

[Press release: Conclusion of the London Somalia Conference](#)

On Thursday 11th May the UK hosted a major international conference on Somalia. Bringing together leaders from around the world, this conference accelerated progress on security sector reform, built on the international response to the ongoing drought and humanitarian crisis and agreed the new international partnership needed to keep Somalia on course for increased peace and prosperity by 2020.

Prime Minister Theresa May opened the conference. Other speakers included Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, International Development Secretary Priti Patel, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, President Farmajo of Somalia, UN Secretary General Guterres and Chairperson Faki of the African Union.

The conference focussed on the agreement of a Security Pact, adopted by Somalia and the international community, which will allow for sustainable, long-term security based on mutual accountability. The conference also ensured the adoption of a New Partnership for Somalia by the delegations, to re-commit them to working together and holding each other account to deliver the vital support and reforms that Somalia needs over the next four years.

The UK is helping to build stability in Somalia through UKAid, with a strong focus on statebuilding, stabilisation and supporting more effective and accountable institutions, as well as through the deployment of around 70 UK Armed Forces personnel, who are supporting the Somali National Army.

Britain is leading the way in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, providing food, water and medicine to over a million people. The UK reaffirmed its commitment to preventing a famine, and called on the international community to urgently step up their support before it is too late.

Read the full communiqué from the London Somalia Conference 2017 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/london-somalia-conference-2017-communication>

Read the New Partnership for Somalia here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-partnership-for-somalia-for-peace-stability-and-prosperity>

Read the Security Pact here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/london-somalia-conference-2017-security-pact>

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[Speech: London Somalia Conference 2017: UN Secretary-General's opening remarks](#)

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to support Somalia at a moment which is both tragic and hopeful. And I do believe that Somalia can be in the near future the kind of good news that we badly need in the international community and in our troubled world.

I thank the United Kingdom, as well as President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo of Somalia, for co-hosting.

I deeply appreciate the leadership of the African Union and the vital work of AMISOM [the African Mission in Somalia]. I thank Chairperson Faki for joining us today.

I commend the President, along with Prime Minister Khayre, the new cabinet and leaders of the federal member states, for their political will to work together in Somalia.

Like all of us, I was deeply saddened by the tragic death last week of the Minister of Public Works, Abbas [Abdullahi Sheikh] Siraji. He grew up in a refugee camp and went on to become a powerful symbol of Somalis' hopes for the future. His unfortunate death must not diminish our resolve to see these hopes realized.

On the contrary, his sacrifice must encourage all Somalis to maintain the spirit of inclusiveness, embracing women, youth, minorities, business leaders and all members of society, and must encourage us all to support that effort.

The significantly enhanced representation of women and youth in the new Federal Parliament shows Somalia's positive trajectory.

We are here to listen to Somalia's leadership – and to agree on a framework for cooperation.

This unique chance to build on progress comes thanks to the courageous and selfless service of the men and women of AMISOM. I want to pay tribute to them.

But I also want to say that I visited Somalia several times. I was in Mogadishu several times escorted by AMISOM. And I have seen the precarious conditions in which AMISOM soldiers were not only protecting the Somali people, but also our global security.

I remember Mogadishu when Al-Shabaab controlled half of Mogadishu. AMISOM had no helicopters, no night-vision systems, and armoured cars that were vulnerable to the weapons of Al-Shabaab. And AMISOM soldiers, women and men, and AMISOM police were fighting to protect our global security.

And they were doing so under a Security Council mandate, without enough support and with unpredictable funding. I think this is the moment to seriously look into the predictable way to fund AMISOM – I myself am favourable to the consideration of possible assessed contributions in relation to, at least, parts of AMISOM efforts.

I know the African Union is working on partially funding its own operations but this is something that we need to solve to give AMISOM the capacity to really create the conditions to allow the Government and the new security institutions of Somalia to then be able to assume the responsibility of the security of their own country.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, more than 6 million people in Somalia need assistance – or nearly half the population. Some 275,000 malnourished children are at risk of starvation.

I went to Somalia in March on my first visit to the field as Secretary-General and I saw the challenges. Somalia has to rebuild security, foster transparency and accountability, deal with a crippling drought, and avert a famine.

But I saw an opportunity to build on the momentum of the electoral process and achieve lasting stability.

We have a firm platform to improve security, deepen federalism, resolve residual conflicts and advance reconciliation, and then complete the review of the Constitution.

The drought is the most pressing priority. This morning, we presented a revised Humanitarian Response Plan seeking an additional \$900 million through the end of the year.

We also need to address the damage caused by climate change and conflict.

Indeed, fighting continues to devastate Somalia. Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law occur with impunity.

We are still seeing Al-Shabaab recruiting and exploiting children, and also children that are arbitrarily detained. And I am particularly concerned about widespread sexual violence. Internally displaced women and girls, and members of minority clans, remain the most vulnerable. They need human rights urgent protection.

The historic agreement among Somali political leaders laid the foundations for Somalia's National Security Architecture. We must better support the Security Pact and the Somali security institutions.

And again, we need to make sure that we are able to be coordinated in supporting the Somali government to build up the Somalia National Army and the Somali Police. What we have had until now are different efforts by different countries doing different training programmes in different areas of the country, that do not match, that do not create the conditions for a unified national army and a unified police force. It is time to overcome this lack of coordination. It is time to have one single programme of training of Somali soldiers and Somali police and that single programme of training to be lead by the Somali institutions. The UN will be totally committed to support that way of doing business.

I welcome Somalia's first National Development Plan in 35 years. I also commend the government for its commitment to progressively create and strengthen the institutions of a true state.

I hope that we will soon be able to see a country able to collect its taxes, to have its own police and security forces, to provide basic public services and guarantee the security of its citizens through its own police force and army. We all must support the realization of this vision. I see progressively the future AMISOM being able to reduce its role after the initial necessary surge and national institutions to be fully able to function.

I urge partners to align their support to the Plan. It can help Somalia achieve economic progress, generate revenue, reduce over-reliance on donor resources, and create conditions for debt relief. And I think debt relief is not only an essential economic and financial question – it is also a moral question.

The present generation of Somali children we see living in dramatic circumstances are burdened by a debt that that was contracted in completely different circumstances by completely different actors. Now I know that there are a number of technical issues that need to be properly addressed. I know that debt relief needs to be sustainable. But I think we also need a strong political commitment to make it really happen and to create the conditions for development to be much more strongly supported by the international community.

This [conference](#) aims to agree on a New Partnership as Somalia turns a page.

The United Nations will do everything possible to make this the start of a new chapter of sustainable prosperity and lasting peace for Somali, to the benefit of us all.

Thank you very much.

Find out more about the [London Somalia Conference 2017](#).

Speech: London Somalia Conference 2017: President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's opening speech

Your Excellency, the Right Honourable Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,

His Excellency, António Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations,

His Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairman of the African Union Commission, Heads of States and Governments in attendance,

Representatives of nations and organizations,

Future for Somalia – Opening Statements

It is indeed a great honour to be addressing you all today at this special conference on Somalia's future in this beautiful city of London. I'm delighted to be sharing this historic day with our key partners all of whom have stood by our people and nation in our greatest period of need.

I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank our great host, Prime Minister Theresa May and her government for committing to and bringing this conference to fruition. As many of you know, this is NOT the first conference for Somalia hosted by the UK. For that, we thank you Prime Minister!

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, as you are all aware, Somalia successfully concluded a long and complicated election process on the 8 February 2017. On that day, representatives of the Somali people voted for change and a new direction for our country. I was humbled by the enormous public support I received following the election.

I am, however, very aware of the high expectations the Somali people have for me – starting with improved security and provision of basic services such as health and education. Although we are working tirelessly to meet everyone's expectations, in the meantime we hope to gradually improve our citizens' lives.

The successful and peaceful transfer of power following my election was a

reminder of Somalia's potential as a beacon of democracy and hope in one of the most unstable regions in the world.

In fact, Somalia has a long and proud tradition of democracy going back to independence in 1960. We were the first country in Africa wherein a sitting president transferred power peacefully after losing national elections.

Despite the enormous challenges my country faces, we strive to those ideals. We believe that the only path to fully recovering Somalia is strengthening our democratic institutions. To that end, I will spare no effort to realizing the promise of my campaign, which was to fight Somalia's 3 major enemies: terrorism, corruption and poverty.

My vision revolves around these 3 issues. And the way to address them starts with building vital state institutions, with a focus on security apparatuses, and championing an overall reform agenda. Most importantly, I will take measurable steps to unleash the great potential of my people to develop their own country, and to do what they know best: trade and commerce. I strongly believe that trade is the surest way to reduce poverty and generate mass employment.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, my reform agenda started with selecting a capable and proven leader as a Prime Minister. Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre brings decades of experience as a senior executive in humanitarian and development sectors, and later as a successful businessman.

Capitalizing on his experience and networks, and following extensive consultations with all actors, the Prime Minister formed a technocratic cabinet that includes 5 female ministers – the largest in our history – and many young ministers representing 85% of our population who are under the age of 40.

One of the new young ministers was a former refugee in Dadaab – the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya. His compelling story gives insight into the transformation my country is going through. Unfortunately, his life was cut short last week. But his legacy remains with us.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman, I recognize that a good cabinet is only as good as the services it delivers its people. And in Somalia, delivering anything hinges largely on 'getting the politics right'. Good politics must be inclusive, participatory, vibrant and on a levelled playing field.

In this regard, we are committed to solidifying our federal system of governance, which has been in place only since 2004. Our overall vision is to achieve a strong and co-operative union which works for all Somalis and enhances equity and good governance.

We are thankfully a step closer to this objective as is illustrated by the recent historic formation of the new National Security Council, which includes federal member states. The National Security Council is not only a

platform for dialogue on security issues, but on broader matters of national importance. The fact that all heads of federal member states are with me here today speaks volumes of our collective effort towards a strong and co-operative union.

Together with other stakeholders, we will be engaging in an in-depth discussion around matters of national importance. We are already engaged in a deep dialogue on sharing of natural and national resources. This and other areas will be discussed in the context of the constitutional review process. As the leaders of Somalia, we recognize that the Constitution is the document that binds us together.

However, our political efforts will not stop there. In the coming months, we will complete legislation around political parties so that all MPs and others interested groups can form their parties legally. We are determined to encourage a vibrant political environment which upholds the best practices of democracy, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech—all of which are enshrined in our Constitution.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, security remains paramount for my administration. The new National Security Architecture and the Security Pact give us the tools we need to strengthen the Somali National Army and introduce an improved policing model.

Together with the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), I am confident that we can defeat Al-Shabaab in the next few years. Once we recover the remaining territories and secure supply routes, we will stabilize the country by building local administrations in collaboration with the federal member states. We believe that communities are best placed to collaborate with the local, state and federal governments to stabilize the country.

But the government needs the necessary tools to be able to defeat Al-Shabaab. For far too long, our security forces and terrorist groups have been fighting using the same type of light weapons – mostly AK47s. Despite the bravery of our men and women in uniform, we were locked in symmetrical battles with the terrorists. Without AMISOM forces, who are supplied with heavy weaponry, we would not have been able to defeat Al-Shabaab. The longstanding arms embargo on Somalia severely restricts our ability to procure heavy weapons, despite the partial lifting of the embargo in 2013.

Time has come for Somalia to be able to get access to qualitatively better weapons than terrorists. In this regard, we are working with our partners and the Security Council to develop a clearly defined roadmap to the full lifting of the arms embargo. This would include the improvements we must make to our weapons management, command and control systems.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to the security sector support we receive from our friends, we are grateful to all partners for their unwavering and sustained support over the years. Many provide financial support, while others provide technical and logistical support. One partner I would like to dedicate special gratitude is AMISOM. Their peacekeepers have been working with us for 10 years – much longer than

anyone expected. During that time, they have sacrificed many soldiers in the quest to help Somalia defeat Al-Shabaab and rebuild our security forces.

A vital element of rebuilding our security apparatuses is to radically improve on coordination among international partners on the security front. I welcome the genuine attempt to address this fundamental problem through the creation of the Comprehensive Assistance to Security or CAS Group. This group, in close collaboration with the National Security Office, must end duplicity and fragmentation in the security support sector. On our side, the National Security Council is designed to do the same.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, the insecurity situation cannot be changed without addressing its root causes, which are abject poverty and mass unemployment. Too many of our young generation are sitting idle, creating fertile ground for terrorists to recruit from. We must tackle this issue with a robust economic recovery plan.

To this end, we have identified the 'priorities of the priorities' within the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP, which clearly articulates our development agenda, is based on sound evidence and extensive consultations across the country. Our partners should align their support with priorities of the NDP, which are focused on strategic investments in key sectors, such as the productive sectors of agriculture, livestock and fishing. Moreover, major investment would have to be made in vital infrastructure, starting with renewable energy, clean water and road networks. That's the only way to create mass employment.

But all that investment needs substantial resources, and our meagre revenue can barely cover our budget. Access to international financial institutions is restricted due to the existing arrears. In this regard, I'm delighted that we have now developed a well-defined, milestones-based roadmap to arrears clearance and normalisation of relations with the international financial institutions. I commend the work of the World Bank and IMF, together with our Finance Ministry, on this crucial work. This is an area that I will personally follow, to ensure that we are meeting our obligations.

Many countries and organizations have demonstrated willingness to cancel their loans. Here I recognize the League of Arab States who announced that member states are prepared to forgive their loans during their summit in Amman in March. We are grateful to our Arab brothers and sisters for this.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to economic development, the greatest asset we have is the entrepreneurial spirit of my people. My administration will take measurable steps to unlock their potential, by removing barriers to doing business in Somalia, and promoting small and media enterprises.

One major barrier is the inability of our financial institutions to access their international counterparts. The money transfer businesses, who send a combined amount of about \$2 billion dollars a year to Somalia, are struggling to access banks here in the UK and in the United States, due to the severe restrictions placed on them. This, despite the fact that we made tangible

progress over the past few years.

Time has come to facilitate access for our financial institutions to work with your banks. A continuation of the current policy will undoubtedly deprive crucial access for our banks, and, as a consequence, will limit employment opportunities in the financial sector.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, for too long, the conventional wisdom has been that Somalia was a problem to fix, and the people a perfect humanitarian example due to the failure of the state to do its job. Today, my administration is committed to seizing this golden opportunity to nurture and deliver on a better, stronger and more prosperous Somalia led by the hopes and aspirations of its people. This is the best way to continue the process of changing the prevailing narrative.

Despite the extraordinary challenges that my people faced, we must remember that they withstood both natural and man-made calamities, and, with their classic resilience, started some of the most successful telecoms and remittance companies in Africa.

Together with our partners, my administration aims to capitalize on this God-given talent for a better Somalia – one that can secure itself, manage its politics and revive its economy. The New Partnership for Somalia provides an excellent framework for co-operation and coordination. The NPS puts government leadership at the heart of implementation of programs and projects. It allows us to hold each other accountable, which I wholeheartedly welcome. If my administration fails, we hope you hold us to account. We promise to do the same. Only in that spirit can we lift Somalia to new heights.

Excellencies, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, there have been many conferences in the past on Somalia and for Somalia. Today's events are different because I can assure and reassure you all that Somalia will never turn back to its difficult past: it will only go forward towards progress and prosperity as is the will of its people and the priority of its government. In engaging with us on the vast array of issues for discussion ahead during this conference, please be confident of the sincerity of this promise.

I thank you all.

[News story: Looking ahead to the London Somalia Conference 2017](#)

On 11 May 2017, the UK will host a major international conference in London, to support the progress that Somalia has made over the last 5 years.

Ahead of the London Somalia Conference, regional experts Ambassador David Concar and Special Representative Nick Kay share their thoughts on progress in Somalia and the country's future:

- [Ambassador David Concar](#) talks about the future of Somalia and what needs to be achieved

[Ambassador David Concar](#)

- Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa Nick Kay explains why it's important to keep Somalia on the international agenda

[Special Representative Nick Cave](#)

Watch [views from others about the future for Somalia](#).

[News story: Service of commemoration for 7 World War 2 Royal Air Force \(RAF\) servicemen](#)

Crew members of 514 Squadron based at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire who died when their aircraft crashed killing all 7 onboard were honoured in a service of commemoration on Friday 28 April 2017 at Heverlee War Cemetery, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium.



The Reverend Ashley Mitchell RAF delivers the Service of Commemoration.
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The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by the Reverend (Wing Commander) Ashley Mitchell RAF and supported by RAF Defence Staff based in Belgium. The ceremony was attended by British and Australian Defence Staff, 514 Squadron representatives and local dignitaries.



Flying Officer Lloyd Burgess RAF delivers the RAF Collect at the Service of Commemoration. Copyright Danielle Roubroeks. All rights reserved.

Beverley Simon, JCCC said:

It has been a tremendous privilege for the JCCC to have organised this service of commemoration for the 7 crew members of Lancaster NN775 and to ensure that the appropriate level of dignity, ceremony and respect has been afforded.

We are especially delighted that so many of the crew's families were able to attend the service, some from as far afield as the USA.

On 5 March 1945, the crew members of Lancaster NN775 took off from RAF Waterbeach for a raid on Gelsenkirchen, Belgium. While flying near Tirlemont, the aircraft suddenly went into a dive from which the pilot was unable to recover. All of the crew were buried together in a collective grave in Heverlee War Cemetery in Belgium.

The crew members remembered were:

Rank and full name	Role	Age	Place of birth
Sergeant Christopher George Hogg	Mid-Upper Gunner	20	South Yardley, Birmingham

Sergeant William Marsden	Flight Engineer	20	Chorley, Lancashire
Flying Officer Holman Gordon Stanley Kerr	Pilot	23	Lurgan, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland
Sergeant Herbert Percival Thomas	Rear Gunner	23	Clarendon, Jamaica
Flight Sergeant Allan Olsen RAAF	Wireless Operator/Air Gunner	21	Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia
Flight Sergeant Sidney Smith	Navigator	21	Not stated
Flying Officer Frank Clarke	Air Bomber	Not stated	Not stated

Families of all of the crew were traced and 17 family members were present at the ceremony with wreaths being laid on behalf of all 7 crew by each of the respective families. Amongst the relatives who paid their respects included the niece of Sergeant Herbert Thomas (Joe), Paulette Thomas, who had travelled with her family from the USA to attend the ceremony. Joe's family were originally from Cuba but migrated to Jamaica. As Jamaica was under British rule in 1945, Joe was listed as a UK national.

Paulette Thomas said:

My uncle died long before my siblings and I were born but his essence was deep rooted in our family. It is awesome that there is a family thousands of miles across the ocean who knew him and can share with us memories and pictures of him. We honour his service and are proud to call him family.

Jeff Temple, nephew of Sergeant Sidney Smith said:

Our uncle Sidney was the Navigator on Lancaster NN775. My sister Susan and I were raised with Sidney very much present, with his photograph on the mantelpiece and our mother telling us stories of him fighting extremism. He was our hero, and gone, but not forgotten.

The excavation and the present commemoration have brought him to life for us, and we thank everyone involved for the opportunity to pay our respects to this young man, and indeed to all the crew. These young men are heroes to each of us, and remind us of our duty to continue with this fight for tolerance.