

News story: Minister Wharton emphasises need for peace in South Sudan

In the first visit by a UK Minister to South Sudan this year, Minister Wharton saw the life-changing impact of UK aid in Juba and Malakal.

The Minister spent a day visiting the Protection of Civilian (PoC) site in Malakal where he met people who have been displaced from their homes. He witnessed the desperate humanitarian situation with more than 60% of the population – 7.5 million people – expected to be in need of food and facing potential famine as the worst food crisis since independence in 2011 caused by prolonged conflict and drought threatens lives and risks destabilising the region.

Minister Wharton heard about the challenging delivery conditions from aid workers, including the need for better security and improved infrastructure. This year, UK troops will deploy to support the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), providing engineering and medical support which will enable increased security at UN camps.

In Juba, Minister Wharton met with teachers and children at the Ustrautuna Primary School and saw how the Girls' Education South Sudan initiative is transforming the lives of a generation of girls, supporting 1.3 million children and over 3,500 schools to ensure children get an education despite the conflict.

International Development Minister James Wharton said:

“South Sudan faces a worsening humanitarian crisis with over half the population in urgent, desperate need and ongoing violence forcing over a million people to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

“I am proud of the lifesaving support that UK aid is providing for millions of the poorest people in South Sudan, including food, clean water, medicine, shelter and education to increase opportunities for the future.

“UK troops will support UNMISS by providing vital engineering and medical assistance to help improve security at UN camps and support UNMISS's capacity to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access, which is central to their mission.

“The international community must now step up alongside Global Britain and help encourage the longer-term stability of South Sudan and the region, which is firmly in our interests.”

During high-level meetings with government ministers and officials, the Minister emphasised that it is first and foremost the responsibility of the country's leaders to alleviate the pressure on its people, and to work with

the UN, as well as NGOs, who are delivering vital, lifesaving aid to the South Sudanese people, and ultimately create lasting peace and stability.

The UK has provided more than £500 million of support to South Sudan over the past three years. Last year, UK aid in South Sudan:

- Fed 440,000 people
- Provided clean water and sanitation for 490,000 people
- Provided 660,000 people with health support, including mothers and children; and
- Provided 130,000 people with shelter and emergency non-food items.

[News story: Walker: Scottish views will play key part in forming EU exit plans](#)

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Part of:

Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker has been visiting Fort William, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

We want to ensure every nation and area of the United Kingdom can make the most of the opportunities ahead, the Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker said during visits to Fort William, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Minister was in Scotland to continue the Government's UK-wide engagement programme ahead of the start of EU negotiations. The Prime Minister has signalled that we will trigger Article 50 before the end of March, allowing formal negotiations to begin.

During the two day trip, the Minister travelled across the country listening to universities, businesses and charities about their top priorities for EU exit and views on how they can capitalise on the opportunities that our departure presents.

He visited both the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh, the Lochaber Chambers of Commerce and Age Scotland as well as attending roundtables with key business sectors.

Minister for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker said:

It's vitally important that we get a deal that works for all of the UK, and Scotland's voice will be heard loud and clear as we prepare for the upcoming negotiations.

Over the past two days I've spoken to people across Scotland, many with extensive experience in their sector, ensuring their views are heard as they are hugely important to us as we continue to form our negotiating strategy.

Working closely with all of the devolved administrations, the UK Government has held monthly meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) to engage with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments.

Press release: North Korean Ambassador summoned over ballistic missile launch

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Today, the North Korean Ambassador to the UK, Choe Il, was summoned to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office following a ballistic missile launch on 11 February 2017.

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said:

The UK fully supports the UN Security Council's strong condemnation of North Korea's recent ballistic missile launch. Today, in summoning the North Korean Ambassador, we have made clear that the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were in direct violation of multiple resolutions, are a threat to international security and that such dangerous and destabilising activity must stop.

We urge North Korea to stop its provocative actions, which threaten international peace and security, and instead re-engage with the international community, and take credible, concrete steps to prioritise the well-being of its own people instead of the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Ambassador was asked to convey this message to Pyongyang in the strongest possible terms.

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Press release: Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme well under way

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Hagley playing fields closed to the public during scheme construction works.

The Environment Agency's Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme that began in December is progressing well. Preparations for the construction of the embankment have now started.

To make sure that the public stay safe while the work is being carried out, the Hagley playing fields will remain closed to the public until 2018, once the scheme has been completed.

During a flood, the embankment will hold water from the Rising Brook and help to reduce the risk of flooding for over 114 homes and 159 businesses. Other benefits of the £3.8 million scheme include improving habitat, restoring heritage features and reconnecting footpaths and improving accessibility. It also forms an integral part of Cannock Chase council's plans to regenerate parts of the town centre.

Environment Agency Project Manager Matt Griffin said:

We're working hard to get the scheme completed as soon as possible so we can minimise any disruption and inconvenience. However, keeping people and the community safe during the work remains our priority which means closing the playing fields is essential.

The works are a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

[News story: Chief Secretary meets Fife businesses to hear growth plans](#)

Today (14 February 2017) the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke met with Fife-based companies to discuss opportunities and challenges, and hear their future plans to grow and boost Scotland and the UK's economy.

Sectors driving growth in the Fife economy – including insurance, manufacturing, accounting, banking, higher education, distilling and brewing – were all represented at the roundtable, held at Handelsbanken Dunfermline.

The latest meeting of the Chief Secretary with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Finance Ministers also took place today in Edinburgh. The ministers discussed the economic outlook and the upcoming UK government Budget.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke said:

Fife's businesses have ambitious plans for the future. The UK government is focusing on raising productivity and creating the right environment for Scottish businesses to flourish.

The UK government and devolved administrations must continue to work together to maximise opportunities to boost the UK economy and support businesses across the country. I was pleased therefore to meet my ministerial counterparts today to look ahead to Budget and discuss our economic priorities.

Fife is playing a key part in developing two city deals in Scotland: Edinburgh and South East Scotland; and the Tay Cities. The UK government, working with the Scottish Government and local partners, remains on track to agree a city deal with all 7 of Scotland's great cities.

The Chief Secretary will later visit the Edinburgh Gin Distillery in the city's West End. Some 70% of the gin consumed in the UK is made in Scotland, while the UK is the world's largest gin exporter, with more than 200 million bottles being sent to overseas markets each year. He also met with the Scotch Whisky Association to discuss how the UK government can continue to support the Whisky industry in the UK and in export markets.

Business roundtable attendees:

- Peter Southcott, Director, Corgi Homeplan Ltd
- Alan Mitchell, Chief Executive, Fife Chamber of Commerce
- Jim Donnelly, Branch Manager, Handelsbanken Dunfermline
- Carol Grant, Customer Service Manager, Reel Service Ltd

- David Marriott, Finance Director, Smith Anderson Group
- Derek Watson, Quaestor and Factor, University of St Andrews
- Andrew Croxford, Partner, Thomson Cooper Accountants
- Paul Miller, Founder and Owner, Eden Mill Distillery & Brewery