

# News story: Foreign Secretary chairs Ministerial on UK support to British Overseas Territories

The Interministerial Group will look at the UK response to hurricane hit Islands.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has this afternoon chaired the first meeting of a new ministerial group overseeing UK support to British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean following Hurricane Irma.

The Interministerial Group on Recovery will agree the UK government's approach to supporting the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and the Turks and Caicos Islands following this month's devastation.

It will secure cross-Whitehall agreement on recovery objectives and coordinate the work required to assist the territories as they move from immediate relief to longer term recovery.

## **The Foreign Secretary said:**

Hurricane Irma was unprecedented. I saw for myself the devastation it inflicted on communities in the British Overseas Territories and I know that Britain's immediate and unprecedented response was welcomed right across the islands.

Key to the success of our emergency support was the way British military, humanitarian and consular efforts were coordinated and targeted. So as we now move from providing relief to assisting in recovery, this new ministerial group will ensure all our future efforts are equally joined up and as effective as possible.

The UK government is determined to help the British Overseas Territories to get back on their feet, dust themselves off and to help them become more resilient to future natural disasters.

The first meeting of the ministerial group was attended by ministers from ten government departments, including International Development Secretary Priti Patel and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Elizabeth Truss, and included discussions on recovery objectives.

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# Press release: Mark Field visits Rakhine state and calls for urgent action in meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi

Mark Field, Minister for Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has become the first foreign minister from outside the region to visit Rakhine state in Burma since the crisis there escalated with hundreds of thousands fleeing to Bangladesh. He held talks in Burma with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to press for an urgent resolution to the crisis in Rakhine.

The meeting in Naypyidaw followed a visit by Mr Field to Rakhine State where he saw for himself the displacement of people caused by recent violence against the Royingya Muslims that has seen more than 400,000 fleeing to neighbouring Bangladesh.

Mr Field made clear the violence needs to stop, with the security forces taking responsibility to protect all communities and the government allowing full humanitarian access for aid. He also emphasised Britain's call for the Burmese government to implement the recommendations of Kofi Annan's Rakhine Advisory Commission, to create the conditions in which Muslim, Buddhist and other communities can live along side each other peacefully and sustainably.

Mr Field also travelled to Rakhine and met the Rakhine Chief Minister Nyi Pu and State Executive Secretary U Tin Maung Swe, as well Rakhine-based UN agencies and international NGOs. He visited camps set up for Rohingya Muslims and other displaced communities who have remained in the country.

Last week Mr Field and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson took part in key talks on the Rakhine issue at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Mr Field said:

What we have seen in Rakhine in the past few weeks is an absolute and unacceptable tragedy. We need the violence to stop and all those who have fled to be able to return to their homes quickly and safely. The UK has taken a central role driving a clear international response, including securing a United Nations Security Council statement.

During my meetings with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and others, I strongly emphasised the need for Burma to heed the Security Council's call to end violence and allow humanitarian access to those in need of aid.

I have also seen for myself some of the communities which have been so badly damaged by what has happened here. Burma has taken great

strides forward in recent years. But the ongoing violence and humanitarian crisis in Rakhine risks derailing that progress.

Mr Field and FCO-DFID Joint Minister Alistair Burt will tomorrow (Thursday 28) hold talks in Bangladesh with key Government officials and aid agencies to identify how best to provide lifesaving support to the large influx of refugees from Burma.

The UK has already announced an extra £30 million of funding to meet urgent humanitarian needs of those affected in Bangladesh and Burma, with the majority of the funding due to be spent in Bangladesh.

Notes to Editors:

A further £5.9 million was committed prior to this influx to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and the host communities who support them.

[Violence in Burma Must Stop](#)

**Further information**

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## **[News story: Five Chevening scholarships awarded to young Tunisian leaders](#)**

The British Embassy in Tunisia is delighted to announce the selection of five young Tunisians as this year's Chevening scholars. The scholarships will allow them to pursue one-year postgraduate study in the UK from September 2017 in order to obtain a Master's degree from a British university of their choice.

Chevening scholars are distinguished by their leadership potential and their commitment to Tunisia's development within their areas of expertise. Their study in the UK will provide them with the tools needed to make a difference in Tunisia once they return to their country. This year's scholars will specialise in: commercial analysis; public policy; agriculture and rural development; psychology in conflict zones; and cultural studies.

Congratulating the successful candidates British Ambassador Louise de Sousa said:

I commend the selected candidates for having passed the rigorous selection process. The Chevening programme reflects the UK's belief in education as a tool for the development of societies. UK

universities are ranked among the best in the world. And we are pleased to offer the young leaders of Tunisia the opportunity to participate in the prestigious Chevening programme. Tunisia is particularly distinguished by its young people active in civil society, politics, and entrepreneurship. Thus, scholars of this year, past and future years, represent a concrete example of this distinguished youth, able to create a change. In the course of this academic year, candidates Nayress, Khawla, Kais, Mohamed Ali, and Ahmed will become ambassadors of Tunisian culture in the UK. They will also join an influential network of Chevening alumni, which now includes more than 44,000 members in 150 countries across the world.

Chevening Scholarship applications for the next academic year, 2018-19, are now being accepted. Applications must be submitted by 8 November 2017.

Scholarships fund one year postgraduate study in the UK in the following priority subject areas:

- Public administration, good governance and transparency;
- International relations and political participation;
- Journalism and strengthening the capacity of the media;
- Rule of law
- Security and the fight against terrorism.

For further information about Chevening scholarships or to submit an application you can visit [chevening.org](http://chevening.org)

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## **Press release: Highest smoking quit success rates on record**

New data published in a University College of London (UCL) report shows quitting success rates at their highest for at least a decade, up to 19.8% for the first 6 months of this year, significantly higher than the average for the last 10 years (15.7%).

Success rates among the less well-off have for years remained consistently low, but in a major turnaround the sharp increase in success rates is being seen entirely among this group. For the first time, smokers in manual occupational groups have virtually the same chances of quitting as those in white collar jobs.

The report coincides with the launch of Stoptober quit smoking challenge, which has inspired over one and a half million quit attempts since 2012. The campaign is based on research that if you stop smoking for 28 days you are 5

times more likely to stop for good.

With Stoptober now in its sixth year, the UCL report gives a number of reasons why there's never been a better time to quit, including:

- better and more quitting aid options, with e-cigarettes now the most popular
- more restrictions on smoking
- banning the use of attractive brand imagery on tobacco packaging
- a strong anti-smoking culture in England
- effective stop smoking campaigns such as Stoptober

E-cigarettes are the most popular quitting method in England and local stop smoking services are the most effective way to give up, with those who combine the two having some of the highest success rates. Last year over half (53%) of all those taking part in Stoptober opted to use an e-cigarette as a quitting aid. This year the campaign will feature e-cigarettes in the TV ad and will do more to encourage and support smokers who are keen to try e-cigarettes to help them stop smoking.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at PHE said:

E-cigarettes are now the most popular way to quit in the country with half of all those taking part in Stoptober last year using an e-cigarette. The evidence is clear – vaping is much less harmful than smoking, a fraction of the risk. So if you've struggled with quitting before, an e-cigarette may be the best option for you.

Don't be put off if you've already made several attempts. Join in with Stoptober and benefit from free support direct to your phone, laptop or tablet via the Stoptober app, a daily email giving support or Facebook Messenger, free face-to-face support plus a raft of advice and information on the website. Search 'Stoptober' online and join the thousands of others who go smokefree once and for all this year.

Professor Gina Radford, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said:

The battle against smoking is far from over. It is still the country's biggest killer, causing 79,000 deaths a year. For every death, another 20 smokers are suffering from a smoking-related disease.

Far too many people are still dying as a result of smoking but there has never been a better time to quit. The culture has changed, strong legislation is in place and effective support is available.

It's never too late to give up. Any smoker, no matter what their age, will feel the health benefits within months. Make the

commitment to stop, join Stoptober, and add healthier years to your life.

Robert West, Professor of Health Psychology and Director of Tobacco Studies at University College London, said:

Quitting success rates are higher than ever. I think the advances and wider choice of effective quitting options and a strong anti-smoking culture are fuelling this acceleration.

Thinking about giving up may be daunting, but all the evidence shows there has never been an easier time to stop. Quitting needn't be the painful journey it used to be and the support you'll get from Stoptober will increase your chances of succeeding.

The campaign starts on 1 October 2017. Search 'Stoptober' online for all the support you need to quit.

1. Visit [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober) to sign up or find out more on what support is available.
2. [Download Stoptober videos, TV Ad and images of celebrities supporting the campaign.](#)
3. Read UCLs report: [Quit success rates in England 2007 to 2017; Jamie Brown Ph.D. Robert West Ph.D.](#)
4. In 2016, 15.5% of adults aged 18 and over currently smoke, down from 19.9% in 2010; In 2000, 26.8 of adults aged 16 and over were smokers. Prevalence since 2010 has fallen most in younger age groups. See the [smoking prevalence figures](#).
5. See [PHE's Tobacco Control Profiles](#).
6. The total cost from smoking to society in England is approximately £14.7 billion a year. This includes the cost to the NHS of treating diseases caused by smoking which is approximately £2.5 billion a year. Source: ASH: The Local Cost of Tobacco – [ASH Ready Reckoner](#) and [Towards a smokefree generation: a tobacco control plan for England](#).
7. There were estimated to be around [79,000 deaths attributable to smoking in 2015](#). This represents 16% of all deaths.
8. The government's new [Tobacco Control Plan](#) sets a series of challenging ambitions:
  - reduce adult smoking rates from 15.5% to 12% or less

- reduce the prevalence of 15 year olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less
  - reduce the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy from 10.7% to 6% or less
9. [PHE](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Follow us on Twitter: @PHE\_uk and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](http://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland).
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## [News story: Minister concludes two day tour of Cornwall](#)

Securing an ambitious EU exit deal that works for every part of the UK is the Government's priority, Minister Steve Baker reaffirmed today as he concluded a tour of Cornwall.

Over the course of two days, the Minister took the opportunity to engage with businesses from a variety of sectors across the region – including, fishing, aerospace, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals. He attended business roundtables at Falmouth University and Tremough Innovation Centre, and visited Newquay AeroHub Enterprise Zone and Newlyn Fish Market.

Speaking to business leaders and organisation representatives, the Minister used the visit to hear about the opportunities and challenges that the UK's exit from the EU could pose to the region and how they are preparing.

### **Minister for Exiting the EU, Steve Baker said:**

My visit to Cornwall has been hugely productive and given me a great opportunity to hear about various businesses' priorities for our EU exit.

We are absolutely committed to achieving a deal which works for every region in the UK which is why it is vital that we continue to speak with businesses and organisations from across the country to ensure their views are fully represented as we move through the negotiations.

With the fourth round of negotiations underway, the visit comes as the UK Government steps up its engagement with businesses across the UK to ensure the voices of British businesses are heard and reflected throughout the exit process.

It is the second regional visit that the Minister has done in two weeks, following his trip to the North East last week.