

Press release: PM's Diwali message: 18 October 2017

I want to send my very best wishes to everyone celebrating Diwali here in Britain and all around the world.

The Festival of Lights is a special time for families and friends to come together, to share wonderful gifts and sweets, and to draw confidence from the knowledge that ultimately good will triumph over evil, hope over despair and light over darkness.

While Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists will all celebrate in their own way this week, the underlying message of Diwali – and its timeless values of duty and service – will resonate with people of all faiths and none.

As Prime Minister, I want to take this opportunity to say a special thank you – on behalf of the whole country – for the immense contributions you all make to every sphere of life in the United Kingdom.

From the doctors and nurses serving in our NHS, to the soldiers, sailors and airmen serving in our armed forces, the entrepreneurs creating jobs across our communities, and the stars of arts and culture inspiring and entertaining us, Britain's Indian communities are a shining example of what makes our country great.

As successful and integrated communities you maintain your unique traditions while contributing fully to our national life. And you help to show the world that our United Kingdom truly is a place where people from all backgrounds and beliefs can live their lives in freedom and achieve their full potential.

So this Diwali let us celebrate the values and freedoms that we share – and let me wish you all a happy, peaceful and prosperous new year.

Shubh Diwali.

News story: Muros report published

MAIB report on the grounding of bulk carrier Muros on Haisborough Sand, North Sea on 3 December 2016 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and subsequent actions taken.

Press enquiries

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

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Speech: “We believe the way to achieve lasting peace is through a negotiated two-state solution”

Thank you Mr President and may I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča, and through him, Special Coordinator Mladenov, for all of his work.

From the outset, I would like to make clear, as we approach the centenary of the Balfour Declaration next month, that the UK understands and respects the sensitivities many have about the Declaration and the events that have taken place in the region since 1917.

The UK is proud to have played a role in helping to make a Jewish homeland a reality. And we continue to support the principle of such a homeland and the modern state of Israel.

Just as we fully support the modern state of Israel as a Jewish homeland, we also fully support the objective of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. The occupation is a continued impediment to securing the political rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine. And let us remember, there are two halves of Balfour, the second half of which has not been fulfilled. There is therefore unfinished business.

With the approaching centenary, we believe it is important to look forward, not backward: forward towards establishing security and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians through a lasting peace.

We believe the way to achieve this lasting peace is through a negotiated two-state solution that leads to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

Mr President, we continue to watch developments on intra-Palestinian reconciliation closely. Our longstanding policy on reconciliation is that we support the Palestinian people in realising self-determination through an independent, sovereign, and unified Palestinian state encompassing the West Bank and Gaza.

We continue to closely monitor the situation in Gaza, and welcome Egyptian efforts on this important issue. We also join the Secretary-General in welcoming the Palestinian Authority's return to Gaza on 2 October, and the agreement to allow the Palestinian Authority to resume administrative control. This is an important and positive step toward the full restoration of Palestinian Authority control and effective governance in Gaza. We encourage those involved in the talks to engage in good faith, to allow the Palestinian Authority to fully resume its government functions, and ensure compliance with the Quartet Principles.

Our policy on Hamas remains clear: Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previous agreements. We expect now to see credible movement towards these conditions, which remain the benchmark against which its intentions should be judged. We call on those in the region with influence over Hamas to encourage Hamas to take these steps.

Mr President, in support of the two-state solution, we must continue to press the parties on the need to refrain from actions which make peace efforts more difficult. We are clear that the repellent phenomena of terrorism and incitement pose a grave threat to the two-state solution, and must end.

We strongly condemn the use of racist, hateful and anti-Semitic language. It is right that we continue to urge against any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a culture of peaceful coexistence.

Settlement construction is a significant barrier to achieving the negotiated agreement we seek, and seriously threatens the physical viability of the two-state solution.

We have witnessed an unacceptable acceleration of settlement activity throughout 2017, both in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. To date, Israel has advanced plans for over thirteen thousand settlement units – the highest number of units since 1992. Reports also indicate that a significant number of units may be advanced this week, and new settlement construction permits were approved in Hebron for the first time in fifteen years. We condemn each of these illegal acts in the strongest terms.

Mr President, moving briefly to Iran:

As we have heard, President Trump has taken the decision not to recertify Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to Congress. The UK stands committed to the JCPoA and its full implementation by all sides. We believe that preserving the JCPoA is in our shared national security interest. The nuclear deal was the culmination of 13 years of diplomacy and was a major step towards ensuring that Iran's nuclear programme is not diverted for military purposes. The JCPoA was unanimously endorsed by this Council in Resolution 2231. The International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly confirmed Iran's compliance with the JCPoA through its long-term verification and monitoring programme. Therefore, we encourage careful consideration of the implications to the security of the US and its allies before taking any steps that might undermine the JCPoA, such as re-imposing sanctions on Iran lifted under the agreement.

As we work to preserve the JCPOA, we share concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme and regional activities that also affect our security interests. We stand ready to take further appropriate measures to address these issues in close cooperation with the US and all relevant partners. We also look to Iran to engage in constructive dialogue to stop de-stabilising actions and work towards negotiated solutions. We believe this approach entails the best path to regional security.

Thank you, Mr President.

Speech: "Together, let's make a difference"– PM marks Black History Month

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Downing Street for this special reception.

For 30 years, Black History Month has called on us to look back and recognise the enormous contribution which African and African-Caribbean people have made to life in Britain.

The excellent timeline on display in the State Dining Room has been provided by the Black Cultural Archive. It tells the story of over two thousand years of black history in Britain.

I'm very grateful to the Black Cultural Archives for helping us with this event and I was delighted that I have just been able to meet Dawn Hill, the Archives' chairwoman, and present her with a Point of Light Award today.

It recognises her activity and voluntary work she has put into the Black Cultural Archives.

The Archives' collection, and the uplifting and inspiring stories of Black history which they tell stretching from Roman times to the present day are now on display in the UK's first national Black Heritage Centre.

Housed in a beautifully restored Georgian building on Windrush Square in Brixton, it is a great asset for this city and our country.

It serves to remind us of a very simple truth: that Black history is British history and the history of our country is the history of all our people, of every ethnicity.

Black History Month also provides us with an opportunity each year to celebrate the success of Black British people in every walk of life.

And there is so much to celebrate.

People of African and African-Caribbean heritage make an invaluable contribution to our life in the UK.

From leading figures in the arts and culture, in sport and academia, business and public service black Britons make our country a better place.

But it is not just the most prominent people – the contribution of Black British people in communities right across the UK in our NHS and schools, running or working for a small business, volunteering in their communities help to make twenty-first century Britain the strong and diverse country we are today.

But while there is much to celebrate, there is also even greater potential which is going untapped.

Because despite all the progress which we rightly celebrate, we know we still have a long way to go not just to root out hatred and prejudice from our society, but to tackle the injustices that still hold people back.

The Britain I want us to build is a country where everyone has the chance to succeed and go as far as their hard work will take them.

A country where no one suffers discrimination because of their background or ethnicity.

That is why, within weeks of becoming Prime Minister, I commissioned an unprecedented audit of public services to analyse how a person's ethnicity affects their experience of public services and how that affects their daily lives.

We published the findings last week. They expose some uncomfortable truths about the injustices that still exist in our society today – from health and education to the welfare and criminal justice systems.

As Prime Minister, it is my job, my duty, to shine a light on these injustices and lead the national effort to address them.

That will require work from Government – and it has already started.

So for example we are providing targeted employment support in 'hotspot' areas with big BAME employment gaps, so everyone has the best opportunity to make the most of their talents.

We are taking forward a number of recommendations from the Lammy Review into the experience of black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system.

There will be an external review to improve the practice in our schools on exclusions.

And the team in the Cabinet Office which produced the audit will not be

disbanded – it is going to continue its work in the future, alongside other departments and the wider public sector to drive real and meaningful change.

As a number of people have said it is all very well producing this review. But when I say we will work to drive real and meaningful change I mean it.

I hope that each of these steps will make a positive difference.

I am under no illusions about the scale of the challenge but the opportunity is enormous. Just think of the potential which is there, which I say is untapped.

Think of the talent, enthusiasm and ambition of our young people.

I saw it last week, when I visited Dunraven School in Streatham.

And an interesting story encapsulates this. One young man told me that his ambition was to pursue a career in law but he didn't see himself represented in the judiciary, and he wondered if he could make it.

But no-one's ethnicity should stop them from pursuing their dreams and as a country, we cannot afford to squander the talent and ambition of our young people.

We need to do much more to make the public sector more representative of wider society and we are taking action through initiatives like the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which was launched on Monday.

The contribution that young black people make to Britain is already enormous.

If we remove the barriers that remain, the potential for the future will truly be without limit.

It will take sustained work over time to overcome age old injustices.

My pledge this Black History Month is that we will see it through.

I hope all of you here, and leaders across communities, will work with me to make it a reality.

Black History Month encourages us to look back and learn from the past to look around us and understand the present and to look forward to shape the future.

To inspire the next generation to make our country and our world an even better place.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate it and I hope you enjoy the rest of this reception.

Together, working together in the future, let's make a difference.

[News story: Baroness Williams speech to National Black Police Association](#)

It is an absolute pleasure to be here today.

The National Black Police Association is a key Home Office partner and I would like to begin by thanking you for all of the work that you do.

My colleagues and I value the advice you provide as we develop policy – on workforce strategy, race relations, community ties and tensions, on hate crime and diversity in the police.

In fact, it was this organisation that provided the platform for the Prime Minister – when she was Home Secretary – to lay down a major challenge to police leaders to do better on diversity.

She spoke at this conference in 2015 and since then police leaders have taken concerted action on workforce diversity and police forces are making great progress.

Now, police forces are more diverse than ever before. But there is still some way to go until forces fully represent their communities. For instance, when it comes to having BME representation in senior ranks, this picture is less promising.

As a government we have implemented measures to expand the pool and diversity of senior police officers by introducing direct entry and by opening up appointments to those with equivalent experience from overseas. And the College of Policing has also been doing important work in this area.

Because we know that diversity is not a nice to have. It is an operational necessity. Because people from all communities want the police to fight crime while having confidence that their individual needs will be understood and respected.

A year ago the Prime Minister pledged to carry out an audit of the data held by government in order to shine a light on how our public services treat people from different backgrounds. The goal was to help the public assess how their race affects how they are treated on key issues such as health, education, criminal justice and employment, broken down by geographic location, income and gender.

The audit exposes a number of uncomfortable truths: there are significant disparities in the way public services are experienced based on a person's ethnicity and between police force areas. And while progress has been made in many areas, through police reform and the good work underway in forces, the data clearly shows that there is more to be done.

As the Prime Minister said herself:

the message is very simple: if these disparities cannot be explained then they must be changed.

The Race Disparity Audit makes it alarmingly clear that while we have made significant progress across a range of measures relating to crime and policing, for many people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, their experiences and expectations fall well short of what is acceptable.

The Home Secretary, along with ministers at the Home Office, is drawing together national work to consider these findings. There will also be an important role for national partners such as the College of Policing, and locally for police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to ensure that those communities where people are more likely to be a victim of crime, and live in greater fear of crime, receive the support that they need.

This government believes that how far you go in life should be based on the talent you have and the hard work the you put in – and nothing else.

We want to build a country that works for everyone – and that means tackling the injustices that hold people back in life, both within policing and indeed in the wider community.

The theme of today's conference is 'exploring the dynamics of hate' and as the Home Office minister responsible for countering extremism – I want to tell you what we are doing to tackle hate crime in all our communities.

I am particularly glad to be addressing you during the sixth annual Hate Crime Awareness Week. Hate Crime Awareness Week is being marked up and down the country, with charity and voluntary sector organisations, public services, and others leading the way. There are so many ideas, from attending local events to showing your support on social media which aim to encourage local authorities and services to work with communities affected by hate crime to raise awareness of the issue.

And I want to make it absolutely clear that hate crime of any kind, directed against any community, race or religion, has absolutely no place in our society, and it remains a serious concern. For my part I will always continue to push for robust action to address the causes of hate crime and improve our response to it.

We need to do this effectively because these crimes have a deep impact on victims because they are targeted against some intrinsic part of their identity. The effect of these crimes is often felt not only by the victim, but of course their family, friends, neighbours and others in their community. Hate crimes also go against the fundamental values of tolerance and respect for others that underpin our diverse society. Through fear, abuse and violence, hate crime can limit people's equality of opportunity and infringe their basic human rights.

The latest statistics show that there continue to be too many cases of hate crime. In 2016/2017 there were 80,393 offences recorded by the police and this is a 29% increase compared with the year before. The increase over the last year is thought to reflect both a genuine rise in hate crime around the time of the EU referendum and following the Westminster Bridge attack as well as ongoing improvements in crime reporting by police and of course the terrorist attack in Manchester. We certainly cannot be complacent when we read these statistics.

We already have a strong legislative framework to tackle hate crime and a hate crime action plan launched by the Home Secretary in July 2016 and due to be updated next year.

Where the police can really help is by encouraging an increase in reporting – which I know many forces have been doing. Because no one should suffer hate crime in silence. This involves increasing awareness of what hate crime is and engaging with communities to make sure that victims have greater confidence to come forward and that they actually know how to report it.

But more needs to be done.

A key part of this will be tackling online hate. As a government we have already provided over £450,000 towards the development of an online hate crime hub in the Metropolitan police area. Following the success of London's online hub, we are now pleased to announce the development of a national online hate crime hub which – when up and running in the coming months – will help the police to respond more efficiently and effectively to reports from across the country. Following referral to the national hub via True Vision, the police website to report hate crime, individual complaints will be assessed, and relevant cases will be assigned to the appropriate local force for investigation. As such the hub will streamline and simplify current processes, avoiding duplication, make full use of expertise and improving the efficiency of local forces to respond. Victims will be kept updated throughout, as police forces seek to bring perpetrators to justice.

We have committed funding for communities to protect against hate crime, with £2.4 million to protect places of worship and £900,000 to support community projects. We are engaging with groups to ensure that we understand the public's experience of hate crime, and make it easier for victims to come forward. As part of this, the Home Office has – just this week – announced a funding package of over £750,000 to tackle hate crime covering all 5 strands of the monitored hate crime strands across England and Wales. This will fund 7 innovative community projects, for example a project that works with schools to improve education on hate crime and a project working with young disabled people to raise awareness of hate crime and how to report it.

We are also committed to refreshing the Hate Crime Action Plan in 2018, working with the police and our wide network of stakeholders to make sure it is fit for purpose as well as asking Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to carry out inspection work on hate crime to build a national picture of how police forces deal with hate crime.

So I don't think I could be clearer, this government believes that it is utterly unacceptable that people should suffer abuse or attacks because of who they are – we must stand together against hate crime and ensure that it is stamped out. The police service is a key partner in this and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

As I have said, this government believes that how far you go in life should be based on talent and hard work – and nothing else. Hate must never impact how people live their lives, how comfortable they feel or where they end up.

We want to build a country that does work for everyone – and that means tackling the injustices that hold people back as well as taking a stand against intolerance.

That is why the work of this association is so important. We need your wise counsel not only on making sure that police officers and staff can progress in their careers and serve their communities but also on issues across all our communities.

Thank you.