

Speech: “It’s clear that our message simply isn’t getting through to the Government of the DRC. The killings have continued, the horror has continued.”

Statement by Stephen Hickey, Political Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, at the Security Council briefing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thank you Mr President.

I wouldn’t normally take the floor ahead of consultations, but as both Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and the Ambassador of France have expressed so clearly, these simply aren’t normal times for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Indeed, for many people in the Kasai region these are the darkest moments of their lives.

The reports emanating from this region should send a shiver down each and every spine in this room. They are reports that bear all the hallmarks of the very worst of humanity; mass killings, beheadings, mass graves, millions displaced.

Sadly, as highlighted by the Secretary-General’s Advisor on Genocide, the government’s own security forces are responsible for much of this death and destruction in certain areas of the Kasai provinces. Nearly a hundred children have been maimed and killed by their own government’s forces and children have been sexually abused by government forces.

This represents a wider, worrying trend – the Secretary-General reports that 60% of 1,444 human rights violations and abuses recorded in the DRC over the past 3 months were committed by government forces – the same government that bears the primary responsibility to protect its citizens.

When faced with hell, people should be able to look to their government in hope. For the people of the Kasai, they do so only in fear.

This does not mean that the militia operating in these areas are innocent. Not by any stretch of the imagination. As we heard from USG Lacroix, they too are responsible for rape, killing, and high levels of child recruitment.

It is clear that the situation in the DRC compels us all to take a stand. That’s why we welcome the international investigation mandated by the Human Rights Council last month. It must start as soon as possible and be conducted

to international standards of independence and transparency. We urge the Government to cooperate fully with this investigation; those responsible for these horrific crimes must be held to account.

Sadly, Mr President, the situation in the Kasai is by no means an isolated example in the DRC. There is also renewed violence in the east of the country, much of which has a worrying ethnic dimension. Such violence, in different areas of DRC, only further reinforces our belief that political uncertainty and instability in Kinshasa is fuelling violent uncertainty and violent instability across the country. And this is now presenting a serious threat to regional stability.

We all know what needs to happen, Mr President, and the Ambassador of France set this out very clearly. The DRC Government knows what it needs to do; stop the violence; ensure accountability for the violations and abuses; implement the 31 December Agreement in full. As set out in this Agreement, elections should be held in six months. We simply must see progress that gives the Congolese people and the world the confidence that this will be realised. This is the issue that is fundamentally increasing frustration and tensions in the country.

To deliver on this, the Electoral Commission must release an electoral timetable setting a date for elections, in line with the 31st December Agreement and agree a budget, so that vital international funds can be released. Let me take the opportunity to welcome progress in electoral registration and the positive role played by MONUSCO in support of this. But this progress must continue – insecurity cannot be used as an excuse for further delay.

In truth, Mr President, none of this new. We've known what needs to happen for some time. It's clear that our message simply isn't getting through to the Government of the DRC. The killings have continued, the horror has continued. What has failed to continue is genuine implementation of the 31st December Agreement that laid the path toward elections. So it's incumbent on all of us in this Council to do more.

With the eyes of the world looking on us today in open session, I ask all Council members to support a clear, unequivocal message: stop the violence; hold those responsible for violations and abuses to account; and implement the 31st of December Agreement in full without delay.

Thank you.

[**News story: Education Secretary**](#)

unveils schemes to tackle social mobility

New initiatives to tackle social mobility and help pupils from all backgrounds reach their full potential were announced today (12 July) in a keynote [speech](#) by the Education Secretary Justine Greening.

Speaking at the Sutton Trust Social Mobility Summit, to mark its 20th anniversary, the Education Secretary confirmed that leading national and local businesses have signed up to provide careers advice to young people in 12 '[Opportunity Areas](#)', which were announced in her [speech at PwC in January](#), with the support of a £2million government-backed fund.

Building on the programme of activity being led in these areas, Justine Greening also named the schools that will act as Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Research Schools in the Opportunity Areas. These schools will get a share of £3.5million to gather and share evidence of best practice on social mobility to help teachers tackle this issue in their schools.

Sir Kevan Collins has been appointed as the Evidence Champion for the Opportunity Areas to ensure intelligence is shared effectively across the twelve areas. The Chairs of the Partnership Boards – responsible for driving forward activity in each Opportunity Area – have been named for Derby, West Somerset and Scarborough.

Alongside this, Justine Greening reaffirmed her commitment to supporting the teaching profession, enabling teachers to be the best they can help every pupil to achieve their potential.

The announcement comes as new research published by the Sutton Trust shows that tackling social mobility could boost our annual GDP by £39billion – the equivalent of £590 per person.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

This is not just a mission for government, or a mission just for the Sutton Trust. It is a generational mission for all of us.

We don't have to accept Britain as it has been in the past. Ours is a generation that can build something better. It is a simple idea. It is a powerful idea. It is an urgent idea.

I believe now we absolutely need to fix social mobility, and make sure it happens. And make sure this is a country where there are no barriers to anybody becoming the best that they can be.

Supporting the teaching profession

Teachers are the great drivers of social mobility and can have the biggest impact on unlocking young people's talents. Earlier this year, the Education Secretary [outlined her vision for the teaching profession](#), announcing a £75million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund to invest in high quality professional development for teachers and leaders working in challenging areas. Justine Greening confirmed that £20 million – the first round of this – will go to programmes from September.

The Department is also setting aside £10 million from the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund for teachers and leaders in challenging schools to take part in the newly reformed, gold standard National Professional Qualifications to ensure these schools have great leaders.

This approach will help to deliver school improvement and drive social mobility across the country and help to tackle regional inequalities in educational outcomes.

Business support

Research shows that young people who have four or more workplace encounters while at school are 86% less likely to be NEET and on average will go on to earn 18% more than their peers who did not.

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) is collaborating with 40 national and local 'cornerstone' employers to prepare pupils for the world of work at more than 260 secondary schools and colleges in the Opportunity Areas.

Employers that have signed up to this £2million initiative include: Adecco; Butlins; KPMG; Michelin; Mantra Media; NatWest; PwC; and Rolls Royce. Together with the CEC, these employers will give tailored careers support to young people in the Opportunity Areas, including:

- Giving all pupils aged 11 – 18 access to at least four inspiring 'encounters' with the world of work; and
- Giving all secondary schools and colleges in the Opportunity Areas access to a local senior business volunteer (Enterprise Adviser), who will work with headteachers and college principals to unlock local business relationships and advise on their careers programme.

This commitment is backed by leading business representatives, such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). These organisations will encourage their members to offer more young people opportunities to help prepare them for future careers through activities such as mentoring, work experience, mock interviews and career talks.

Claudia Harris, Chief Executive of the Careers & Enterprise Company, said:

Over 40 of our economy's leading businesses have stepped forward to ensure we can increase young peoples' exposure to the world of work following clear evidence that this improves employment outcomes.

The scale of collaboration between businesses announced today will make a much-needed dent in social immobility in key areas and we are proud to be co-ordinating these efforts.

EEF Research Schools

The 11 Research Schools named by the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) will act as local centres of excellence, working with schools in the Opportunity Areas to deliver evidence-based approaches to tackling social mobility and provide resources for teachers. This will support local teachers to be the best they can be and tackle the regional inequalities surrounding educational outcomes for local pupils.

The 11 Research Schools have been named as:

- Hastings Research School at Ark Blacklands Primary Academy;
- Stoke-on-Trent Research School by The Keele and North Staffordshire Alliance;
- Norwich Research School at Notre Dame High School;
- Oldham Research School by The Greetland Academy;
- Blackpool Research School at St Mary's Catholic Academy;
- Doncaster Research School by Partners in Learning;
- Scarborough Research School by Esk Valley Alliance;
- Derby Research School at Wyndham Primary;
- West Somerset Research School at The Blue School, Wells;
- Bradford Research School at Dixons Academies; and
- East Cambridgeshire and Fenlands Research School at Littleport CP School.

EEF Research Schools have already developed programmes to help schools make the most of teaching assistants, training to support literacy in the early years and backing to develop Research School leads.

Justine Greening also announced that Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the EEF, would become 'Evidence Champion' for the Opportunity Areas. He will support the regions to better use evidence to improve outcomes and social mobility prospects for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged homes.

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, said:

We know that there are big differences in educational standards across the country. Reaching these 'coldspots' is one of the biggest challenges we face in our drive to improve social mobility. While evidence of 'what works' is one of our most useful tools to do this, we know that research on its own is not enough to make a

difference in the classroom.

Research Schools are breaking down these barriers even more, so that research doesn't stay in the pages of academic journals but has a real impact on classroom practice. Putting teachers in the driving seat can make all the difference.

The Education Secretary also confirmed the Chairs of three of the Partnership Boards that will be responsible for driving forward the activity in each Opportunity Area. They are:

- Derby – Professor Kathryn Mitchell, Vice-Chancellor of Derby University;
- West Somerset – Dr Fiona McMillan OBE in West Somerset; and
- Scarborough – Sir Martin Narey.

All three will bring a wealth of experience and credibility to these roles and help to tackle the challenges unique to each of these areas.

Press release: Intimidation of Parliamentary candidates: Committee announces short review

The independent Committee on Standards in Public Life will be conducting a short review of the issue of intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates, and the broader implications of this for other holders of public office, following a request from the Prime Minister.

Press release: Highways England event to inspire the next generation of transport professionals

Around 24 Year 6 pupils, aged 10 and 11, from Bristol primary school St Werburgh's joined traffic officers, engineers and managers for a comprehensive tour of the ROC on Tuesday, 11 July, as well as taking part in business skills workshops and hearing about career options with Highways England.

Highways England technical leader and event organiser Garry Packer, said:

I'm very focused on raising children's aspirations and confidence so that they will see their potential, and this open day was an ideal way of doing that while promoting Highways England as a great place to work.

The pupils were really enthusiastic, asking thought-provoking and interesting questions and getting stuck into the workshops, which included sessions on communication, visioning the future and team work.

I really believe that by engaging children from a young age, the next generations will be more interested in a whole range of transport related careers and that can't be a bad thing when over 25 per cent of school leavers need to take up science or engineering to meet the demand in the South West region alone.

Traffic Officer Dom Hudd shows pupils around a Highways England patrol vehicle

Highways England has been working with St Werburgh's Primary School for a number of years, taking part in annual careers events, which also involved Year 6 pupils from Cabot Primary School, Glenfrome Primary School and St Barnabas Church of England Primary.

Helen Faulkner, deputy headteacher at St Werburgh's, said:

The children really enjoyed the visit and found it very inspiring. As well as giving them ideas about what they might like to do in their future careers it has helped them understand the type of skills employers are looking for.

Traffic Officer Dom Hudd and St Werburgh's pupils at Highways England's Regional Control Centre at Avonmouth

Highways England has also been working with the charity Envision and Bradley Stoke Community School on a mentoring scheme designed to build confidence and business skills. This year a group of young people mentored by Highways England made it in to the final of Envision's Community Apprentice competition.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Review into abuse and intimidation in elections](#)

The Prime Minister has asked the [Committee on Standards in Public Life](#) to conduct a review into the issue of intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates.

The review was announced by Chris Skidmore, the Minister for the Constitution, in a Westminster Hall Debate. It follows reports of abuse experienced by Parliamentary candidates who stood during the 2017 General Election.

The independent committee will look at the nature of the problem of intimidation. They will consider the current protections and measures in place for candidates, and will report back to the Prime Minister with recommendations for further tackling the issue.

A number of candidates have come forward about abuse they experienced during the campaign for the 2017 General Election. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Antisemitism recently published their Electoral Conduct Report which included reports from candidates of all parties of racist graffiti, death threats and abuse on social media.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I have been horrified by stories from colleagues about the scale and nature of the intimidation, bullying and harassment they suffered during the general election campaign.

Robust debate is a vital part of our democracy, but there can be no place for the shocking threats and abuse we have seen in recent months.

We must all work together to banish this behaviour, and I would urge MPs and candidates from all parties to report their experiences to this review so we get the fullest possible picture – and can take the action required to stamp it out.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

A cornerstone of our democracy is that everyone's voice matters and no-one should be intimidated by abuse. We need to ensure that our democracy is a tolerant and inclusive one, in which all future candidates for election will not be dissuaded or intimidated from standing for public office.

The committee will set out how they will take forward the review in due course.