

# [News story: Foreign Secretary visits the Gulf to discuss regional tensions](#)

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has arrived in Saudi Arabia today (Friday 7 July) for the first in a series of meetings in the Gulf on the current tensions.

In the coming days Mr Johnson will hold talks with leading representatives of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait.

In Saudi Arabia today he is meeting 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.

In the coming days the Foreign Secretary will also travel to Qatar and Kuwait for talks with senior figures from both countries.

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

The Foreign Secretary said:

Britain's close and historic friendship with all of the Gulf states is becoming even more relevant and important in today's volatile world. As our Prime Minister has said: The Gulf's security is our security and we remain deeply committed to the stability of the region and to working with our friends in the Gulf to keep all of our people safe.

These talks underline the UK's strong support for Kuwait's mediation efforts and I urge all parties to play a constructive role in order to restore the unity of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

**Further information**

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# [News story: Service marks 100 years of](#)

# women's contribution to UK Armed Forces

Today, Friday 7th July, The Royal British Legion led celebrations marking the centenary of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) – the first all-female unit in the UK Armed Forces. The event also recognised the contribution of women to the UK's Armed Forces military capability over the past 100 years.

WAAC was founded on 7 July 1917, enabling the enrolment of women into the British Army for the first time. Women were issued their uniform before taking over from men in roles such as mechanics, drivers, cooks, clerks, drivers, mechanics, telephonists, and telegraphers. A total 58,000 women served in the Corps before it was disbanded in 1921, with 82 women dying in service, and five being awarded the Military Medal.

200 current Servicewomen, from helicopter pilots to weapons engineers, joined veterans at the ceremony which included a traditional Drumhead Service.

Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon said:

From the fields of Flanders to the deserts of Afghanistan, women have served in our Armed Forces over the past century with distinction and commitment.

It is essential that roles in our Armed Forces are determined by ability, not gender, and it is therefore very good news that women are joining us in greater numbers and serving in diverse roles including close combat operations.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin MP who attended the ceremony said:

I'm delighted to be here today to mark this special anniversary, and also to pay tribute to the thousands of brilliant women in our Armed Forces past and present who serve our country, keeping us safe.

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**News story: Defence Secretary**

## reaffirms leadership in NATO on Washington trip

During his first meeting with US Secretary for Defense James Mattis in the American capital, the Defence Secretary said Britain had shown leadership across the alliance and has helped encourage an increase of more than £40bn of defence investment by NATO states.

The UK has consistently met NATO's 2% of GDP spending target, Sir Michael said in Washington, and has led by pressing allies to increase their own fiscal commitment. In the past year NATO countries have committed around £43bn more towards collective defence, at a time when a large number of assurance and deterrence activity is taking place across NATO's eastern European flank.

He set out how the threats to security are growing and changing, but reflected on the fact that since his visit to Washington in 2015 the UK has delivered by committing to 2%, sailed her first Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carrier and sent thousands of personnel on NATO exercises and deployments by land, sea and air.

Sir Michael said:

Today our nations are facing a wave of multiple, concurrent, diverse global threats. From Islamist extremism, Russian state aggression, sponsors of terror and North Korea testing nuclear bombs and firing off missiles, to the insidious spread of misinformation and Wannacry like cyber attacks. Such events demand an international response, so we see Brexit as an opportunity not to step back from European defence but to step up to strengthen Euro-Atlantic security. In particular, we're bolstering our bonds with NATO, the cornerstone of our defence.

Sir Michael met Secretary Mattis in Brussels last week at the NATO Defence Ministerial meeting, where they discussed a range of security issues including Syria, where US jets struck in response to a chemical weapon attack. Sir Michael explained at the Pentagon how the UK is acting to protect the UK and allies from threats.

He said:

We're performing a pivotal role in the Counter-Daesh Coalition, attacking Daesh positions, training local forces, using our cyber capabilities to disrupt their activities, an overall contribution which is second only to the US.

And he discussed the impending fall of Mosul, a key location in Daesh's ill-fated, so-called caliphate.

He said:

It's striking to think that back then Daesh were closing in on the gates to Baghdad, yet now they are close to defeat in Mosul.

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## [Press release: Burglar who targeted the elderly jailed for longer](#)

A burglar who targeted the elderly has sentence increased to 7 years and 6 months following ULS referral

A burglar who targeted the elderly will spend more time in prison after Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Felix Joseph Hanrahan, 29, committed 13 burglaries in Durham and Northumbria. Posing as a water board official checking water supplies for contamination he managed to get into people's homes. He stole cash and jewellery with a total value of at least £2585.

Hanrahan deliberately targeted elderly, vulnerable people – many of whom lived alone. Some of the victims also suffered from medical conditions including dementia.

Hanrahan was originally sentenced to 3 years 9 months in prison at Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court. He will now serve 7 years 6 months behind bars.

Speaking after the hearing, the Attorney General said:

“This was a planned operation with vulnerable, elderly people being the target. The original sentence failed to take proper account of the seriousness of this offending and the effect the burglaries had on the victims' lives. I am pleased the Court has increased the prison term.”

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# Press release: Demolition company fined for illegal waste site

A County Durham demolition company has been ordered to pay £6,180.46 after pleading guilty to breaking environmental laws.

PTS Demolition and Dismantling Ltd, which operates out of Hackworth Industrial Estate, Shildon, Bishop Auckland, was prosecuted for operating a waste transfer station without a permit at Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court on 5 July 2017. The court ruled it was a deliberate offence and ordered the firm to pay a fine of £3,500 and £2,680.46 costs.

The charges brought by the Environment Agency relate to the company's attempts to reduce costs by starting its own waste transfer station.

An Environment Officer and a colleague from Durham County Council visited the site in July 2014 to provide advice on how to apply for an environmental permit and planning permission to do this.

In 2015, Environment Officers visited a further five times to give additional advice and guidance. At the same time they recorded evidence that the company was operating a waste transfer station illegally, including storing 100 tonnes of crushed aggregate, 15 skips full of mixed waste and a store of fire extinguishers.

In February 2016, PTS Demolition submitted a permit application, which was returned for failing to include the application fee. Following a further visit by Environment Officers to give more advice, the company submitted another application. This was also returned for failing to include a Fire Prevention Plan (FPP). Again, officers provided advice on how to complete an FPP.

Officers returned to the site on 11 August 2016. The levels of waste had reduced but some skips of mixed waste remained, along with a number of wooden railway sleepers and a skip containing glass.

## **Company given 'every possible opportunity' to comply**

Jamie Fletcher, Environment Agency Area Environment Manager, said:

The regulations exist to protect the environment, legitimate business and local communities from the risk of harm. Every business dealing in waste, whether they produce, carry, sort, recycle, ship or dispose of it, has a responsibility to fully understand and comply with environmental laws.

We gave PTS Demolition every possible opportunity and extensive support to comply. However, not only did they store waste illegally, the company repeatedly ignored advice and failed to shut

down operations.

Those that repeatedly fail to comply with regulations pose a heightened risk to the environment and undermine legitimate business. In such circumstances we will have no hesitation prosecuting to ensure that waste crime doesn't pay.