the book will be deferred until 5 February 2018. This may be extended until 5 May 2018 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £48,000.

Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the book should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.

A photo of the book can be downloaded via our [flickr site](#).

ENDS

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Notes to editors

1. Details of the book are as follows: A second edition of volume 1 of Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (first published c1620; this

edition 1640, published in London by Richard Bishop to be sold by Andrew Crooke). The volume has been rebound in plain sprinkled calf, probably around 1900. It measures (cm) 30 x 19 x 6. There are some small tears, repairs, and staining, but the book is generally in good condition.

2. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
3. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

[News story: New funding for exciting STEM education projects](#)

The projects are designed to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and provide exciting contexts for the teaching of a range of subjects. This will, in turn, help the growth of the space sector, which is currently hampered by the lack of graduates and technicians with relevant qualifications.

The seven new projects were selected to support the aims of the Education and Skills Strategy, and build upon the Agency's investment in a number of areas, in particular:

- Earth Observation
- Satellite Launch Programme (UK spaceports and launchers)
- James Webb Space Telescope

Susan Buckle, Astronaut Flight Education Programme Manager, said:

"We are delighted to be funding all these projects and to work with a variety of different organisations – from the D&T Association with expertise in design and technology to the Triathlon Trust with expertise in getting children active, as well as the more traditional STEM organisations. Each project will fulfil the objective to inspire the next generation to study STEM and consider a career in the space industry, whilst having a lot of fun along the way."

The 7 successful projects to be funded are:

1. Glasgow Science Festival: Get me into orbit!
2. Triathlon Trust: Space to Earth view

3. Mangorolla CIC: Space zones 'I'm a Scientist' and 'I'm an Engineer'
4. Institute for Research in Schools: MELT: Monitoring the Environment, Learning for Tomorrow
5. The Design and Technology Association: Inspiring the next generation: design and technology in space
6. European Space Education Resource Office-UK: James Webb Space Telescope: Design challenge
7. Children's Radio UK (Fun Kids): Deep Space High – UK Spaceports

The MELT project will allow students to understand and analyse key earth observation data relating to the North and South Pole.

This work is in collaboration with Robert Swan on his Antarctic expedition, who said:

"I'm delighted to be working with IRIS on the MELT project. Students looking at Earth observation of the poles will be directly observing our South Pole Energy Challenge and seeing what a crucial role they have in understanding and taking care of their environment."

Emma Watson from The Design and Technology Association said:

"The Design and Technology Association are delighted to be working with the UK Space Agency to develop a series of curriculum based resources which will use the design and technology curriculum as a platform to motivate more young people to consider careers in the space industry.

"Structured around Earth Observation, Satellite Launch Systems and the James Webb Space Telescope, these innovative resources will inspire young people to imagine new possibilities, drawing on their existing STEM knowledge, and applying it to real-life space contexts."

More details on each of the projects will be available as they develop their resources and activities.

[News story: Relationships and Sex Education for the 21st Century](#)

Education Secretary Justine Greening has today announced that Ian Bauckham CBE will provide the Department for Education with advice on how relationships education, including relationships and sex education for older children, should be taught in schools.

With 32 years' experience as a teacher, and 13 years spent as a headteacher, Ian has worked in a variety of roles, including heading up the Association of Schools and College Leaders in 2013 and 2014.

As part of his new role, he will speak to parents, teachers, children and other interested groups about the topics that young people today need to understand to stay safe and happy, including age-appropriate content on mental wellbeing, keeping safe online and LGBT issues.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

We want all young people to feel equipped to have healthy and respectful relationships, so they can succeed in adult life in modern Britain. That's why we've committed to making sure more children learn these important lessons as they grow up.

I'm delighted that Ian Bauckham will be working with us to gather views from a variety of interested stakeholders and to make sure we are reaching as many people as possible.

Ian Bauckham CBE said:

As we work to update relationships and sex education and consider the role and importance of PSHE in schools, I am looking forward to meeting and hearing from a wide range of interested parties. Schools, pupils, parents, teachers and a range of groups with valuable experience in these areas will have important views and insights to share to help the government shape the next stage of schools' work on RSE and PSHE. As a teacher and headteacher I am pleased to be able to contribute to this important work which will help to make our young people safer and better prepared for the complex world in which they will live.

Relationships and sex education is a key part of the government's wider plan to ensure every young person has the essential knowledge they need to stay safe and develop healthy relationships.

Currently only pupils attending local-authority run secondary schools – which represent around a third of secondary schools – are guaranteed to be offered Sex and Relationships Education as currently delivered.

The teaching of this important subject in schools is supported by the wider public. Recent surveys show that:

- 91% of parents believe all pupils should receive lessons to teach them about the risks of sexting, as well as other issues such as contact from strangers online; and
- 74% of 11 – 15 years old believe that children would be safer if they had age appropriate classes on relationships and sex education.

Ian Bauckham, who was awarded the CBE in 2017 for services to education, will

advise on this process. As well as starting a multi academy trust, he is head teacher of a large 11-18 Church of England comprehensive in Kent and, as a National Leader of Education (NLE), works with many other schools in the region and more widely.