

[News story: Bluetongue: UK farmers urged to be vigilant as cattle test positive in northern France](#)

Farmers are being urged to be vigilant for signs of Bluetongue virus (BTV) and consider vaccinating their livestock after BTV-8 was detected in cattle in a previously disease-free area of northern France.

[Bluetongue virus](#) is transmitted by midges and can infect all ruminants, particularly sheep and cattle. It can reduce milk yield, cause sickness, reduce reproductive performance or, in the most severe cases, cause death in adult animals.

It does not affect people, and meat and milk from infected animals are safe to eat and drink.

Vaccination is the best way to protect livestock and a safe and effective vaccine is available in Great Britain. Livestock keepers—particularly those on the Kent and Sussex coastline—should discuss with their vet if vaccination is an option which would benefit their business.

The holding where the virus was detected in northern France is less than 150km from the south coast of England. Farmers across the south of England in particular should look out for clinical signs of disease, including mouth ulcers; drooling; swelling of the mouth, head and neck; fever; lameness and breathing problems. Any suspicion of disease must be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on 03000 200 301.

The [latest expert assessment, published today by Defra](#), is that the risk of an outbreak of Bluetongue virus in the UK is currently low, but will change as we move into summer. The risk of incursion via infected midges later in the summer depends on the level of disease on the continent, proximity to the UK, the vaccination status of animals in the UK and weather conditions.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Bluetongue does not pose a threat to human health or food safety, but can have a negative impact on farm incomes, for example by causing reduced milk yield in cows and infertility in sheep.

We have robust disease surveillance procedures and continue to carefully monitor the situation in France, where Bluetongue disease control measures are in place.

Our latest assessment shows the risk of outbreak in the UK is currently low, but the detection of the virus in northern France is a timely reminder for farmers to remain vigilant for disease and report any suspicions to the Animal and Plant Health Agency. I

would also encourage farmers to talk to their vet to consider if vaccination would benefit their business.

More information about Bluetongue—including veterinary advice and information on the vaccine—is available from the [Joint campaign Against Bluetongue \(JAB\)](#).

Regular risk assessments will be published on GOV.UK and all disease control measures are kept under review based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice.

Read the [latest situation assessment of Bluetongue virus \(BTV-8\) in France](#).

Press release: More than 300 miles of roadworks will be lifted this Bank Holiday

Almost 98 per cent of motorways and strategic A roads will be roadworks-free over the bank holiday.

Highways England is completing 184 and suspending 162 miles of roadworks by 6am on 26 May until 12.01am on 30 May.

And before they set off, to help ensure safe journeys, drivers are reminded to:

- check fuel: make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- check tyres: prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare – look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screenwash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- check your lights: if your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

[See a map showing the locations of lifted and completed schemes.](#)

Suspension or completion of roadworks means that more lanes will be open and many speed restrictions will be lifted.

[Find out more about driving on smart motorways.](#)

Drivers planning to use the Dartford Crossing are reminded to pay Dart Charge in advance or by midnight the day after crossing, and you can find us [online at Dartcharge.](#)

More information about conditions on our roads can be found on our website or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000).

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, [search Think!](#)

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.

Speech: “We’re meeting today as South Sudan spirals deeper into crisis.”

Thank you Mr. President, and thank you David for your briefing just now, and for all of your excellent work.

We are meeting two months after President Kiir recommitted to a ceasefire in South Sudan, two months after this Council agreed to a Presidential statement with very clear steps. We should be reflecting today on two months of peace, two months of life-saving aid reaching those most in need, two months of UNMISS protecting civilians.

Instead, we’re meeting today as South Sudan spirals deeper into crisis. As we’ve heard so many times, the humanitarian and human rights situation is worsening, the economy is collapsing, and fighting has continued unabated. People are no longer fleeing in their tens of thousands, but in their hundreds of thousands. Over 900,000 South Sudanese now call Uganda home.

This situation underlines not only how severe the situation has become, but also how hollow those promises sounded to the people of South Sudan when President Kiir made them two months ago.

We all know what needs to happen. President Kiir must take the long overdue steps that he agreed in the IGAD statement in March and that we called for in

our Presidential statement. This means granting sustained humanitarian access, allowing the deployment of the regional protection force, enabling UNMISS to fulfill its mandate, and above all, bringing an end to the fighting, not just in words, but through actions that make the people of South Sudan feel safe in their own homes, in their own country.

President Kiir this Monday once again declared a unilateral ceasefire and said he has once again agreed to consider the release of political prisoners. We welcome these statements, but the onus is now on him to prove that these are meaningful commitments, and not just convenient timing with the start of the rainy season, when fighting is made more difficult. I note with scepticism, but not surprise, that on the day that the ceasefire was announced, government offensives continued in Yei, and attacks by militia groups continue still.

We need to see an end to offensive operations, and end to disproportionate responses. We need to see true inclusive engagement with the opposition and civil society. And in turn, yes, we need to see a commitment to a ceasefire from opposition groups as well. President Kiir must begin withdrawing troops from parts of the country, disband ethnic militias, and ensure that humanitarian assistance can reach those in desperate need.

Sadly, the government has repeatedly ignored the requests of this Council, repeatedly ignored too the requests of the African Union and IGAD. Instead of allowing humanitarian access, the government has willfully endangered the most vulnerable, denying aid to those facing famine in Unity state. Instead of allowing UNMISS to fulfill its mandate, the mission has faced significant harassment and worse, with the SPLA threatening to shoot UN peacekeepers if they moved any closer towards Wunkur in Unity state. These are not moves designed to inspire confidence in the commitment of President Kiir.

It's long past time, Mr. President, for the Government of South Sudan to show a genuine commitment to peace and stability, including by reaching out to the opposition. We will of course support political efforts which are truly inclusive. But we must learn from the past and not make the same mistake of relying on just the promise of dialogue. We will also need to keep up the pressure, and by that I mean we must use all of the tools at our disposal to encourage the Government of Sudan to take those steps, and for the opposition to follow suit. We need to show that there are consequences should they fail to do so.

Earlier today we renewed the sanctions regime that enables us to do just that. We should be willing to use this regime to send a clear message to anyone who continues to fail to deliver peace. And as I have said on numerous occasions in this chamber, we also need to restrict the flow of weapons into South Sudan. This Council has a responsibility to do all we can to bring peace to South Sudan. It's a responsibility that we are not yet fulfilling. All of us in this chamber, in the UN and across the region must redouble our efforts; we owe it to the people of South Sudan.

Thank you.

Speech: “Until Iraq is free from the terrible scourge of Daesh, families will continue to be subjected to horrific violence...”

Thank you Mr. President, and thank you, Special Representative Kubis for your briefing this morning.

Your Mission is carrying out an important function at a critical time for Iraq, supporting the Government as it seeks to spread stability and security across the country.

At the outset, I want to commend the brave men and women of the Iraqi Security Forces. Thanks to their bravery and sacrifice, Daesh now controls less than 12 square kilometres of territory in Iraq. Soon it will be none; Mosul will be liberated, and Daesh’s so called Caliphate will have been brought to an end.

But as the Secretary-General makes clear in his report, until that happens, until Iraq is free from the terrible scourge of Daesh, families will continue to be subjected to horrific violence at the hands of these fanatics. So we cannot relent in our efforts; we must do everything we can to help them.

The United Kingdom commends Prime Minister Abadi for putting the protection of civilians at the heart of Iraq’s military operations. It is critical that the Iraqi security forces continue to do so throughout the final and most difficult stages.

The United Kingdom is playing its part. As well as supporting the Iraqi security forces through the Global Coalition against Daesh, we have contributed almost \$220 million in lifesaving aid to vulnerable displaced families across Iraq, and the UK has pledged almost \$12.5 million to support the UN’s Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation, to support newly liberated areas. We encourage other donors to contribute to the Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq.

The conflict has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls. That is why we are also providing \$1.2 million to help implement the Iraqi National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

As Daesh’s Caliphate comes to an end, Iraq will need political reconciliation and reform. The UK welcomes the efforts of Iraq’s political leaders to promote national reconciliation, and we urge UNAMI to continue to support this. We also welcome the support Iraq’s neighbours have provided in this time of need and encourage them to continue their solidarity and friendship.

Mr. President,

As this Council knows too well, security and stability will count for little without accountability. That's why the UK launched, along with Iraq and Belgium, a global push to bring Daesh to justice. As we have said before, time is of the essence; we must start gathering evidence of their crimes before it is lost. Newly liberated areas hold a wealth of evidence against Daesh that the international community must help Iraq collect and preserve. The UK has been working closely with the Government of Iraq and international partners to achieve this.

I welcome the discussions we have had with the Government of Iraq on this issue, and the recent, and significant, statement by Prime Minister Abadi calling at the end of March for "the UN Security Council to issue a resolution to prosecute Daesh's crimes against civilians". This was delivered during the Secretary-General's visit to Baghdad. We believe the UK's proposal is the clear way forward for the Council to answer Prime Minister Abadi's call. We look forward to working with our Iraqi colleagues so that the proposal can be finalized as soon as possible. As the global community works together to defeat Daesh, we must work together to hold them to account.

Mr. President,

As the Council lead on resolution 2107, the UK welcomes the Secretary-General's latest report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property. Unfortunately, despite the strengthening of bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait, there has been no progress on returning Kuwaiti property this year. I want to extend our support to all parties in their efforts to achieve tangible progress in the next year.

Because ultimately, Mr. President, we all want to see a stable, secure, prosperous and unified Iraq. The UK stands ready to work with the Government of Iraq and our international partners to build the better future all Iraqis want and deserve.

UNAMI will play a critical role in this effort. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I thank the Special Representative and his staff for their work at such a significant point in Iraq's history.

Thank you.

Speech: "This cannot become the new reality of warfare."

Thank you Mr. President for holding this debate, for ensuring that this chamber hears the voices of civil society, and for your own speech. It's

quite rare to get a round of applause from this audience. And thank you too to the Secretary-General, to the ICRC, and to Human Rights Watch for excellent contributions, and I pay tribute to them and their teams' work.

The UN Charter is clear, protecting civilians is supposed to be at the heart of what we do. When governments fail to protect, people look to this Council, for safety from the scourge of war. But for civilians in Syria, South Sudan, so many other places, this isn't about words in the Charter or a debate once a year, it is a horrific daily reality.

The sheer scale of the need is unprecedented. 2016 saw record numbers of people needing assistance and protection, so many of them victims of conflict and of the flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. So many of them becoming victims of sexual violence, trafficking, or other modern forms of slavery.

As our briefers made clear, that suffering has been made worse through cruel, unconscionable attacks on medical facilities. Look at the fall of Aleppo last year. Time and again, the regime and its backers bombed that city until all the hospitals were out of action, so that the city could not even care for its injured.

Sadly, the trend is spreading. As the Secretary-General pointed out, the urbanization of conflict in Aleppo, Mosul, Juba, has increased the risk of destruction of hospitals, schools, water systems, and power supplies.

This cannot become the new reality of warfare. Fifteen years on from this Council's first formal commitment to protect civilians in armed conflict, it's clear that we need a new approach.

So I welcome the Secretary-General's call to reinvigorate a global campaign which would take practical steps to minimize civilian harm, protect those that are displaced, ensure peacekeepers perform their best, and deliver accountability for those who flout compliance with international law.

In support, we should all do four things. First, we need to take practical steps to mitigate impacts on the ground. For instance, work is ongoing to fortify healthcare facilities in Syria and to promote access to mobile clinics in Yemen. In South Sudan, UK peacekeepers are helping strengthen the security and accessibility of the UN's Protection of Civilian Sites.

Second, we should share best practice. That means the full participation of women in efforts to protect civilians. It also means full compliance with international humanitarian law by all. In the UK, we train our military on international humanitarian law throughout their careers, including with country-specific courses before they deploy. And we're sharing our expertise to help other governments and their armed forces comply with international humanitarian law, and we're helping them to make their military justice systems more effective.

Third, we need to collect better and more systematic data on attacks on medical facilities and personnel. We support the Secretary-General's

commitment to do this within the UN system, but it's not enough to collect data, we need to use it. So we call for more Council briefings from the whole UN family, including OCHA, OHCHR, and the Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, whenever attacks on medical facilities and personnel occur.

Finally, this Council needs to take action when violations occur. When States fail to act, it's our responsibility to decide that these abuses will not be tolerated, that we will hold those responsible accountable.

In this chamber, we have a duty to shine a light on those who fail to comply with international law. We have a duty to collect the evidence that is so essential for timely legal action against those who attack medical personnel and facilities in violation of international humanitarian law.

But we are not fulfilling that duty, Mr. President, not yet. So today, let us all recommit to using this Council's authority, shouldering our responsibility to prevent conflict, to protect civilians, and to hold to account those who violate international humanitarian law, and those who violate and abuse human rights. The UK will continue to show leadership, including as part of the Secretary-General's global campaign.

Thank you.