

Press release: PM meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak: 14 Sept 2017

The Prime Minister welcomed Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak to Downing Street on 14 September with Defence Secretary Michael Fallon also in attendance.

The leaders spoke of the deep and historical ties between the UK and Malaysia and agreed on the importance of taking steps to enhance our bilateral relationship. They noted that that 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two countries as well as the 60th anniversary of Malaysian independence.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Najib discussed the ongoing crisis in Rakhine in Burma with the Prime Minister reiterating the importance of the Burmese authorities allowing unfettered access for humanitarian assistance in the country. The leaders agreed that the UK and Malaysia should co-ordinate on the provision of humanitarian assistance in Burma and in Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Najib also agreed on the continuing importance of Commonwealth values and spoke of the steps being taken to renew the organisation including at the Commonwealth Summit in London next year.

They discussed the importance of the existing defence relationship between the UK and Malaysia with both countries being party to the Five Power Defence arrangements.

The leaders spoke about the opportunities that the UK's exit from the EU will offer and committed to exploring ways to deepen the trade and investment relationship between the UK and Malaysia.

The Prime Minister also took the opportunity to personally express her condolences to Prime Minister Najib for the loss of life in the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah Tahfiz school fire.

Press release: HMRC's Executive Chair to step down

Edward joined HMRC in 2012 after several years in HM Treasury, and is the department's most senior tax professional. During his time at the department, Edward has fulfilled the roles of Tax Assurance Commissioner as well as

leading the former business group Central Tax and Strategy. As the former Head of Profession, Edward has also been responsible for overall policy partnership with HM Treasury. Since April 2016, Edward has chaired HMRC's Board.

Speaking of his retirement, Edward said:

After nearly 40 years in the world of tax, and the last 13 working in HM Treasury and HMRC, I have decided to retire from my role as Chair of HMRC. We have just delivered our best ever annual performance and I am immensely proud to end my professional career in tax in the department which is at the heart of the UK's tax system. My colleagues across HMRC continue to deliver the vital work we do with huge talent and professionalism and the department is well on track to fulfil the vision of becoming a world class organisation.

Chief Executive, Jon Thompson, said:

Edward has given his all to this department during his time here, and as our most senior tax professional, we will miss greatly Edward's expertise and leadership. HMRC is without a doubt a better organisation thanks to Edward's contribution, and we will certainly build on his achievements here – I wish him all the best for whatever he does next.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

My colleagues and I are very grateful to Edward for his service to HMRC and HM Treasury – his deep expertise and experience has rightly gained him the respect of the tax world and he retires with our very best wishes.

Edward will leave the department on 31 December, 2017.

End

Having become involved in tax policy through work with the Institute for Fiscal Studies and other academic and professional groups, in 1995 Edward was asked to join the Treasury as Special Adviser on tax to Kenneth Clarke, the then Chancellor.

Edward worked on the 1995 and 1996 Budgets, before returning to Simmons & Simmons in 1997 as Head of Tax Strategy, where he contributed to a range of tax initiatives and published and lectured extensively on tax policy issues.

Edward joined the Treasury as Director, Business and Indirect Tax in 2004 and was Director-General, Tax and Welfare from 2010 until he joined HMRC in 2012

as Tax Assurance Commissioner and Second Permanent Secretary.

Edward Troup was appointed Executive Chair and First Permanent Secretary at HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in February 2016.

[News story: PHE experts to aid recovery on storm hit British overseas territories](#)

Last week the British Virgin Islands, The Turks and Caicos Islands and Anguilla 3 of the 6 UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean, were severely damaged by Hurricane Irma along with a number of other countries in the region.

Recovery efforts are getting underway, aid is heading to the islands from the UK and now the senior medical and healthcare professionals in the territories will be able to receive help from PHE to restore their public health systems.

Dr Jenny Harries, Deputy Medical Director, said:

From recent work on international health issues, PHE has built strong working relationships with the chief medical officers of the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean. Seeing the level of damage inflicted by the recent storms, it is imperative we provide whatever support we can to protect public health on the islands.

Events such as hurricanes can significantly damage public health systems. Our staff will assist those on the ground working hard to protect the islanders from infectious disease and other hazards, which can cause further problems in the aftermath of a natural disaster such as Hurricane Irma.

Health Minister, Steve Brine said:

People in the British Territories have been through a truly traumatic experience and they have the full support of this government as they rebuild their lives.

Experts from Public Health England will share their experience with local health leaders in the region to prevent outbreaks of disease – this will help protect citizens in the critical aftermath and play an important role in restoring communities.

PHE is sending 3 staff who will be available to help develop public health guidance if needed and to provide specialist support to local public health professionals. We have also opened a direct emergency response line for local chief medical officers to access public health advice from doctors in the UK at any time.

The work will involve assessing the risks to public health from the damaged infrastructure and disruption to health and social services. The plan is to do this by:

- monitoring the spread of infectious diseases which may be circulating
- determining local capacity of laboratories and other services
- ensuring critical vaccination programmes continue to be delivered
- reviewing local mosquito control programmes

The staff going are experts in:

- public health incident management
- disease monitoring
- control of disease vectors such as mosquitoes
- public health system development

It's expected that while in the region they will assist with supporting health protection work and assessing damaged facilities to see what further work would need to be done to protect people both now and in the longer term.

Press release: Minister for Europe delivers key speech at Ukraine conference

Two months on from the London Ukraine Reform Conference, Sir Alan Duncan will travel to Ukraine where he will meet representatives of the Ukrainian government, including the Vice Prime Minister for European Integration Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze. He will also hear about the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea, illegally annexed by Russia, when he meets with Crimean human rights defenders.

Sir Alan will deliver a keynote speech at the Yalta European Strategy (YES) Forum, an annual conference focusing on Ukraine's European future. He will reaffirm that the UK government will continue to support the Ukrainian people and government in their efforts to implement an ambitious programme of political and economic reform.

Ahead of his visit, Sir Alan said:

I am delighted to make my first trip to Ukraine and I'm looking forward to following up on the priority reform areas discussed at the London Ukraine Reform Conference. It's clear that Ukraine's security and success matters to the UK, Europe and beyond. I urge the Ukrainian government to push forward their ambitious reform programme, particularly on anti-corruption, pensions, healthcare and the judiciary.

My message to the Ukrainian people and government is that we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you in upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As the UK leaves the EU, our political and practical support will not diminish. We remain committed to Ukraine over the long term, and fully support Ukraine's path towards greater integration with Europe.

I will also meet Crimean human rights defenders to discuss the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea. The UK does not, and will not, recognise the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia. Crimea is Ukraine.

[Speech: International Day of Democracy](#)

15th September marks the United Nations International Day of Democracy. I wanted to take this opportunity to restate the UK's strong support for democracy and human rights at a time when civil society is under increased threat in many parts of the world. If democracy is to flourish in Britain, Rwanda and the world, we need to discover a mutual trust—a trust of citizens in their politicians and, perhaps most difficult of all, a trust of politicians in their citizens. Democracy, like any important moral consideration, is not a state but an activity, a way of behaving. It is an active, living contract between the politician and the citizen. If the International Day of Democracy is about anything, it is about citizens.

Democracy carries risks, of course, including that of over-promising or blaming all of a country's ills on a particular group of people but adopting the citizen-based approach that democracy implies is the safest best for long-term stable and effective government. There is a strong correlation between societies that are secure and prosperous and those that enjoy participative democracy.

The UK supports democracy worldwide because we believe it is the system of government that best allows for individual freedom. It rests on foundations that have to be built over time: strong institutions, responsible and accountable government, a free and responsible press, the rule of law and equal rights for men and women. The UK supports a wide range of democracy initiatives, including funding NGOs that increase citizen participation,

promoting inclusion of marginalised groups, providing training for legal professionals, promoting freedom of expression and helping strengthen parliaments.

We all need to recognise that different societies have different responses to democracy. Rwanda has unique circumstances and history which has shaped the political system we see today. Models of democracy also cannot and should not be imposed by others and necessarily need time to take root. Democracy is an evolutionary process rather than a fixed end result. No model is perfect, and all remain works in progress.

Elections are rightly seen as important barometers of a country's democratic credentials. I was lucky enough to be an official observer in Muhanga district during the August Presidential elections and was pleased to see the people of Rwanda participating peacefully and in great numbers, with a result which I believe reflected the will of most Rwandans. I was particularly encouraged to see broader media coverage than in the last elections, and some instances of the obstruction of opposition candidates reported and addressed rapidly by the National Election Commission and the government.

I was concerned, however, by the lack of clarity in the registration process for candidates which appear to have made it impossible for certain credible candidates to register. Along with other international observers, I personally saw irregularities with the counting of ballots and vote tabulation. I know that the National Electoral Commission is committed to improving the system and I very much hope that Rwanda will take the opportunity to continue to amend its electoral processes in advance of the 2018 parliamentary elections as part of the democratic journey here. This is important not just for its own sake but for people's faith in the process.

I am concerned by the arrests and legal challenges in recent weeks. While Rwanda's political situation and recent terrible history is unique, it is concerning to see the targeting of opposition figures.

As diplomats, we are often (rightly) accused of focussing too much on the short term. If I step back, the progress Rwanda has made towards becoming a modern democracy during my four years in Kigali is clear. The transformation since the horrors of 1994 are nothing short of incredible. The UK is proud to be a friend and partner of Rwanda, and to play its part in assisting with Rwanda's democratic development.

End.