

# Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Paraguay



Mr Ramin Navai has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay in succession to Mr Matthew Hedges. Mr Navai will take up his appointment during September 2020.

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Full name: Ramin Navai

Married to: Paola Victoria

- 2017 – 2020 FCO, Deputy Head, Counter-Daesh Communications Department, Communications Directorate
- 2015 – 2017 FCO, Head of Programme Team, Syria Unit, Middle-East and North Africa Directorate
- 2010 – 2015 Chicago, Deputy Consul General
- 2006 – 2010 Bogota, Second Secretary – Political
- 2004 – 2006 Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, Cross Whitehall Liaison
- 2003 – 2004 FCO, Desk Officer – Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic, Latin America and Caribbean Department
- 2002 – 2003 FCO, Desk Officer – G8, Economic Policy Department

## **Further information**

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## [Flood Risk Management Scheme ongoing in West Cumbria](#)

The Environment Agency continues work on a Flood Risk Management Scheme in Egremont that consists of flood walls and embankments, which will create storage areas for flood water as well as helping to better protect a number of properties through flood resistance measures.

### **Stewart Mounsey, Cumbria's Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency said:**

"We have been working really closely with the community of Egremont from the start of the consultation process in order to help reduce the impact of flooding in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all partners involved in this partnership project, it's great to see this scheme progressing with construction ongoing.

We are looking forward to the completion of the Skirting Beck and Whangs Beck Flood Risk Management Scheme and the benefits this will bring to reduce flood risk."

Following planning application approval from Copeland Borough Council in October 2019, the Environment Agency have completed works in the Croadalla Avenue area of the town. Other completed works consist of property level protection (PLP) to 43 properties in Croadalla Avenue and Church View. Culvert works have also commenced in this area with piling works completed. The scheme involves the creation of flood storage areas at West Lakes Academy and Falcon Club, Whangs Beck and How Bank, where some enabling works have started, in readiness for the main construction works.

Over the next weeks and months, works will continue to construct flood storage areas and pre-cast units will be installed over the piled wall at West Lakes Academy and the Falcon Club. Works will commence on habitat and recreational space for the community to enjoy, and approximately 800 trees will be planted.

Councillors from Copeland Borough Council visited the site on Monday 20th

July 2020. Environment Agency project leads Graham Stanger and MBE Glyn Vaughan gave a tour of the scheme and discussed the various elements of the construction.

**Pat Graham, Chief Executive of Copeland Council, said:**

“We welcome the progress that is being made on this vitally important scheme for the town of Egremont.

“When the works are complete, it will make a significant and lasting difference to the community; many of whom have suffered the trauma that flooding brings over many years.

“It has been an outstanding collaborative effort from ourselves, the Environment Agency, Cumbria County Council, partners and the community to get to this point, and we look forward to seeing the scheme continue to progress towards completion next August.”

The help and cooperation of local residents, West Lakes Academy, Falcon Club, schools and nurseries has helped this scheme come to fruition.. Thank you to the community of Egremont, and for our partners for their ongoing support and community spirit.

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## [UK Troops reach training milestone ahead of UN Peacekeeping deployment to Mali](#)

News story

UK troops deploying to the United Nations Peacekeeping operation in Mali have reached a significant training milestone in preparation for their mission, which starts in December 2020.



## Soldiers from the Light Dragoons and 2 Royal Anglian training on Salisbury Plain

Over 14 days, soldiers from the Light Dragoons and 2 Royal Anglian joined together for the first time on Salisbury Plain to begin their mission specific training. It is the start on months of preparation where they will be honing skills around reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, patrols and medical evacuation.

The unit will act as the Long-Range Reconnaissance Task Group to the UN peacekeeping operation MINUSMA. Part of their non-combat role will be to conduct patrols in Jackal vehicles to provide situational awareness and intelligence that will help the UN mission to protect civilians and progress towards a sustainable peace in Mali.

Commander Officer of the Light Dragoons, Lt Col Thomas Robinson said:

This exercise is part of an intensive training package. Over recent months we have been honing our specialist skills and now we have brought all aspects of the Task Group together to operate as a highly professional and effective peacekeeping force.

This Pre-Deployment Training is the first time that the 250 strong Task Group have trained together

Terrorist violence and conflict is sharply on the rise in Mali and the wider region. Marked by chronic poverty, instability, high levels of gender inequality, and one of the world's most vulnerable regions to the effects of climate change, the Sahel remains one of Africa's most fragile regions.

The deployment also supports UK engagement in the Sahel under HMG's new strategic approach to Africa, which includes support and training to Commonwealth partners. We are bringing top-class British expertise to the areas of greatest need in UN peacekeeping missions.

The new operation follows a successful three-year commitment to the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, where British engineers and medics built and repaired much-needed hospitals and military bases. It also forms part of a wider offering in West Africa, where the UK is working with regional partners across defence, diplomacy and aid to contain the spread of instability from the Sahel to other parts of West Africa and the world.

UK forces will conduct patrols in Jackal vehicles to provide situational awareness and intelligence that will help the UN mission to protect civilians

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## Pride at Home

Working from home isn't always easy. Those living alone can feel isolated, while those with partners may have felt their relationships put under strain by separation or confinement, and those with children may have to juggle childcare or toddler taming.

This is the daily reality for many of our LGBT+ colleagues and I'm proud that SLC has an active and supportive network to share information and support on those days when anyone can find themselves feeling isolated or uncertain.

Every year during the month of June, the LGBT+ community celebrates Pride in a number of different ways. It's a season of celebration and, with the majority of SLC staff working remotely, our LGBT+ network, Arcus, has held its own Pride season online in July, with the theme of 'Pride at Home'.

Throughout July there have been a raft of events, providing a chance for network members to have a virtual catch up and chat, alongside activities such as online quizzes and bingo nights.

One of the leading lights in Arcus is Gary Stevenson and it's thanks to him and his colleagues that we are able to reach out and provide support when and where it's most needed. Fun and companionship are sometimes all that is required but, by providing opportunities for people to come together online, we are also able to keep an eye out for anyone who might be having a bad day.

Pride at Home is very much in the spirit of the Student Loans Company and I'm proud of the fantastic job Arcus does all year long. Support networks are more important now than ever, and Arcus is leading the way for SLC's LGBT+ community.

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## Applications open for £50 million funding to boost UK customs intermediaries

From today (29 July 2020), customs intermediaries can apply for £50 million of new funding, first announced in June 2020, to increase their capacity to make declarations ahead of 2021.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), which is running the scheme, is encouraging customs intermediaries and traders who make their own declarations to take

advantage of the funding now.

After the transition period ends, intermediaries, such as brokers, freight forwarders and express parcel operators, will play a critical role for businesses, and the government wants to create conditions for a diverse market.

HMRC had already made up to £34 million available to bolster the intermediary sector, which was used very quickly.

In total, the government has now made available £84 million to grow the customs intermediary sector to encompass EU trade after 2020. At the moment, agents cover non-EU trade though many, like parcel companies, do operate in the EU market.

As well as injecting £50 million to support businesses with recruitment, training and supplying IT equipment to handle customs declarations, the government also intends to change rules which will remove the financial liability from intermediaries operating on behalf of their clients, plus allow parcel operators to continue declaring multiple consignments in a single customs declaration.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, said:

After the UK transition period with the EU ends on December 31, intermediaries will play a vital role in helping UK businesses trade and seize new opportunities around the world. This funding and support will increase capacity as we get ready for the UK's new start next year.

Applying for this funding is simple and I urge the intermediary sector and businesses to take advantage of the help on offer now.

Liam Smyth, Director of Chamber Customs at the British Chambers of Commerce, commented:

The Customs Intermediary Grant Scheme has been a real enabler for businesses. It's enabled firms to hire more people, to upskill their employees and to drive efficiency through upgraded IT.

We have helped almost 2,000 businesses across the UK to upskill their staff through our training courses and we have benefitted directly by taking on more people and equipping them to be ready for the end of the Transition period.

Firms need many more customs agents to be ready, this fund can help to make that happen.

HMRC will continue to monitor the preparation of the customs intermediary

sector closely.

[For full details of criteria and how to apply](#) please read the guidance on GOV.UK.

The customs grant scheme was launched in November 2018 to support the intermediary market to expand.

To date, HMRC has made a total investment of £34 million available to support the sector, which has supported more than 20,000 training courses, nearly 15,000 units of IT and the recruitment of over 600 new customs agents.

The grant scheme is being run by HMRC and administered by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on its behalf.