

News Release

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Contact: Richard Reeve on 07811 362054 or richard@rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

GOVERNMENT WRONG TO MERGE FOREIGN AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS

Rethinking Security, a network of peace and security experts, today criticised the Government's decision to shake up Whitehall with a merger of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development (DFID).

In a report published last week, cross-party MPs called for DFID to stay independent of the Foreign Office. But according to today's announcement, part of the 'Global Britain' strategy, the new combined Department will start work in September.

The merger, widely expected to be an outcome of the current Integrated Review of Foreign Policy, Defence, Security and International Security, has been announced despite the Review being paused after just six weeks of work.

Rethinking Security Co-ordinator Richard Reeve said:

"Development should be seen as at least equal to diplomacy and defence when it comes to securing and sustaining peace.

"Tackling poverty and inequality are crucial steps in reducing insecurity and conflict. DFID has been world-leading in its focus on conflict prevention; its loss risks aid spending being diverted to narrowly defined security and trade objectives rather than global wellbeing.

"Cross-party MPs have already called for DFID to stay independent. Despite assurances, we know of no civil society consultations held on its future. Its deletion now deeply compromises the work and findings of the incomplete Integrated Review."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Rethinking Security Co-ordinator, Richard Reeve is available for comment – 07811 362054
2. The Rethinking Security media page and factsheet is at www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/media

3. Rethinking Security's evidence submissions to the Defence Committee and the International Development Committee are attached.
4. The report of the International Development Committee can be found here <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/98/international-development-committee/news/146785/mps-publish-interim-report-calling-for-dfid-to-stay-independent/>
5. About Rethinking Security:
 - Short description – Rethinking Security is a network of peace and security experts.
 - Long description – Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists working together for security based on justice, co-operation and sustainability.
6. Member organisations:
 - Campaign Against Arms Trade
 - Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament
 - Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
 - Conciliation Resources
 - Forces Watch
 - International Alert
 - Medact
 - Movement for the Abolition of War
 - Northern Friends Peace Board
 - Oxford Research Group
 - Peace Direct
 - Quaker Peace And Social Witness
 - Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network
 - Saferworld
 - Scientists for Global Responsibility
 - United Nations Association – UK
 - War on Want

Our work also benefits substantially from the active participation of academics from the universities of Bradford, Coventry, Kent and Oxford Brookes.