

H.E. Sir John Sawers

Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

Sir John Sawers has been a career diplomat in the British Foreign Office since 1981, when he joined aged 26, specializing early on in the Middle East.

In a career spanning 28 years, he has been posted to Yemen, Syria, South Africa, Washington DC, Cairo and UN New York.

He has worked as Foreign Policy Adviser for Tony Blair, from 1999-2001, a period dominated by the war in Bosnia and crises in the Middle East. He was sent out to Baghdad May 2003 for 3 months as Prime Minister Blair's Personal Envoy in the aftermath of the Invasion.

One of the most memorable moments of his career was shaking Nelson Mandela's hand the day after his release from prison, 11 February 1991. Sir John was the first British diplomat to welcome Mr Mandela to freedom.

He took up his post at the United Nations in August 2007. In November 2009 he will return to London to head MI6, UK's Intelligence Agency.