Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

# This week at the Foreign Office

2013-01-11

Syria

The Foreign Secretary William Hague

updated parliament on the crisis in Syria

and outlined further UK action for the coming weeks. He said: “Our country has a moral obligation to help save lives in Syria, and a national interest in ensuring that the country provides no haven for terrorist activity. We know that to achieve lasting stability we must work with the Syrian opposition and countries of the region, not try to impose a political settlement from outside.”

At a

meeting organised by the UK this week,

the Syrian National Coalition leadership shared its thinking for a future Syria and helped to identify practical options for how the UK and wider international community can support a successful Syrian-led transition to a stable and democratic country.

Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt will

answer questions about the UK’s policy on Syria

via Twitter on Monday 14th January from 11.15am-12.00pm.

Middle East Peace Process

The

Foreign Secretary met the Secretary General of the League of Arab States

to discuss the Middle East Peace Process and Syria. Speaking after the meeting the Foreign Secretary said: “We expressed the shared hope that this year will be the ‘year of peace’ for Palestinians, Israelis and all people of the region.”

Bahrain

The Bahraini Cassation Court upheld the sentences of 13 activists for their part in anti-government protests in 2011.

Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt expressed dismay at the decision

, saying: “I call on the Government of Bahrain to meet all its human rights obligations and guarantee its citizens the fundamental liberties to which they are entitled.”

Pakistan

The Foreign Secretary

condemned the brutal terrorist attacks in Quetta and Swat this week.

He said: “The United Kingdom strongly condemns these senseless attacks and the persecution of the Shia population. It was a tragic day for Pakistan. We will continue to stand with the people of Pakistan in their fight against terror and violent extremism.”

Saudi Arabia

Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt condemned the beheading

of a Sri Lankan national Rizana Nafeek and reiterated the UK’s opposition to the death penalty as a matter of principle.

Also this week

Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire

urged the Laotian authorities to investigate disappearance of respected community leader Sombath Somphone.

Matt Baugh the British Ambassador to Somalia

blogged about how the changes of 2012 offer better prospects for improved stability in Somalia.

We advised British nationals travelling in Australia to

check with local state authorities for the latest bushfire information.

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