

## [News story: Foreign Secretary in Qatar and Kuwait for Gulf talks](#)

Mr Johnson, who yesterday met senior representatives of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, has arrived in Kuwait for discussions with His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs.

The UK strongly supports Kuwait's mediation efforts and the Foreign Secretary will pay tribute to the work of the Emir of Kuwait.

Later today he will also travel to Qatar for meetings with His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Al Thani, the Prime Minister of Qatar, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the Foreign Minister of Qatar.

The Foreign Secretary is urging all parties to get behind Kuwait's mediation efforts and work towards de-escalation and Gulf unity for the sake of regional stability. He is also discussing a range of security and bilateral issues with a particular focus on working together to address the common threats of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism.

In Saudi Arabia yesterday, the Mr Johnson met His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

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## [News story: UK statement on treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons](#)

The UK is committed to the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As a responsible Nuclear Weapons State the UK continues to work with international partners towards creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

However, we will not sign the treaty which has been published today. As we have previously made very clear, we do not believe that this treaty will bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. This treaty fails to address the key issues that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global

nuclear disarmament.

It will not improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency. The unpredictable international security environment we face today demands the maintenance of our nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. And we cannot rule out further shifts in the international security context which would put us, or our NATO allies, under grave threat.

This treaty also risks undermining and weakening the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, which has played an unparalleled role in curtailing the nuclear arms race. The NPT continues to make a significant contribution to the strategic stability that the international community requires. We must uphold and strengthen the NPT because of, not despite, the complex security challenges that we all face. It remains the right framework for progress across all three, mutually reinforcing, pillars, including disarmament.

The UK firmly believes that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach, within existing international frameworks. Productive results can only be achieved through a consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security context. It is only through building the necessary mutual trust between states, and through putting into place the key international architecture to help build the conditions for further disarmament, that we can make progress on a realistic and effective route towards our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The UK has not taken part in the negotiation of this treaty, and does not intend to sign, ratify or become party to it. The treaty will therefore not be binding on the UK. Furthermore, the UK would not accept any argument that this treaty can constitute a development of customary international law binding on the UK or on other non-parties. Importantly, states possessing nuclear weapons have not taken part in the negotiations. As has been made clear, the UK, as a Nuclear Weapons State, has been pursuing a step by step approach to nuclear disarmament consistent with the NPT and its other treaty commitments.

The UK will continue to work with partners across the international community to press for key steps towards multilateral disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and successful negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. And we will continue to play a leading role in disarmament verification.

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**[News story: Innovative vehicle to grid](#)**

## technology to receive £20 million

The new investment will support vehicle-to-grid projects as part of the government's Industrial Strategy and create a smarter energy system, while increasing the numbers of electric cars on UK roads.

The projects will investigate technology that allows plug-in electric vehicles to not only draw power from the grid when charging but return it to people's homes or back to the grid.

There are already 100,000 electric cars and 11,000 chargepoints thanks to government support. As this number grows they become a resource for a smart electricity grid – bringing benefits for drivers and creating a more flexible and efficient energy system.

Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry, Claire Perry said:

The government is a world leader in tackling climate change and we are committed to investing in clean energy innovation to support the UK's transition to a low carbon economy.

Vehicle to grid technology provides another opportunity for the UK to showcase to the world our leading expertise in research and development which is at the heart of our ambitious Industrial Strategy. This competition could unlock significant economic benefits for the UK – helping to create jobs in this burgeoning sector while helping to reduce our emissions.

The new funding from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) underlines the government's commitment to innovative technologies. Financial support for energy innovation will double by 2021 and over £600 million is already being invested to accelerate the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles.

The £20 million announced today will be awarded to three types of innovative vehicle to grid projects:

- feasibility studies – investigating the ways vehicle to grid technology can be used in the future
- industrial research or experimental development – for example, to develop vehicle-to-grid charging equipment
- demonstrator trials in the real-world environment – projects that trial vehicle to grid technology in different locations across the country

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

Electric vehicles are already helping thousands of motorists cut their fuel costs, and now there is an extra financial incentive for

motorists to go green.

The number of ultra-low emission vehicles on our roads is at record levels, with the latest figures showing that there are over 100,000 plug-in cars and vans registered.

The government's ambition is that nearly all cars and vans on our roads are zero emission by 2050.

The competition process will start in the next few weeks with the aim of winners being notified in December and projects starting in early 2018.

Simon Edmonds, Manufacturing and Materials Director at Innovate UK, said:

These competitions present ground-breaking opportunities for UK businesses to develop the next stage of vehicle to grid products and services. The potential of these technologies are huge, both for businesses and consumers.

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## **Press release: PM announces new measures to help Africa boost its prosperity and stability**

Prime Minister Theresa May is to unveil an ambitious package of support to create new wealth in Africa – reducing the continent's reliance upon aid and improving global security.

Speaking to G20 leaders in Hamburg today (Saturday), the Prime Minister will call for global action to unlock the huge untapped economic potential of Africa.

She will say a more prosperous Africa would lift millions of people out of poverty while also offering the UK greater security at home and significant future trading opportunities.

The new long term approach to be set out by the Prime Minister will be based on three key principles:

- Building a modern partnership with Africa which is focussed much more strongly on supporting African aspirations for trade, investment and growth;
- Creating millions of new jobs;
- A commitment to work with others including the private sector to

stimulate trillions of pounds/dollars investment into Africa.

Some 20 million jobs need to be created in Africa every year until 2035 just to absorb new entrants into the labour force.

The Prime Minister will say to the G20 that if young people remain permanently excluded with jobs and opportunities always out of reach then destabilising migratory patterns will persist – with extremist causes and criminality more likely to thrive.

But the Prime Minister will say that, with the right approach, if we get this right, our efforts will make it less likely that people migrate to Europe, turn to extremism or join criminal networks.

The Prime Minister will announce a package of new measures designed to help Africa reduce its reliance on aid and boost its prosperity and stability over the long-term, including:

- Announcing a new London Centre for Global Disaster Protection, which will use world-leading UK expertise and innovation to help developing countries strengthen disaster planning and use insurance to provide more cost-effective, rapid and reliable finance in emergencies, such as the severe drought in East Africa. This will reduce the need for expensive humanitarian aid, reassure private investors and help people rebuild their lives. Insurance protection built through this centre could provide £2 billion when crises hit to ensure that the high costs of disasters aren't borne by people or businesses trapping them in cycles of poverty, and its work to build insurance markets in developing countries could generate billions of pounds each year in additional national investment to boost economic development;
- New support (£60 million) to help Africa integrate into global financial markets, by building a robust and transparent financial sector that will attract more investment and financial innovation, help its banking sector stand on its own two feet and direct finance where it is most needed. This paves the way for a strong partnership with the City of London, creating more opportunities for London to become the finance hub for Africa;
- Providing £61 million to boost trade infrastructure in Tanzania – including working with the World Bank to nearly double the capacity of Dar es Salaam port;
- £30 million dedicated to helping Somalia's state and economy recover from conflict by building a functioning civil service for sound economic management and helping up to a million people benefit from better roads and water supply; and

- £35 million UK support to Ethiopia and £11.8 million to Rwanda to help attract private investment so these countries can be less dependent on aid.

The Prime Minister will call on other G20 leaders to provide similar assistance to other African countries to help create millions of new jobs, stimulate trillions of investment and harness the power of trade.

This will enable African refugees to be supported in the first safe country they reach and reduce their need for risky onward journeys.

Germany, the G20 hosts, are already championing this approach, including through a Compact with Africa initiative to promote private investment. The Prime Minister is urging others to now follow the UK and German lead on this vital issue.

Speaking in the margins of the G20 summit, the Prime Minister said:

We must not forget that progress in Africa benefits the UK at home.

Our international aid work is helping to build Britain's trading partners of the future, creating real alternatives to mass migration, and enhancing our security, while simultaneously ensuring we abide by our moral responsibility to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of some of the poorest people on earth. This is the future of aid, delivering value for money for the taxpayer.

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## [Press release: New War Horse story to mark the centenary of Third Battle of Ypres](#)

The work by Michael Morpurgo has been specially written for the national commemorations on Sunday 30 July. His live reading of the story will be accompanied by an appearance by the much-loved horse puppet Joey from the acclaimed National Theatre stage adaptation of War Horse.

The commemorations will also feature extracts from The Wipers Times, the play by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman based on the satirical trench newspaper published by British soldiers fighting on the Ypres Salient.

Images from the War will be projected onto the town's Cloth Hall, which was famously destroyed and later rebuilt. Recordings of interviews with First World War veterans and first-hand accounts from soldiers, nurses and loved

ones will also be read out and projected onto the Cloth Hall.

Karen Bradley, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said:

A century on from the horror of Passchendaele, the nation will come together to remember the sacrifice of those who were there. This battle has become synonymous with the horrific conditions of the trenches, and the futility of the war. It is important for us to commemorate and remember not only those who never returned home from the Western Front, but the families and the communities they left behind.

The event will be preceded by the traditional Last Post ceremony which has taken place every evening at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial since 1928. As part of the ceremony, representatives of combatant nations will lay wreaths under the Gate.

On Monday 31 July, thousands of descendants of the men who fought, and those with a connection to the battle, will attend a ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest CWGC cemetery in the world, where almost 12,000 men are buried. Serving military personnel and descendants will read out letters and diaries from their ancestors as part of a service of remembrance to those who fought at Passchendaele.

Author Michael Morpurgo said:

All our yesterdays help us to comprehend our present. It is ever more important in this complex world for young people to know the roots of their history. We are inclined to take for granted our freedoms and our rights. It is easy to forget that so many of those who came before us, fought and died to defend the liberties we enjoy today.

We are now a hundred years on from the battle of Passchendaele, one of the most appalling battles of the First World War, in which thousands upon hundreds of soldiers suffered and died. It is a moment to reflect on their lives, and on the terrible nature of that war and of all wars, and on the importance of maintaining peace. They fought for our peace. That is what we must not forget, which is why we must continue to tell the story, to pass it on.

Broadcaster Ian Hislop, who co-wrote The Wipers Times with Nick Newman, said:

It is a great honour for the Wipers Times play to be included in the commemoration of Passchendaele. This satirical trench newspaper was born in the ruins of Ypres and named Wipers by the Tommies who

could not pronounce it. It captured the defiant black humour of the British Forces in the face of overwhelming adversity. This story has gone from the Western Front to the West End, and now it is returning to where it all began.

Lisa Burger, Executive Director of The National Theatre of Great Britain said:

We are absolutely delighted to be bringing War Horse to Ypres for this historic event. We hope that with Michael Morpurgo's specially written short story alongside Joey's appearance at the commemoration of Passchendaele, we can remind people of the cavalry action and the bravery of both men and animals during the First World War.

Welsh poet Hedd Wynn, who was killed on the first day of Passchendaele, will be honoured in the commemorations, along with Irish poet, Francis Ledwidge, who was also killed in action on 31 July 1917. The National Youth Choir of Scotland will perform at all three commemorative events and around 100 graduates of youth empowerment programme National Citizen Service (NCS), aged 16 to 19, will be part of the delivery team at the commemorations.

Passchendaele began at 3.50am on 31 July 1917 when Gough's Fifth Army launched their attack over a 15 mile front. Despite initial successes, the attack soon became bogged down and hampered by rain which turned the battlefield into liquid mud. By the end of the offensive, the Allied forces had sustained over 320,000 casualties. German losses are estimated to be between 260,000 and 400,000.

The Government's four year First World War centenary programme will close in 2018 with services to mark the start of the 100 Days offensive – the Battle of Amiens – in August, and a special ceremony at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the centenary of Armistice. The centenary will also be marked with an expanded march past the Cenotaph following the traditional Remembrance Sunday service, and an event at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission St Symphorien Military Cemetery near Mons in Belgium. St Paul's Cathedral will hold a special service of music and readings.

The Government's cultural partner, 14-18 NOW, is also commissioning a series of arts projects to reflect the major themes of the centenary. This will culminate in a UK-wide event on Sunday 11 November, in which people across the UK will be invited to participate and reflect on how the FWW continues to shape our world today.

## **ENDS**

For further information, interviews and image requests please contact Faye Jackson on [faye.jackson@culture.gov.uk](mailto:faye.jackson@culture.gov.uk) or on 020 7211 6263.

Extract from Michael Morpurgo's From Farm Horse to War Horse:



Father used to tell me that when he was a littlun he used to get hisself into all sorts of trouble. He always said that the worst scrape he got hisself into, was the First World War, and the worst battle he was ever in was at Passchendaele. And he was there, all because of a horse.

### **Join the Commemorations on social media:**

Watch, share and embed this short YouTube video featuring stories of those that served at Passchendaele, as told by their ancestors:

[Passchendaele100](#)

Explore our map to discover a range of [personal Passchendaele stories](#) of those that served, representing regions across the UK.

Share your Passchendaele histories and messages of remembrance on social media alongside the [#Passchendaele100](#) hashtag.

Use these [websites](#) to research your Passchendaele and First World War family histories and local connections.