

# News story: Defence Secretary welcomes Liberation of Raqqa

Following on from the liberation of Mosul, this is a significant development in the fight against Daesh. The fall of the capital of their so-called caliphate is a devastating blow to the terrorist group.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

With the fall of Raqqa, the head of the snake has been cut off and Daesh has lost its twin capitals in Iraq and now Syria. But the fight against Daesh's reign of terror is not over. We will continue to hit the terrorists hard in both Syria and Iraq while supporting efforts to rebuild – only by defeating Daesh for good will we reduce the threat to us here at home.

The UK has been at the forefront of efforts to alleviate the humanitarian situation since 2012, working tirelessly with partners on the ground to deliver more than 660,000 lifesaving relief packages including blankets, clothing and hygiene kits in Raqqa alone. We will continue to work closely with our Coalition partners to ensure that Raqqa's population will be able to return home safely as quickly as conditions allow.

Three years ago Daesh was almost at the gates of Baghdad, now it is failing but time and patience are still necessary to bring about their ultimate defeat. The UK is committed to maintaining the momentum and to keep up the pressure on the terrorists as the fight moves along the Euphrates River Valley towards the border with Iraq. The RAF and Coalition partners will continue to target Daesh in both Syria and Iraq, supporting local forces on the ground to decisively defeat our common enemy.

But despite military progress in Syria and Iraq, the threat posed by Daesh and their poisonous narrative remains substantial. Their continued ability to inspire attacks means that we must remain resolute in our work to defeat them in their branches worldwide and counter their propaganda.

The liberation of Raqqa, by non-Regime forces, has yet again proved that Assad can never be a partner against terrorism. This means a national political settlement that secures a transition to a government that can protect the rights of all Syrians, unite the country and end the conflict remains the only solution.

---

# **Press release: Environment Agency urges caution as high tides expected on south coast**

The Environment Agency is urging communities in the south to be aware of the risk of flooding from Storm Brian with high tides and large waves expected on Friday and Saturday.

Environment Agency staff are working around the clock to minimise flood risk and to protect people, property and land. Teams are out clearing trash screens, inspecting coastal defences, and checking river levels.

Richard O'Callaghan, Duty Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

We're expecting to see a combination of high tides and winds leading to an increased tidal surge for Saturday around midday. Due to Storm Brian we are currently assessing key areas at risk on the current forecasts and planning for our response.

With a particularly high tide due in Yarmouth at midday tomorrow, we will be moving 100 metres of temporary barrier to the Isle of Wight today, ready to deploy in the morning. We will also be putting the boards into the RNLi slipway in Lymington this evening, as well as closing the gates tonight and tomorrow for the high tides.

Anyone concerned should act now and sign up to our free Flood Warning Service so they can be ready to take action if they get these warnings to protect themselves and their property. Please check your flood risk and sign up for our free warnings at [gov.uk/flood](https://gov.uk/flood) or by calling 0345 988 1188. You can also get the latest updates on Twitter by following us at @EnvAgencySE.

We will continue to monitor the situation very closely and we urge communities to be aware of their risk and be ready to act.

For media enquiries, contact 0800 141 2743.

---

# **Press release: Environment Agency**

# [warns of coastal flooding in Dorset](#)

The Environment Agency is urging people to remain vigilant to potential coastal flooding as high winds and rain is forecast to hit the Dorset coast on Saturday.

Current forecasts show a low pressure storm arriving on Saturday 21 October which, combined with close-to-spring tides, means flood warnings are likely to be issued along the Dorset coast.

Areas likely to be impacted include West Bay, Lyme Regis, Poole Harbour, Chiswell, Preston Beach and Christchurch.

Rachel Jacobs of the Environment Agency said:

We urge people to take care on the Dorset coast this weekend. Strong winds pose a risk of waves overtopping defences and whilst coastal storms can look dramatic, we strongly advise against “wave watching” or taking “storm selfies”.

Please take note of road closures and don't attempt to walk or drive through flood water. Just 30cm of flowing water can move a car and driving through water can also create waves.

Environment Agency teams have been working around the clock to check flood defences and have been taking precautionary measures such as closing tidal gates. Teams will continue to be out this weekend and are ready to respond to flooding.

The Environment Agency continue to monitor the situation and will review plans as and when the forecast changes.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to [sign up to flood warnings](#) on the Environment Agency website. People can also call Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Once registered, if a flood warning is issued, they will receive an automatic message by telephone, SMS text message, email and/or fax.

Find out [how to prepare for flooding and if your home is at risk](#).

---

## [Press release: Xylella fastidiosa: UK secures added EU protections](#)

The European Commission's Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and

Feed (SCOPAFF) has approved (Thursday 19 October) increased protections against *Xylella fastidiosa*. The plant disease has devastated olive plantations in southern Italy and is killing plants and trees in areas across Europe.

Last month the Environment Secretary Michael Gove [wrote to the European Commission](#) stressing that if EU protections were not increased, we would consider our own national measures, which could include a suspension of high risk imports. The disease, which could be deadly to our oak trees, would be difficult to eradicate if it was to arrive, which is why the UK has pushed hard for these increased protections to help keep it out.

The new measures incorporate key proposals from the UK and include strengthened movement requirements on high risk plants and require quicker responses to potential findings of the disease.

Following the vote Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Xylella poses a serious threat to our plants, trees and horticulture sector and as I made clear to Commissioner Andriukaitis last month, we need to see robust action by the EU against the disease.

I am therefore pleased this has been taken forward. These increased protections will add to our own efforts to protect our horticulture sector and our famous ancient oaks which have stood tall and proud for centuries as a national symbol of strength and survival.

While the measures we pressed for will come into force, we will keep the risk level under continuous review to determine if further measures are needed to keep the disease out of the UK.

When we leave the EU we will have an opportunity to examine all our national biosecurity measures on plant imports to ensure they are as robust as possible and we are doing everything we can to protect the UK against diseases like Xylella.

The new measures will take effect around the end of November, following a formal adoption process in the European Commission and will supplement measures already in place in the UK which require certain plants to be notified to the plant health authorities when they are brought into the country. This enables the Animal and Plant Health Agency to carry out targeted inspections as well as surveillance for disease in the wider environment.

---

# [News story: Civil news: help with how to submit a civil tender](#)

Keep an eye on our tender pages for the latest information on the 2018 civil contracts which will support you in the procurement process.

## **Answering your questions**

We are regularly updating this page and this includes answers to questions about the process submitted by providers through the e-Tendering system.

The deadline for submitting questions was 23.59 on 19 October 2017 for the Selection Questionnaire, face to face and CLA contracts.

We are now working through the answers which will be published in full on our tender pages in the week beginning 30 October 2017.

Meanwhile, interim documents are already available for you to download.

The deadline for questions on the Housing Possession and Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) contract tender is 23.59 on 7 November.

## **Face to face and CLA tender deadline**

The deadline for submitting a tender for a face to face or CLA contract is 5pm on 10 November 2017 and must include a response to the Selection Questionnaire.

## **HPCDS tender deadline**

Applicants wishing to submit a tender for HPCDS must submit a response to the Selection Questionnaire and Face to Face Contract Housing and Debt Invitation to Tender (ITT) by 5pm on 10 November.

In addition, a response must also be submitted to the HPCDS applicant ITT and each of the scheme area ITTs they wish to bid to deliver by 5pm on 4 December 2017.

## **Further information**

[e-Tendering system](#) – for submitting bids and using the message boards

[Legal aid civil tender 2018](#) – information for potential applicants

Email [help@bravosolution.co.uk](mailto:help@bravosolution.co.uk) or telephone 0800 0698630 for technical questions about using the e-Tendering system

[Tender process for 2018 contracts opens](#) – GOV.UK news story on 19 September 2017