

Beat: Miscellaneous

## **BRITAIN HAS BEGUN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ROYAL NAVY FACILITY IN BAHRAIN**

### **TO ASSERT INFLUENCE OVER THE GULF**

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**USPA NEWS** - The UK has begun the construction of a new Royal Navy facility in Bahrain, which will become the first permanent British military base in the Middle East in over four decades. It is designed to assert influence over the Gulf...

The UK has begun the construction of a new Royal Navy facility in Bahrain, which will become the first permanent British military base in the Middle East in over four decades. It is designed to assert influence over the Gulf. A year after signing a deal to build a new permanent naval base in Bahrain, British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond and his counterpart Bahraini Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction.

The BBC's security correspondent Frank Gardner said the UK's growing military commitment to the Gulf was 'likely to remain controversial'. Bahrain has paid most of the £15m (\$23m) needed to build the base, with the British paying ongoing costs.

Mr Hammond, in a speech to a security summit in the country, said the UK had been late to recognise the need to tackle the extremist views behind terrorism.

Bahrain used to be Britain's primary naval stronghold in the Persian Gulf region. Starting from 1935 it hosted the Royal Navy's whole Middle Eastern command. For nearly four years, from 1967 until gaining formal independence from the UK in 1971, Bahrain was Britain's main regional naval base.

'The beginning of construction work at Mina Salman Port marks a watershed moment in the UK's commitment to the region,' Philip Hammond said at the ceremony. 'The presence of the Royal Navy in Bahrain is guaranteed into the future, ensuring Britain's sustained presence east of Suez.'

Every police force in England and Wales will be required to record anti-Muslim hate crimes and treat them as seriously as anti-Semitic attacks if the Tories win the next General Election, Theresa May has announced in April 2015. In a move hailed by Islamic groups, Mrs May said that police will have to record Islamophobic attacks as a separate category, just as anti-Semitic crimes are recorded separately.

Hate crimes against Muslims in London have risen by 70% in the past year, according to Met Police statistics. Figures for the 12 months up to July showed 816 Islamophobic crimes, compared with 478 for the previous 12-month period... The Met define Islamophobic crime as any offence intended to affect those known or perceived to be Muslim. Reported incidents ranged from cyber-bullying and assaults to extreme violence.... The Met does not have a breakdown of the gender of victims of Islamophobic crime but said they believed the overall increase in attacks were due to 'improved methods of recording crime'. (BBC - September 2015)

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