

News story: Natasha Kaplinsky recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours for project to remember the Holocaust

The award recognises Natasha's incredible personal commitment to preserving the memory of the Holocaust for future generations, following her work to record the testimony of more than 100 British Holocaust survivors and Bergen Belsen liberators as part of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's major national project.

Over a period of 15 months and on an entirely pro-bono basis, Natasha conducted 112 testimony interviews. The majority of these moving personal stories were recorded for the first time. The invaluable body of testimonies created by Natasha cover a wide range of experiences of Nazi persecution, including camp survivors, children in hiding, refugees who escaped to Britain – some of whom then served with the British Army – and children who arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport, an organised rescue effort for Jewish children in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries before the outbreak of war. The collection also includes Charedi survivors, a Roma survivor and recordings of British soldiers involved in the liberation and relief of Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp.

Natasha's work gave all these people the chance to record their history, preserving it so that their voices can be used to educate future generations about the lessons of the Holocaust and to challenge them to think about their own role in fighting hatred and prejudice in all its forms. The testimonies will have a permanent home in the new education centre that will accompany the National Memorial which is to be built next to Parliament in Westminster.

Natasha Kaplinsky said:

"Meeting the survivors and their families has been an incredible privilege. Their testimonies detail humanity's darkest hour. They are also stories of incredible strength, compassion, inspiration and forgiveness.

"Through their testimony they offer up challenges for us all to consider about our world and the way we treat each other, and to remind us of the constant need to stand up against hatred and prejudice in all its forms."

Natasha's empathetic, sensitive and personal style ensured that survivors felt comfortable sharing their experiences and the impact they had on their lives. Reflecting on their interview, one survivor commented:

"You handled me and my testimony with great sensitivity, which made it easier for me to talk about the painful events in my life. I cannot say I enjoyed the interview as it brought back so many painful memories, but at the end I was pleased to have done it... Future generations must know what happened."

The national project began after an independent, cross-party commission found there was an urgent need to record and preserve further testimony of British survivors and liberators. It has been led by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said:

“Natasha has undertaken an extraordinary project, single-handedly interviewing 112 British Holocaust survivors and liberators. Using her expertise, professionalism and compassionate approach, she was able to draw out stories sympathetically and sensitively, supporting survivors to recount their testimony.

“Natasha has helped to create an indelible record of the Holocaust, curating a particularly British story for future generations to learn from. This is something we can all be grateful for.”

The testimonies will be made available online so that they can be explored by individuals and educational projects around the UK. This new digital resource will add to the existing testimony available and form part of a rich network of recorded testimonies to aid remembrance and education.

[Watch an example of excerpts from the testimonies.](#)

About Natasha Kaplinsky

Natasha Kaplinsky is one of the UK's leading broadcasters having worked for Sky News, BBC and ITV. Natasha is patron of a number of charities and an Ambassador for Save The Children. In 2014 she became a member of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission and in 2015 she was appointed by the Prime Minister to the board of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) was created to implement the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report in 2015, ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust and its lessons are preserved and remain current for future generations. Alongside the programme to record and preserve the testimony of Holocaust survivors, UKHMF is leading the creation of a new national Holocaust Memorial and accompanying education centre that will explain the facts of the Holocaust and challenge visitors to explore its lessons for society today. UKHMF has cross-party support and is chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette.

[**Press release: DIT appoints Crawford**](#)

Falconer as new Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser

A globally respected trade negotiator, tasked with sealing deals with the UK's key trading partners, has been appointed today by the Prime Minister and the International Trade Secretary.

Internationally recognised expert Crawford Falconer will act as head of profession for trade negotiators and will bolster the Civil Service's trade negotiation skills, bringing over 25 years of public service in trade and foreign affairs.

As the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser and Second Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade (DIT) he will be responsible to the Secretary of State for International Trade, The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP for negotiating with ministers the best global trade deals that will benefit the whole of the UK.

The new expert Second Permanent Secretary post was created to support the establishment of a world-class trade negotiation function and lead this new profession within the Civil Service, reporting to the DIT Permanent Secretary.

Together with his team Crawford will:

- develop and negotiate free trade agreements and market access deals with non-EU countries
- negotiate plurilateral trade deals on specific sectors or products
- make the department a 'centre of excellence' for negotiation and British trade
- support the UK's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

Since its formation in July 2016, the headcount at DIT has increased to a global workforce of over 3,000 people. The Trade Policy Group that includes policy and country specialists, as well as expert economic analysts and lawyers, has itself quadrupled in size.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Britain is a great global trading nation and, as we leave the EU, we will embrace the world and seek to build an outward-looking Britain that is confident on the world stage.

We're attracting the very best global talent to DIT as an international economic department. Crawford brings extensive experience of trade negotiation and foreign affairs and will play a key leadership role, with ministers and the first Permanent Secretary as we further build our trade capability

Welcoming the appointment Sir Jeremy Heywood said:

As the UK's first Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, Crawford Falconer will play a crucial role in building the Department for International Trade's trade negotiation capability, enabling the new department to take forward its vital mission of promoting free trade and supporting UK business on the global stage. I am delighted that we have been able to secure someone for this role with a long and distinguished track record in international trade negotiations.

Crawford Falconer is an excellent addition to DIT's senior team and I look forward to working with him.

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary at DIT, said:

Crawford Falconer brings a wealth of global trade expertise to the Department for International Trade from over 25 years of working on trade policy in the New Zealand government, the OECD and academia.

International trade drives the prosperity of the UK and the world. As we build our relationships to create a more global Britain, Crawford will be central to our work to secure the best trade deals that deliver for businesses and consumers.

Crawford Falconer said:

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, it will be top of the government's agenda to turn the enormous new opportunities opening up for the UK into win-win agreements with our trading partners around the globe.

That will bring tangible new gains to us at home, and it will bring gains to those trading partners that join us. As the world's fifth largest economic power, the UK will bring much needed leadership to the international trade agenda. I am absolutely delighted to join this hugely exciting new journey.

DIT has already established a series of 9 'working groups' with 15 countries including India, China and Australia and high-level dialogues to explore the best ways of progressing our trade and investment relationships.

The announcement comes as Dr Fox prepares to visit his US counterparts in Washington (Monday 19 June 2017) to explore ways of deepening trade and economic links on what will be his first international visit since being reappointed International Trade Secretary.

A New Zealand/UK dual-national, Crawford Falconer is currently Professor of

Global Value Chains and Trade at Lincoln University. This follows a long career at the heart of NZ's Foreign Office, specialising in trade. He was latterly the NZ Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister for International Trade and Foreign Affairs. He is a former NZ Ambassador to the WTO, and the holder of a variety of trade-related posts within the ministry.

Further information

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[Press release: Prime Minister's statement on the death of Helmut Kohl](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. As the First Chancellor of a unified Germany since 1945 he was a giant of European history. On behalf of the people of the United Kingdom I pay tribute to the role he played in helping to end the Cold War and reunify Germany.

We have lost the father of modern Germany and my deepest sympathies and condolences are with his family and with the German people at this sad time.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary hosts further talks with Gulf counterparts on diplomatic tensions](#)

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has held talks with Gulf counterparts this week about ongoing tensions in the region.

Mr Johnson met with the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani, on Monday (12 June) to discuss the diplomatic row between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Today (Friday 16 June), the Foreign Secretary met Khalid bin Ahmed al Khalifa, the Foreign Minister of Bahrain; Adel Al-Jubeir, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia; and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash, at the Foreign Office in London.

On Tuesday (13 June), Boris Johnson spoke to Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Khaled al-Saba, by phone, thanking him for the leading role Kuwait is playing in mediating the current row.

The Foreign Secretary reiterated his concerns about the ongoing tensions, urging Gulf ministers to deescalate the situation and find a swift resolution through mediation.

He called on all Gulf states to refrain from any escalation which could have serious repercussions on the lives of ordinary people in Qatar and beyond. He made clear that the UK is concerned by the collective action taken by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain against an important ally, and urged them to ease the restrictions currently in place on Qatar.

The Foreign Secretary reiterated that Qatar must engage with its neighbours in the region on their concerns about extremism, and build on the progress already made to address the scourge of radicalism and terrorism in the region, in partnership with its Gulf allies.

Alistair Burt, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, also spoke with a number of Gulf interlocutors today.

The UK and the US remain in close contact as they both make efforts to calm tensions in the region.

[News story: David Mundell in Peterhead and Aberdeen](#)

Scottish Secretary David Mundell has visited north-east Scotland today to meet fishermen's representatives in Peterhead and businesses in Aberdeen.

Following on from his reappointment this week as Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Mundell visited north-east Scotland today to hear the priorities of fishermen and other north-east businesses ahead of EU exit.

In Peterhead Mr Mundell toured the fish market, spoke to traders and fishermen, then met representatives from the Scottish Fishermen's Federation.

In Aberdeen he met small and medium-sized businesses from a number of sectors – including tourism, food and tech – at a roundtable hosted by Aberdeen and Grampian Chambers of Commerce.