

## **News story: Minister for Africa meets African diplomats and leading figures**

UK-Africa relations were celebrated at an event at Lancaster House this week when Minister for Africa Rory Stewart met with African diplomats and leading diaspora figures.

This was the first meeting between the Minister and many of the London-based African diplomats since his appointment as Minister for Africa for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development in June.

Countries from across the continent were represented, along with members of African diaspora in the UK, marking the start of regular dialogues between the Minister and African representatives.

Africa Minister Rory Stewart said:

The UK has an extraordinary and unique partnership with Africa and we want to build on this partnership over the years ahead. All my recent trips to Africa have shown me how exciting the continent is today – how much potential it has in the future.

Brexit should be our moment to rebuild and invest in these partnerships in Africa. Africa will be at the heart of the greatest challenges and opportunities of the next half century. And I look forward to us working more closely together and learning ever more from each other.

Since his appointment in June the Minister has visited nine countries in Africa, including: Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi and plans several more trips before the end of 2017.

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## **News story: Education Secretary revisits her former secondary school**

Education Secretary Justine Greening today (Thursday 26 October) visited Oakwood High School in Rotherham, the comprehensive secondary school she attended as a pupil in the 1980s, for the official opening of its new, state-of-the-art buildings.

The school has undergone a £12.2 million refurbishment as part of the

government's Priority School Building Programme, which is focused on rebuilding and revamping school premises. The new facilities at Oakwood High include specialist science, art and music rooms, a large gymnasium, and a separate dining hall – all under one roof.

The Education Secretary was given a tour of the school by current pupils and by former teachers Richard Townsend and John Bingham, who taught at Oakwood High during her time as a pupil at the school.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

Returning to Oakwood High School was incredibly special to me. I had amazing teachers here who inspired me.

I want every young person to be able to reach their full potential and great teachers are at the heart of that. It's great to be back in Rotherham and to see Oakwood High helping raise the aspirations of new generations of young people from the area, making sure they have the skills and knowledge to achieve their goals.

Oakwood High School Headteacher David Naisbitt said:

We understand that children and young people need positive role models. Here in Rotherham, our young people need to see that opportunity does not lie beyond their grasp – it rests firmly within the realm of their possibilities.

There is no better example of what can be achieved than the Secretary of State; a local girl, educated in her local community.

The new school building will act as a beacon and stands as a clear statement to this community of the value of education.

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## **Press release: FC0 Minister welcomes release of Ilmi Umerov and Akhtem Chiygoz**

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan has welcomed the release of the Crimean Tatar leaders and drawn attention to the considerable number of Ukrainian political prisoners who continue to be detained by Russia.

I welcome the fact that the Crimean Tatar leaders Ilmi Umerov and Akhtem Chiygoz were freed yesterday, 25 October. They were both arrested and sentenced by Russia for their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea. The UK had previously called for their release, and appreciates the efforts of all those who worked for this outcome.

Nevertheless we must not lose sight of the many others, including other Crimean Tatars, who have been detained by the de-facto Russian authorities for their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea. I call once again for the immediate release of all Ukrainian political prisoners on the Crimean Peninsula and in Russia. The UK remains clear that Crimea is part of Ukraine, and that its annexation by Russia is a breach of international law.

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## **Press release: Charity Commission welcomes publication of the UK's National Risk Assessment**

The Charity Commission for England and Wales welcomes today's publication of the UK's National Risk Assessment (NRA 2017) of money laundering and terrorist financing and in particular the chapter on non profit organisations (NPO) – which includes charities.

The NRA 2017 published today assesses the terrorist financing risk of the NPO sector in its entirety to be low, whilst recognising that certain parts of the sector – particularly charities working internationally in certain countries – face significantly higher risks. The Commission welcomes this distinction and emphasises that the risks that charities face will vary depending on what they do and where they operate. In 2015, the UK's first NRA assessed the terrorist financing risk to the NPO sector as medium-high.

The Commission is pleased to have worked with the Home Office and HM Treasury on the NRA 2017 and to have contributed, along with law enforcement agencies and other government departments, to their understanding of the charity sector in England and Wales and the risks relating to terrorist financing and money laundering that it faces.

The Commission encourages trustees to read the NRA 2017 and to consider the risks to their charity, particularly if their charity works internationally in a country that the NRA 2017 has identified as being at greater risk. The Commission has published guidance for trustees on these issues, such as its [Compliance Toolkit](#). It also undertakes outreach work with the sector and publishes regulatory alerts and messages to assist trustees in understanding the risks of terrorist financing and how to manage them.

## **Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, said:**

We welcome today's publication of the NRA 2017 and the updated assessment on the risks to the charity sector from terrorist financing and money laundering. The risks to the sector of such abuse are not shared equally. It is essential that those charities that are at greater risk take steps to protect themselves so that charitable funds are not abused.

Any trace of terrorist financing within the sector corrodes public confidence in charities and cannot be tolerated. One case is one too many, which is why we continue to work proactively with the subsection of the sector that remains at high risk. In response to today's publication we are reminding those charities to review our Compliance Toolkit and ensure that they have strong financial, due diligence and monitoring controls in place to prevent exploitation by terrorist groups.

### **Notes to editors**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
  2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
  3. Addressing the abuse of charities for money laundering or terrorist financing are two of the [Commission's strategic priorities for 2015 – 2018](#).
  4. The [Compliance Toolkit](#) offers comprehensive guidance on how charity trustees, staff and volunteers can protect their charities from abuse by anyone encouraging or condoning extremism, terrorism or illegal activity, including by:
    - ensuring that a charity's premises, assets, staff, volunteers or other resources cannot be used for activities that may support or condone terrorism
    - reporting a belief or suspicion of offences connected to terrorist financing using the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
    - reporting to the Commission if their charity (including any individual staff, trustees or volunteers) has any known or alleged link to a proscribed organisation or to terrorist or other unlawful activity as soon as they become aware of it, under the Commission's Reporting Serious Incidents regime
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# News story: New stats reveal veterans' contribution to society, as Ministerial Board steps up support to Armed Forces

The stats show that, contrary to common misconceptions, veterans are as likely to be in employment as the general population, with 78% of veterans in employment, compared to 79% in the general population.

The stats come on the day of the inaugural meeting of a new Ministerial Board, co-chaired by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and First Secretary of State Damien Green, which discussed the Government's support to the Armed Forces, their families and veterans.

The new Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board will drive forward and coordinate better Government support to the Armed Forces, their families and veterans.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Veterans and their families have given so much to this country to help keep us safe. We need all of Government working together to deliver a better deal for Veterans during and after their move to civilian life. We will examine new ways to repay our armed forces for the bravery, honour and sacrifice they demonstrate when defending this country.

A number of other statistics released today by the Office of National Statistics also outline how prevalent myths around the employment, education and health of veterans are untrue. The statistics found that:

- There were no differences between veterans' and non-veteran's self-reported general health and health conditions. 35% of veterans aged between 16-64 reported their general health as very good, compared to 36% of non-veterans. 18% of over 65 veterans also reported very good general health, compared to 19% of non-veterans.
- Working age veterans were as likely to have a qualification as non-veterans, (92% and 89% respectively) and more likely to have gained qualifications through work (63%) and leisure (17%) than non-veterans (45% and 10% respectively). This is likely a result of the training opportunities offered by the MOD to support service personnel in their military career and during transition out of the services.

- Veterans were as likely to have bought their own home (outright or with a mortgage) (75%) as non-veterans (77%). The MOD's Armed Forces Help to Buy scheme recently revealed that over 11,000 service personnel had been assisted in buying or renovating their own home through the scheme. Forces Help to Buy is just one of the initiatives under the Armed Forces Covenant to support Armed Forces personnel and veterans.

On Tuesday the Defence Secretary called on businesses to do more to promote the positive role veterans play in the workplace. Speaking at an Armed Forces charity dinner he said that veterans play an important part in the nation's economy, contrary to prevalent misconceptions surrounding those who have served.

Research published last week by Lord Ashcroft, the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Veterans' Transition, found that while people on the whole were positive about veterans, some 54% of the general public estimated that service leavers had some kind of physical, emotional or mental health problem as a result of their time in the military

Lord Ashcroft's report highlighted the pervasive nature of myths surrounding public perception of veterans, pointing towards research which debunks a number of these:

- The employment rate for veterans six months after leaving the military is higher than in the UK workforce as a whole
- The vast majority of former service personnel go on to lead normal, healthy, productive lives
- Suicide is less common among the military population than the general public
- Veterans are less likely to go to prison, not more.

The new Ministerial Board which met for the first time today will have a specific focus on the priority area of healthcare, including mental health, but will also look at housing, education, and employment opportunities.

The new Board comes just weeks after the MOD established a new partnership with the Royal Foundation, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry's charity, on improving mental fitness. The partnership delivers on a commitment made in the MOD's recently launched Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.