

Policing plan 'neglects' rural Scotland

28 Feb 2017



Justice secretary Michael Matheson has been warned not to neglect rural Scotland following the publishing of a 10-year strategy for policing.

The single force failed to mention countryside communities once in its 'Serving a Changing Scotland', which was released yesterday.

And today, shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross warned the Scottish Government not to concentrate all its efforts on the central belt when it embarks on policing reforms.

He pointed out the population of Scotland's rural communities is growing at a faster rate than anywhere else north of the border.

And the omission comes despite the strategy highlighting challenges such as migration, health and inequality.

But despite that, Mr Matheson failed to give assurances in Holyrood today when challenged on the issue.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

"It's all very well coming up with a plan for Scotland's cities when it comes to policing.

"But, as ever with the SNP, its obsession with the central belt leaves rural communities neglected.

"The document produced by Police Scotland doesn't mention our rural communities once, and that's utterly unacceptable.

"Crime in these parts of the country can differ significantly to offending in towns and cities, and it's regrettable the single force isn't acknowledging this.

"And when he had a chance in the Scottish Parliament to set the record straight, Michael Matheson failed to do so."

The Scottish Conservatives criticised the document when it was published yesterday:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/02/police-scotland-changes-must-not-deplete-the-frontline/>

Taiwan's 'February 28 Uprising' unrelated to 'Taiwan independence'

Archives and witness statements have indicated that Taiwan's "February 28 Uprising" had nothing to do with "Taiwan independence".

Tuesday marks the 70th anniversary of the uprising.

Some witnesses recalled the occasion, saying that there were no slogans or leaflets advocating "Taiwan independence" during the campaign, and most Taiwan people believed that ideas advocating "Taiwan independence" are false and absurd.

"What the Taiwan people are seeking is local autonomy, rather than separating from the motherland," Li Wei-kuang, head of a Taiwan people association in Shanghai, was quoted by archives as saying.

As "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces described the uprising as a conflict between provinces, Li recalled that people in Taiwan were not against people from other provinces, but only hoped to seek their help and cooperate with them.

On Feb. 28, 1947, a Kuomintang (KMT) party enforcement team assaulted a woman near Taipei railway station as she was selling contraband cigarettes.

The incident caused a bloody confrontation between Taiwan civilians and the KMT authorities, which developed into an island-wide movement against the despotic rule of the KMT.

The uprising was a spontaneous mass movement of the people of Taiwan for democracy and autonomy, but some people in Taiwan interpret the uprising as a "Taiwan independence" movement, completely distorting the true story.

An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, told a press conference last week that "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces twisted the uprising for their own gain, adding that their intentions are despicable.

The Taiwan people have a glorious tradition of patriotism, and participants of the uprising made enormous contributions to territorial integrity.

People across Taiwan also marked the civilian uprising to mourn the victims and calling for an understanding of the true nature of the event.

Among various ceremonies held across the island Tuesday, a symposium was held and attended by more than 100 people including participants of the uprising and their family members, as well as historians and academics.

"The Feb. 28 uprising was against the despotic rule of the Kuomintang Party (KMT) on the island at that time, and has no connection with current 'Taiwan independence,'" said Chen Ming-chung, 88, a participant of the uprising.

Press release: Patel: women are key to building post-conflict stability

Countries will only be able to fully recover from conflict if they involve women in building security and stability, International Development Secretary Priti Patel said today following a visit to Afghanistan.

Ms Patel welcomed the progress Afghanistan has made on women's rights and girls' education since the Taliban's repressive rule. But ahead of International Women's Day next month, she warned that countries like Afghanistan will only achieve security and prosperity if women have the opportunity to play a full and active role in business, politics, peacebuilding and shaping the future of their country.

During her visit, Ms Patel saw a HALO Trust training site where UK funding is helping staff learn to identify and safely remove mines and other unexploded ordnance, saving lives and reclaiming land that can be used for agriculture and building. She also met female HALO workers who identify and map the location of mines for disposal, as well as educating communities and children on the dangers of unexploded ordnance.

Ms Patel also met First Lady Rula Ghani, a champion of women's rights in Afghanistan. And she spoke to female students, teachers and community advocates who benefit from UK funding that has helped provide education to more than 300,000 girls from rural and impoverished communities, who would have had no opportunity to learn under Taliban rule.

Priti Patel said:

Afghanistan can only succeed in creating a secure and prosperous future if girls and women are put at the heart of its political and economic development.

Women and girls are key to delivering real and lasting peace and stability in countries like Afghanistan – and that is clearly in the UK's interests as well.

Together, the UK and Afghanistan have made huge progress so far. The inspirational girls and women I met during my visit will be instrumental in charting Afghanistan's path to prosperity.

Whilst in Afghanistan, the International Development Secretary also met President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. She reaffirmed the UK's enduring commitment to working with the Afghan Government and civil society to improve rights for women and girls, and underlined that this was a critical part of the UK's pledge of up to £750 million, made at the Brussels Development Conference last year.

She also spent two days in Pakistan prior to visiting Afghanistan. Whilst there, she met Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif and Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of Planning and Development.

She visited a UK-funded health centre that provides primary healthcare services including delivering babies, treating child malnutrition, immunisations and family planning services. She also visited a tuberculosis and leprosy hospital to see how UK support is helping to provide state of the art facilities to diagnose and treat patients.

Notes to editors

1. Today, more than seven million children in Afghanistan are attending school and 39% of them are girls; there has been significant progress in maternal healthcare; and women now hold 28% of parliamentary seats.
2. Legislatively, women's rights have been enshrined in the 2004 Constitution, recognising gender equality and women's right to education and to work.
3. Significant challenges remain, however. Afghanistan still ranks among the lowest in the world for gender equality. Female literacy rates are extremely low at 17%, only 19% of women are in work, and an estimated 87% of women experience violence, abuse and sexual harassment in private and public life.
4. UK funding has helped 2.5 million girls get an education, including the 300,000 under the Girls Education Challenge programme that supported the teachers and students that the International Development Secretary met during his visit.
5. The UK is also providing services and access to justice for women victims of violence and helping thousands of women access quality jobs and gain business skills. It is also helping to train security and police forces to provide better support on gender and violence issues.
6. International Women's Day takes place on 8th March and is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The theme of International Women's Day 2017 is 'Be Bold for Change'.

[News story: Installed: the machine set](#)

to clean up Sellafield's most hazardous building

The £100 million Silo Emptying Plant will scoop radioactive waste out of the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo.

The 1960s storage facility has been described as one of the most hazardous buildings in western Europe and contains 10,000 cubic metres of intermediate level waste from the earliest days of the UK's civil nuclear industry.

John Clarke, outgoing NDA Chief Executive, unveiled the machine – the first of three being assembled in the building – at a ceremony yesterday.

He said:

This is an enormous step forward for the Sellafield decommissioning programme.

It is the culmination of 20 years of work to get to the position where we've got the first machine in place that will retrieve waste from these silos.

The machines will sit on rails on top of the silo's 22 vertical waste compartments. Each compartment is big enough to accommodate six double decker buses stacked three high.

Once operational, the emptying machines will be manoeuvred into place over the top of each compartment to scoop out their contents.

The material will then be packed into nuclear skips and sent to modern waste stores at Sellafield, pending final disposal in the UK's Geological Disposal Facility.

The machines will be ready to start retrieving waste in 2018, taking an estimated 20-25 years to complete the task.

Chris Halliwell, head of the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, said:

This is probably the most complicated and advanced machine ever built at Sellafield.

It has about 13,500 different working parts and its design and concept was first drawn up more than 20 years ago.

Turning that vision into the machine we have today has been a major challenge for the UK's advanced manufacturing and nuclear supply chain.

The process has been hugely challenging because no plans were drawn up for how waste would be taken out of the building when it was built in the 1960s.

The emptying machines were built by engineering firm NES Ansaldo at its Wolverhampton factory, before being dismantled and sent to Sellafield in 23 separate modules.

These modules were lifted one by one into the silo building and then re-assembled in situ.

Chris Halliwell added:

There is no job at Sellafield more important than the one being done by this machine. Emptying the waste from this legacy silo is our number one priority.

It has to be reliable because once it starts taking waste out, the contamination inside it would make it very difficult to maintain or repair.

The silo took waste from nuclear power stations all over the UK until its closure in June 2000.

Its contents are chiefly made up of magnesium cladding which was stripped from nuclear fuel rods before they were sent for reprocessing.

[News story: Installed: the machine set to clean up Sellafield's most hazardous building](#)

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