

# [Press release: Minister condemns war crimes committed during battle of Aleppo](#)

UN report confirms war crimes were committed during the battle of Aleppo.

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria has released its latest report, this time examining human rights violations and abuses committed during the offensive against eastern Aleppo in the second half of 2016.

The Commission found that all parties to the conflict had shown “a wilful disregard” for international humanitarian law and said that war crimes were committed.

Commenting on the report, Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

This latest UN report highlights the appalling suffering of the civilian population in eastern Aleppo, caused by the Syrian regime and its backers.

The regime and its backers are continuing to inflict indiscriminate bombardments and use starvation tactics in other parts of Syria, most alarmingly in the eastern Ghouta in rural Damascus. This UN report underlines the urgent need to strengthen the current ceasefire to avoid more innocent civilians enduring the same suffering as those in Aleppo.

The UK condemns in the strongest possible terms all human rights violations and abuses by all parties. We need to see a negotiated political transition to end this conflict and break the cycle of suffering. The UK will continue to work with international partners to support the people of Syria.

The report outlines how the Assad regime used indiscriminate weapons such as barrel bombs; cluster munitions; incendiary and chemical weapons. Syrian and Russian air strikes claimed hundreds of lives, destroyed vital civilian infrastructure and forcibly displaced the population of eastern Aleppo.

The full report can be found [here](#)

**Further information**

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# [News story: Minister for Policing and the Fire Service visits the Police Rehabilitation Centre](#)

During his visit, the minister spoke with staff and met patients as well as touring the facilities at the centre, which helps both serving and retired police officers who are sick or injured from 29 forces across England and Wales. Each year, the Police Rehabilitation Centre helps more than 3,500 police officers get back to health and return to work.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Brandon Lewis said:

I've heard a lot about the excellent work that staff at Flint House do helping support brave police officers, who may have been injured in the line of duty or are in need of help. I was very keen to come down to see their work and to meet some of the staff and patients here and thank them for their efforts.

Police officers and staff do so much to keep our communities safe. Sometimes that means putting themselves in harm's way on our behalf, which is why it is really important that charities such as the Police Rehabilitation Centre are here to support them when they need it most.

Earlier this month, an initiative coordinated by the Police Federation for England and Wales saw the launch of a new website, [policecharitiesuk.org](http://policecharitiesuk.org), which is part of a new effort from policing charities to improve access and signpost officers, staff and their families in need of support to the correct organisations such as Flint House.

The Police Rehabilitation Centre at Flint House provides individually planned and intensive rehabilitation for police officers and includes healthcare and mental health facilities as well as residential accommodation. It is funded primarily through small weekly donations from serving officers.

The Police Rehabilitation Centre Chief Executive Officer Tom McAuslin said:

I am very pleased that the minister found time to visit Flint House and to see the good work undertaken helping to get ill and injured police officers back on duty.

[BL Rehabilitation Centre](#)

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## [News story: OTS welcomes new Tax Director](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Paul Morton takes up post as the OTS's new Tax Director.

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## [News story: Robin Walker: 'Gibraltar has particular interests'](#)

Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker, Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan and International Trade Minister Lord Price today (1 March) hosted the second Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) to discuss Gibraltar's priorities as we prepare to exit the European Union.

Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory with a population of over 32,000. In 2015/16, its GDP was forecast to be £1.77bn. Its main industries are tourism, financial services, online gaming, shipping and construction.

The discussions today centred around the opportunities and challenges in areas such as trade and market access, with ministers in agreement that we must ensure Gibraltar's interests are taken into account.

Speaking after the meeting, Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker said:

We recognise that Gibraltar has particular interests, and that is why this dedicated forum is vital. It gives us the opportunity to discuss Gibraltar's priorities and ensure their interests are taken into account.

We have had a useful and informative discussion today and I will continue to engage with Gibraltar throughout the negotiations, as we forge a new relationship with the EU and look outward into the world. As the Lords' report today has recognised, the UK has a responsibility to represent Gibraltar in these negotiations and we will do so better informed as a result of this process.

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

UK is steadfast in our support for Gibraltar, its people and its economy. As the UK leaves the EU, we are making sure we understand the priorities of Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, so that the new relationship with the EU works for all. The JMC, and the useful discussion today, is a key part of that dialogue.

International Trade Minister Lord Price said:

The UK is banging the drum for British businesses across a range of international markets and we are committed to taking the needs of Gibraltar and other Overseas Territories into account during this process.

That's why I was pleased to be part of today's meeting to discuss the place of Gibraltar in the global trade agenda. This forum provides a welcome opportunity to hear from Gibraltar on their priorities and ensure we're working together as we look towards our future as a global leader on free trade.

As the UK leaves the EU, the government will ensure the priorities of the Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, and the Crown Dependencies are understood through a range of engagements. These will continue after we trigger Article 50 and begin the process of exit later this month.

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## **[News story: UK Space Agency announces new Chief Executive](#)**

Graham has been Chief Executive of the Better Regulation Executive, a unit within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, since 2011. He has a BA and a PhD in Particle Physics from Cambridge University for theoretical work on collision experiments at CERN. He also holds a diploma in public administration from the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA).

Graham has extensive experience across Whitehall and at a European level – a key priority for the Agency's head. He has worked in the European Commission and held several other posts in the UK Civil Service with a strong European element, including the Treasury's lead on the EU budget.

Recently he has been the BEIS representative on the Met Office board while outside of work he is a trustee of the Youth Hostels Association and a keen cyclist.

As the UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Graham will lead a team of more than 100 who manage the UK's civil space policy, regulation and programmes. He

will be responsible for realising the agency's aims of increasing the size of the UK space industry, using space to understand planet Earth and the universe, supporting British businesses to deliver practical help to developing countries and overseeing the Agency's plans to establish commercial space flight in the UK.

Graham will take up his new role on the 1st of April. He replaces Interim Chief Executive Katherine Courtney, who has been with the Agency since April, 2016. During her time Katherine guided the Agency through the European Council of Ministers in Lucerne, Switzerland, where the UK committed to European collaboration on science and exploration, satellite technology and services, allocating more than €1.4 billion over five years to European Space Agency programmes.

Katherine also led the Agency at a key time for commercial spaceflight in the UK, inviting commercial space consortia to apply for grant funding to enable small-satellite launches and sub-orbital flights from the UK by 2020.