

# UK welcomes US deal with the Taliban and calls for Afghan leaders to seize opportunity to end decades of conflict



The UK has today welcomed the United States' Joint Declaration with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the United States' agreement with the Taliban, which paves the way for a meaningful peace process and an end to decades of conflict in Afghanistan.

Thanks to the efforts of UK and coalition forces, Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for international terrorists and Britain's streets are safer. But all sides recognise that only a political solution can ensure stability and build a lasting peace in Afghanistan. The UK urges the Taliban to engage now with Afghan leaders in meaningful and inclusive negotiations.

NATO's Resolute Support Mission will make modest initial reductions whilst continuing to deliver on its commitments in Afghanistan. Further troop reductions will be based on progress in peace talks and conditions on the ground.

The people of Afghanistan want and deserve hope after four decades of war, which has left the country one of the poorest and most fragile in the world.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

These agreements mark a significant moment in the pursuit of peace in Afghanistan. The current reduction in violence is welcome and I hope it will be maintained, but meaningful negotiations between the Afghan leadership and the Taliban are the real prize and I hope this opportunity will be seized.

The only way to achieve lasting peace in Afghanistan is through a political solution.

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Notes to editors:

- The UK combat mission in Afghanistan began in 2001, when Al Qaeda used the country as a safe haven from which to launch terrorist attacks, most notably the 9/11 atrocities, and incite hatred. That combat mission ended in 2014 but the UK continues to work closely with NATO on Afghanistan in a number of areas.
- The UK, as part of NATO's non-combat mission, have played an important role in developing the Afghan Security Forces and Institutions. As the frame work nation for the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA), the UK has helped train the next generation of military leaders.
- Almost 40 years of conflict has left Afghanistan one of the poorest and most fragile countries in the world. UK Aid is creating a more stable environment that will help reduce poverty and make progress towards the Global Goals. It will also reduce threats to the UK from violence and extremism, and discourage illegal migration.
- The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan's development. At the Brussels Conference in 2016, the UK pledged up to £750 million for the period 2017-2020.
- During President Ghani's visit to the UK in June last year, we pledged £170 million in humanitarian aid over the next five years. This new support will provide emergency life-saving UK aid to more than five million people, including urgent food, water and medical help, and polio vaccinations for children.

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