

## Relaunch of the West End Community and Sports Hub – survey



I recently participated in a very well-attended meeting at Harris Academy aimed at relaunching the West End Community and Sports Hub. There was a great mix of local sports clubs there and much enthusiasm.

To help the West End Community and Sports Hub relaunch to assist with and build community sport in the West End, there is now an on-line survey. This takes just a couple of minutes to complete and you can access it [here](#).

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## China's fixed broadband speed hits almost 12Mbps

A report released by Broadband Development Alliance, a third party research organization, shows the development of broadband speed in China. According to the report, China's broadband speed grew steadily in the fourth quarter in 2016, with average fixed broadband download speed reaching 11.9 Mbps, that of 3G and 4G network respectively hit 3.89 Mbps and 11.93 Mbps.

With efforts from the Chinese government, broadband speeds have grown very fast since 2015. The coverage of the 4G network expands and the speed increases continuously. China has built the largest 4G network worldwide. The amount of 4G network users accounts for 55% among all mobile users.

There are 13 provincial administrative regions with an average fixed broadband download speed over 12 Mbps. The report ranked the top five provincial administrative regions in fixed broadband download speed as Shanghai, Shandong, Jiangsu, Beijing and Fujian. Among the capital cities and municipalities, Shanghai, Jinan, Fuzhou, Zhengzhou and Beijing are the top five cities in the fixed broadband download speed list.

Judging from the speed of mobile broadband of different operators, China Unicom's 3G and 4G network download speeds are the highest among the three

major operators, which are 4.81 Mbps and 13.72 Mbps respectively.

Meanwhile, according to the report, the average time for fixed broadband users to open the first page is 1.15 second in the fourth quarter in 2016, and the average download speed for web video has reached 9.34 Mbps. Both are faster compared with the previous quarter.

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## That article 50 letter

Yesterday the various amendments proposed to the Leaving the EU Bill were voted down. Labour decided not to press one of their main one to a vote because the government offered assurances that Parliament will get to vote on the final deal, to be held before the European Parliament votes on it. That vote will be about whether to accept the new Agreement or to leave without one.

During the exchanges the fundamental question of whether sending the Article 50 is irrevocable or not came up. I argued it is. The Treaty makes no provision to withdraw the letter or to cancel exit two years later, which is automatic with or without a deal. The Treaty says if you start to leave and change your mind you need to reapply for membership. You do not simply keep or reinstate the membership you proposed to quit.

I reminded the Commons that both the Attorney General and the Remain lawyer in the Supreme Court case argued that the notice to leave is irrevocable. In finding against the government on one count the Supreme court had to rely on the irrevocability of the process. It is only because the change of leaving becomes inevitable when the letter is sent could the Court say Parliament therefore had to pass an Act and could not just do it by debate and vote. Predictably the Remain side who were so keen to use this argument to win in court now have changed their mind and say it may not be!

I will post the exchanges later today.

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## Yemen: UN, partners seek \$2.1 billion to stave off famine in 2017

8 February 2017 – The United Nations and humanitarian partners today launched an international appeal for \$2.1 billion to provide life-saving assistance to 12 million people in Yemen in 2017 &#8211 the largest-ever humanitarian response plan for the war-torn country.

Two years of war have devastated Yemen... Without international support, they may face the threat of famine in the course of 2017 and I urge donors to sustain and increase their support to our collective response," said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien in a press release on the launch of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen in Geneva.

Humanitarian partners are ready to respond. But they need timely, unimpeded access, and adequate resources, to meet the humanitarian needs wherever they arise," said Mr. O'Brien, who is also the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

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He noted that since March 2015, violent conflict and disregard by all parties to the conflict for their responsibility to protect civilians have created a vast protection crisis in Yemen and millions of people face threats to their safety and basic human rights every day. In addition, deliberate war tactics are accelerating the collapse of key institutions and the economy, thereby exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.

This has left an alarming 18.8 million people – more than two thirds of the population – in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which also estimates that 10.3 million people are acutely affected and nearly 3.3 million people – including 2.1 million children – are acutely malnourished.

We remain committed to the principle that our plans must be grounded both in evidence and actual capacity, and I ask donors today to help Yemen in its moment of great need," said the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick.

In 2016, 120 national and international partners including UN agencies and non-governmental organisations working out of humanitarian hubs in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Ibb, Sana'a, and Sa'ada assisted more than 5.6 million people with direct humanitarian aid.



*Source: OCHA 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen*

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**[Security Council, UNAMA condemn attack](#)**

# near Afghanistan's Supreme Court

8 February 2017 – The Security Council and the United Nations political mission in Afghanistan have joined Secretary-General António Guterres in condemning the deadly attack outside of the Supreme Court in Kabul.

This attack is nothing short of an atrocity. Those responsible for planning and carrying out this horrendous act must be brought to justice, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, said in a statement issued earlier today.

Mr. Yamamoto, who is the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), noted that the attack fits a pattern of violence against judicial authorities in recent years. Since 2015, UNAMA documented at least 74 attacks, which killed 89 people and injured 214 others.

The Mission reminds all parties that judges and staff of civilian courts including the Supreme Court are civilians, the statement said. Attacks intentionally targeting civilians are tantamount to war crimes.

At least 20 civilians, mostly female employees of the Supreme Court, were killed yesterday when a suicide attacker detonated a device outside the Court. No person or group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Calling the killings heinous and cowardly, the Council members late last night reiterated their serious concern at the threats posed by groups such as the Taliban, Al-Qaida, and the Islamic State (ISIL), on the local population, National Defence and Security Forces and the international presence in Afghanistan.

They also stressed that no violent or terrorist acts can reverse the Afghan-led process along the path towards peace, democracy and stability in Afghanistan, which is supported by the people and the Government of Afghanistan and by the international community.