

**Session 2019-21  
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**Thursday  
11 June 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
<b>Baroness Evans of Bowes Park</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<b>Lord Agnew of Oulton</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Treasury
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord Ashton of Hyde</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Baroness Barran</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Bethell</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
<b>Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Keen of Elie</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Byfleet</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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## Written Statements

Thursday, 11 June 2020

### British Council

[HLWS279]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Nigel Adams), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has sought an advance of £60 million from the Contingencies Fund in order to provide a loan of up to £60 million to the British Council, who are a key driver of UK soft power overseas. The British Council's commercial income has been heavily hit by Covid-19, leading to significant losses and the risk of insolvency. The British Council have taken measures to reduce their deficit and cut costs, and the FCO has supported the British Council in accessing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in line with the scheme's eligibility criteria for public sector employers, as well as similar schemes in other countries. This has helped them support many of their workforce, and those employed through its partners, funded through the commercial side of their business. The FCO is also working closely with the British Council on its future strategy, operations and long-term sustainable funding models.

However, without additional support from Government the British Council will shortly become insolvent. The FCO is therefore seeking a Contingencies Fund advance to provide an initial loan of up to £60m to the British Council, drawn down in tranches depending upon need and contingent on the approval of FCO and HM Treasury, to stabilise their financial situation until mid-August 2020. The terms of the loan will be agreed with HM Treasury.

Parliamentary approval for additional capital of £60,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £60,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

### Change in Machinery of Government

[HLWS284]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Policy responsibility for the Official Secrets Acts 1911, 1920, 1939 and 1989 has transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Home Office, to align with wider Home Office work on counter Hostile State Activity legislation. This change is effective immediately.

## Hong Kong

[HLWS280]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office)). I commend the report to the House.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Hong Kong Six Monthly Report [Hong Kong Six Monthly Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-06-11/HLWS280/>

### Machinery of Government

[HLWS283]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for the Border Delivery Group, henceforth known as the Border and Protocol Delivery Group, has transferred from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to the Cabinet Office.

This change is effective immediately and will help to ensure readiness of the border for the end of the Transition Period and lay the foundations for the best border in the world by 2025. Existing Ministerial responsibilities remain unchanged.

### NATO Parliamentary Assembly

[HLWS278]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The following will represent the United Kingdom at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Lord Anderson of Swansea

Stuart Anderson MP

Harriett Baldwin MP

Alun Cairns MP

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

Douglas Chapman MP

Feryal Clark MP  
 Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP  
 Nusrat Ghani MP  
 Lord Hamilton  
 Kevan Jones MP  
 Lord Jopling  
 Baroness Kingsmill  
 Abena Oppong-Asare MP  
 Alec Shelbrooke MP (Leader)  
 John Spellar MP  
 Bob Stewart MP  
 Heather Wheeler MP.

## Offensive Weapons

[HLWS281]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

As part of the Government's continuing action to tackle serious violence and keep dangerous weapons off the streets, we have on 9 June laid draft regulations – The Surrender of Offensive Weapons (Compensation) Regulations 2020 – before Parliament.

These regulations are required as part of our plans to bring in the weapons prohibitions that are provided for by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. These prohibitions will apply to specified rapid-firing rifles and certain other offensive weapons for example, zombie knives.

The Offensive Weapons Act provides for the Government to put in place arrangements for the surrender of those items that will become prohibited under the Act and requires that regulations be made to provide for the payment of compensation to those who surrender items.

The regulations which have been laid set out a scheme for compensation, in particular making provision as to eligibility for compensation and the making and determination of claims. The regulations are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure in both Houses. It is our intention to bring the regulations into force at a time when it is safe and reasonable to expect the owners of these weapons to be able to travel to designated police stations in their areas in order to surrender the item.

We will finalise and publicise full details on the surrender and compensation arrangements before they

commence. This will include the details on when the scheme will go live and information on how to surrender and make a claim. This will help to ensure that all those who possess the items in question are well informed and are given sufficient opportunity to surrender their lawfully held items to the police and claim compensation for them.

## OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

[HLWS282]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe is as follows:

(Gareth Johnson MP - Leader)

Full Representatives	Substitute Members
Lord Bowness	Tahir Ali MP
Deidre Brock MP	Baroness Blower
Lord Dubs	Sara Britcliffe MP
Marcus Fysh MP	Martin Docherty-Hughes MP
Andrew Gwynne MP	Peter Grant MP
Rupa Huq MP	Lia Nici MP
Brendan O'Hara MP	Kate Osborne MP
Nigel Mills MP	Lord Robathan
Royston Smith MP	Selaine Saxby MP
Craig Tracey MP	Bob Stewart MP
Mike Wood MP	Claudia Webbe MP
Nick Smith MP	James Wild MP

## UK Debt Management Office

[HLWS285]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO) has today published its business plan for the financial year 2020-21. Copies have been deposited in the Libraries of both houses and are available on the DMO's website, [www.dmo.gov.uk](http://www.dmo.gov.uk).

## Written Answers

Thursday, 11 June 2020

### Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which court would determine the outcome of a dispute between Customs Officers and a person moving goods via a Border Control Post in Northern Ireland. [[HL4767](#)]

**Lord True:** Any such disputes would be a matter for UK authorities and UK courts.

### British Overseas Territories: Biodiversity

Asked by **Lord Randall of Uxbridge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide assistance to projects and programmes in relation to conservation of biodiversity in the UK overseas territories. [[HL5236](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** Environmental policy is a devolved responsibility, however the UK works in partnership with the Overseas Territories (OTs) to deliver both OT-specific objectives and contribute to wider regional and international environmental commitments of the UK and OTs. The Government has awarded £5.2 million which will be given to 21 projects through the Darwin Plus Scheme for conservation of the unique and globally significant plants and animals that reside in UK Overseas Territories.

There are a number of funding streams available to the British Overseas Territories to support the protection and management of their natural resources including Darwin Plus (also known as The Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund), an environmental funding stream with an annual budget of £10 million from 2021. Funding from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund has also provided funding from 2016-2021 for a number of environmental projects including the Blue Belt of marine protection around the OTs, assessing Natural Capital, implementing actions plans to protect fragile coral reefs and non-native species/biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful species to new environments.

The UK Government's call for evidence undertaken in 2019 sought to identify how government funds can achieve greater impact in protecting the rich biodiversity of the OTs, and how funding can deliver better value for money in meeting environmental commitments in the future. Responses to this call will inform the upcoming comprehensive spending review.

### Coronavirus: Females

Asked by **Baroness Goudie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Department for International Development is taking to ensure that women and women's organisations are (1) included, and (2) supported, to participate at all levels in the (a) design, (b) implementation, and (c) evaluation, of responses to COVID-19 and its secondary impacts. [[HL5188](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The significant gender impacts of COVID-19 are deeply concerning. DFID has been regularly consulting various women's funds and women's rights organisations (WROs), to understand first-hand what's happening and to inform our response. Over the last month, DFID has hosted numerous roundtables where WROs took part.

DFID's decision to pledge £10 million to the United Nations Population Fund and £20 million to UNICEF was informed by the conclusions of a rapid assessment of 122 WROs, which the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence undertook. DFID also launched a call for proposals under our Rapid Response Facility requiring all projects to mainstream gender, protection and safeguarding.

Through engagement with the UN, the World Bank and G7, DFID has promoted the importance of recognising women as frontline actors and leaders, and placing WROs front and centre in the international response.

DFID is being more flexible in its funding to support WROs. Amplify Change, a multi-donor fund is supporting local organisations for improved sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) adapt to address immediate and heightened SRHR risks.

This month DFID hosts its first Gender Equality Challenge Board. Experts, including women's funds, will be invited to hold us to account on our plans for economic response and recovery.

### Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by **Lord Rosser**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 tests were carried out on each day since 28 April; how many of those were retests each day; what were the reasons for retests being necessary; what assessment they have made of the impact of carrying out a retest before knowing the result of the original test on the reduction of COVID-19 cases; and what is their percentage target for the maximum number of retests from each set of daily tests. [[HL3996](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The number of daily tests and number of people tested from 28 April to 7 May 2020 are shown in the following table.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Daily number of tests</i>	<i>Daily number of people tested</i>
28 April	52,429	33,455
29 April	81,611	33,455
30 April	122,347	73,191
1 May	105,937	63,667
2 May	76,496	56,397
3 May	85,186	62,956
4 May	84,806	69,839
5 May	69,463	57,006
6 May	86,583	65,092
7 May	97,029	67,443

Data on the number of re-tests are not recorded. Re-testing is undertaken according to the judgement of clinicians, based on the case by case circumstances and need presented to them. They may run tests more than once on an individual, if they feel it is appropriate. Therefore, targets have not been set for re-testing.

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their target of 200,000 COVID-19 tests a day relates to tests administered, results received, or the number of people tested. [HL4456]

**Lord Bethell:** The target of 200,000 tests per day refers to testing capacity.

## Coronavirus: Written Questions

*Asked by Lord Beecham*

To ask The Leader of the House how many of the Questions for Written Answer listed as unanswered after 10 working days in the edition of House of Lords Business dated 3 June related to COVID-19; and what steps she is taking to ensure that they are answered promptly. [HL4906]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** In the House of Lords Business dated 3 June, there were 164 unanswered Questions for Written Answer (QWA) relating to COVID-19. As of 11th June, 72 of these have been answered. The officials and special adviser's working in my office regularly speak with departments to ensure the timely answering of QWAs and have been doing so during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also regularly remind the Government Front Bench of their obligations to the House and the need to ensure all QWAs are answered within the established deadlines.

## Customs: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which customs regulations will be enforced at border control posts in Northern Ireland after 1 January 2021. [HL4765]

**Lord True:** The Northern Ireland Protocol guarantees the place of Northern Ireland within the UK customs territory and internal market, upholding the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The Protocol will prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland, while explicitly recognising Northern Ireland's integral place in the UK. Further details on the Government's approach to the Protocol are outlined in our [Command Paper](#), The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

## Death

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total number of deaths, from any cause, in the UK in 2020. [HL4131]

**Lord True:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Baroness Jones,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what estimate has been made of the total number of deaths, from any cause, in the UK in 2020 (HL4131).

The table below contains the registered deaths of UK residents in the first 20 weeks of the year. Data has been sourced from the Office for National Statistics, National Records Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency weekly death publications.

*Table 1: Provisional number of deaths registered in the first 20 weeks of 2020, broken down by country [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]*

	<i>UK</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>
Total deaths registered: week 1-20	952,133	901,066	15,990	27,850	7,227

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1] Figures are based on deaths registered up to 1 May 2020

[2] Weekly deaths for Scotland are produced by NRS: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>



[3]Weekly deaths for Northern Ireland are produced by NISRA:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/weekly-deaths>

[4]England, Wales and Northern Ireland weekly deaths run from Saturday to Friday, Scotland deaths run from Monday to Sunday

[5]Northern Ireland week allocation differs from other countries. For example, week 1 is week ending 10-Jan. This has been adjusted for the purpose of aggregating the data

### Dental Services: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Redesdale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which regulatory body is responsible for the changes needed to allow dental surgeries to operate in a COVID-19 safe environment, including how patients are booked into surgeries, instructed to behave whilst attending a general dental practice and the layout of waiting areas and spacing of waiting room chairs. [HL4562]

*Asked by Lord Redesdale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which regulatory body is responsible for the protocol of how dentists and dental nurses wear personal protective equipment before, during and after treatment when a patient has left, including how a surgery must be cleaned before the arrival of the next patient. [HL4563]

**Lord Bethell:** Public Health England (PHE) is responsible for and has published guidance on infection control protocols (IPC) and guidance on how health care professionals should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure their safety. A copy of PHE's published guidance *COVID-19: infection prevention and control guidance* is attached.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that National Health Service dentistry outside urgent care centres will begin to restart from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety. The letter outlines that practices need to consider the PHE guidance on IPC and PPE in order to deliver care in a way that is safe, operationally deliverable and allows dental practices flexibility to do what is best for patients and their teams. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PHE - COVID-19 Infection prevention and control [PHE - COVID-19 Infection prevention and control guidance.pdf]

Resumption of dental services letter 28 May [Resumption of dental services letter 28 May.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-18/HL4562>

### Developing Countries: Overseas Aid

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking with multilateral organisations to ensure that official development assistance, allocated to tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is reaching people living in the global south that need it. [HL5239]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is working together with international partners including the G7, G20, the UN, the World Bank and other multilateral institutions, to galvanise the global fight against COVID-19.

The UK is playing a leading role in the international response to the pandemic, pledging up to £764 million of UK aid to help address urgent needs in vulnerable countries, accelerate progress towards a vaccine, reinforce infection control and help the poorest countries address the economic impact.

We are a major contributor to the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan, which is supporting the most vulnerable people in this crisis, including women and girls, people with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants and host communities. The UK has committed £2.2 billion in new loan resources for the IMF's concessional lending operations to make rapid emergency financing available for developing countries, and up to £150 million to the IMF Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust for the poorest countries to receive debt relief on IMF repayments. On 4 June, the UK hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, where world leaders, foundations, corporations and organisations pledged \$8.8 billion for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. This funding will help strengthen health systems in the global fight against COVID-19 and immunise a further 300 million children in the world's poorest countries against other deadly diseases. The UK remains Gavi's largest donor, pledging an equivalent of £330 million per year over the next five years.

We continue to use our seat at the table to shape the multilateral response and ensure it addresses the needs and priorities of the poorest and most vulnerable.

### Faculty: Contracts

*Asked by Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Crown Commercial Service was consulted on the decision by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to let a contract to Faculty. [HL5225]

**Lord True:** The contract in question was awarded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and there was no requirement for the Department to engage with the Crown Commercial Service prior to the award of this contract. Further details are published on [ContractsFinder](#), in line with the Government's transparency agenda.

## Humanitarian Aid: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what engagement they have had with the UN and other international actors to ensure that tackling gender-based violence is recognised as a specific objective in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. [[HL4970](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is deeply concerned about the surge in gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have consistently encouraged the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to prioritise GBV within the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) through bilateral channels and joint advocacy with other donors. We believe revising the GHRP to explicitly include a specific objective on GBV will prove lifesaving for women and girls.

Whilst we are pleased to see improvements in how GBV is being addressed overall in the GHRP, the UK is still championing a specific objective on GBV in future versions. All UN agencies and international actors must demonstrate that the shadow pandemic of GBV is taken seriously in the global response to COVID-19 and be held accountable for addressing GBV.

## Marine Protected Areas: British Overseas Territories

*Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK Overseas Territories' marine protected areas are part of the Blue Belt; if not (1) why not, and (2) what plans they have to include those areas in future. [[HL5315](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK Overseas Territories' are constitutionally responsible for their marine environments. The Blue Belt programme has supported Territories to designate and manage large-scale protected areas around the British Indian Ocean Territory, South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands, Pitcairn, St Helena, Ascension and within the British Antarctic Territory. The programme is on track to deliver over 4 million square kilometres of protected ocean during this year, with the anticipated future designation of a management regime across Tristan da Cunha's maritime area.

Other Territories indicated that they did not wish to pursue the development of large-scale marine protected areas within their waters though the Blue Belt programme. Many of these Territories have already implemented a range of marine management measures within their waters. Funding from the Blue Belt programme has been used to enhance the annual Darwin Plus initiative, to enable those Territories to bid for funding to undertake local marine projects, which many

have done, including projects with the Blue Belt delivery partners.

The next phase of the Blue Belt programme, subject to the comprehensive Spending Review, will seek to expand engagement, and provide broader support for all Territories to protect their marine environment, while further developing sustainable marine economies.

## Navi Pillay

*Asked by Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they met with Navi Pillay, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, during her visit to London in May; and, if so, what topics they discussed. [[HL5053](#)]

*Asked by Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office attended an event on 20 May that was addressed by the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay. [[HL5054](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not aware of this event.

## Nigeria: Crimes against Humanity

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria about the findings of the report by Amnesty International 'We dried our tears': Addressing the toll on children of Northeast Nigeria's conflict, published on 27 May, that the Nigerian armed forces have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during their operations. [[HL4945](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** We are concerned by the reports of abuse, and of children being held in military detention facilities, detailed within Amnesty International's Report, 'We Dried Our Tears'. Children are victims of the conflict in North East Nigeria, not perpetrators.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State with responsibility for Human Rights, discussed the report with Amnesty International UK's Director on the day of its launch. Our High Commission will raise the details of this report with the Government of Nigeria imminently. The UK will continue to call on the Nigerian security forces to respect human rights, including the rights of children and abide by international humanitarian and Human Rights Law. All allegations of human rights violations or excessive use of force should be investigated and those responsible for any violation must be held to account. It is essential that victims can have trust in, and are protected from, their security forces.



## Non-governmental Organisations: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to international non-governmental organisations based in the UK to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5240]

**Baroness Sugg:** UK and Southern Civil Society organisations (CSOs) are crucial partners for DFID and play a critical role in ensuring UK aid reaches the most vulnerable in the global response to COVID-19. UK charities, such as Christian Aid and Humanity & Inclusion, are receiving funding to support vulnerable people around the world during the crisis. We have allocated £18 million to charities through the Rapid Response Facility and over £24 million through our partnership with Unilever.

A new UK Aid Direct funding round has also been launched, some of which has been set aside for rapid access by existing UK Aid Direct grant holders who are able to respond immediately to COVID-19. As DFID's country network adapts programming to respond to COVID-19, country teams are considering how they can do this through partners, including through CSOs.

In addition, DFID welcomes the vital role that NGOs will continue to play in service delivery through multilaterals. UN agencies have undertaken a review of their existing procedures related to partnership management and issued additional internal guidance to simplify and expedite collaboration where appropriate. We will be working with the UN and DFID's country offices to increasingly better understand and track eventual flows to NGOs in-country.

## Overseas Aid: Genito-urinary Medicine

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they ensure (1) the availability of, and (2) equitable access to, sexual and reproductive health and rights services is included as part of the essential package of health services for their COVID-19 response overseas. [HL5257]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK proudly continues to work with our key partners, including UN agencies, national governments and civil society, to protect and advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), to ensure that decades of progress toward securing universal access are not reversed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We remain committed to supporting the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crises and have provided UNFPA with an additional £10 million for life-saving SRH services as part of the global humanitarian response plan to COVID-19.

The UK-aid funded Global Financing Facility is continuing to support governments to maintain health

systems in 36 affected countries, with a focus on protecting reproductive, maternal and newborn health services. Our flagship SRHR programme 'WISH' is delivering desperately-needed services and supplies during the pandemic across 27 countries, including increasing use of technologies, more self-care delivery and working to ensure SRHR is part of national COVID-19 essential service delivery. Ensuring that no-one is left behind is key to this effort. Local radio and SMS are providing critical messages on SRHR and COVID-19 to those living in remote areas. Where possible, fee waiver schemes are removing cost-barriers for the poorest and community outreach services continue in rural areas where it remains safe to do so.

## Sri Lanka: Politics and Government

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further information they have on the current political situation in Sri Lanka in view of fears of a constitutional crisis, further to the government of Sri Lanka's announcement of its intention to rule without parliamentary oversight. [HL5310]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The parliament of Sri Lanka was dissolved on 2 March ahead of a planned general election. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic the general election was postponed. The Sri Lankan Government has made clear that they want to see the election take place as soon as practicable. The UK has taken note of the decision made by the Supreme Court in Sri Lanka on 2 June to dismiss seven petitions related to elections and reconvening parliament. We understand that the Elections Commission of Sri Lanka is due to convene shortly to announce a date for the next general election, and that a range of practical preparations are underway. We will continue to follow the situation closely.

## Universities: Admissions

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they consulted the (1) Northern Irish, (2) Scottish, and (2) Welsh, governments about their proposals to cap the number of English students who can be admitted to universities elsewhere in the UK; if not, why not; on what date the relevant ministers of those governments were informed of Her Majesty's Government's proposals; and what representations they have received from such ministers about those proposals. [T] [HL5316]

**Baroness Berridge:** My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, have regular meetings with ministers from all the devolved administrations about higher education issues. These discussions have included the development of student number controls policy. The department's officials also have regular meetings and discussions with their counterparts.

Student number controls for institutions in the devolved administrations only apply to the number of English-domiciled entrants who will be supported with their tuition fees through the Student Loans Company. The funding of English-domiciled students is not a devolved matter, and it is right and fair that this policy should apply consistently wherever they are studying in the UK.

Ministers will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations on strengthening and stabilising the higher education system following the COVID-19 outbreak.

### USA: Press Freedom

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British journalists and camera crews covering the recent protests in the United States have been affected by the United States security forces' use of force; and (1) whether, (2) when, and (3) to whom in the United States authorities, they have made it clear that the use of force, including tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper spray, against all journalists is an unacceptable violation of press freedom. [\[HL5305\]](#)

**Baroness Sugg:** We are aware of a small number of British journalists and camera crews being affected by the US police response to the unrest. Our Embassy in Washington has raised the issue with the US Administration.

Journalists all around the world must be free to do their job and to hold authorities to account without fear of arrest or violence.

### Violence: Females

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the response to violence against women, and in particular, intimate partner violence, is provided for as an essential service within their COVID-19 response overseas. [\[HL5256\]](#)

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is deeply concerned about the surge in violence against women and girls (VAWG) during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are using significant investment and influence within the international system to ensure that women and girls have access to the essential and lifesaving services they need.

We have already provided £10 million of UK aid to the UN Population Fund and £20 million to the UN Children's Fund to scale up protection and support services for women and girls.

We are adapting DFID's WISH programme activities to prevent and respond to reported increases in Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) as a result of the pandemic. This includes mapping of SGBV support services, remote training to support women disclosing SGBV, messaging in media campaigns, such as radio, and

referrals to centres providing services for survivors; contact centres to provide first line support; as well as support to advocacy efforts. We are also urgently reorienting other existing bilateral programmes to ensure that women and girls can continue to access support during the lockdown. For example, in Nepal, the UK is financing 14 Women's and Children Service Centres across the country and 62 One Stop Management Crisis Centres within Health Centres. In Uganda, DFID is supporting the Government's response to the spikes in VAWG by funding 13 shelters across the country and supporting revision of standard operating procedures to ensure safety of frontline staff and survivors.

### Written Questions: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask The Leader of the House what percentage of (1) topical questions for written answer, and (2) normal questions for written answer, have not been answered within the expected timeframes for responding to such questions since the COVID-19 lockdown was imposed. [\[HL4914\]](#)

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** Since the lockdown was imposed on 23 March 82 topical questions for written answer were tabled. 49% of these were not answered within the expected timeframe. There were 2434 standard questions for written answer tabled, 25% of which were not answered within the standard time frame. These figures are correct as of 11 June.

### Zimbabwe: Abduction

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action has been taken by the HM Ambassador in Harare and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in relation to the reported attack, abduction and torture by security forces in Zimbabwe of Joana Mamombe and two of her colleagues from the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance. [\[HL4974\]](#)

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Zimbabwe about the arrest, abduction and torture of Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimhiri on 13 May. [\[HL4976\]](#)

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action has been taken by HM Ambassador in Harare in relation to the arrest, abduction and torture of Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimhiri on 13 May. [\[HL4977\]](#)

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation in Zimbabwe. It remains one of the UK's 30 Human Rights Priority

Countries globally. The Minister for Africa spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June and expressed his [Minister Duddridge] deep concern regarding recent reports of the abduction and torture of three female opposition activists, including a Member of Parliament. He [Minister Duddridge] urged the Foreign Minister to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights, including investigations into violations.

It is vital that the Zimbabwean authorities adhere to their international human rights obligations and respect their Constitution, which prohibits enforced disappearances and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This was reiterated in a joint local statement issued on 20 May by the UK alongside other partners, including the European Union, France, Germany and the United States of America. The UK will continue to monitor developments closely and urge the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights.

*Asked by Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have considered further targeted measures against leaders of the Zimbabwe security apparatus following reports of the violent assault and torture of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimбири and Netsai Marova. [[HL5232](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation in Zimbabwe. It remains one of the UK's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries globally. The Minister for Africa spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June and expressed his deep concern regarding recent reports of the abduction and torture of three female opposition activists, including a Member of Parliament - Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimбири and Netsai Marova. He urged the Foreign Minister to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights, including investigations into violations. The UK will continue to monitor developments closely and urge the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights.

Currently, the EU has an arms embargo against Zimbabwe and active targeted measures against the company Zimbabwe Defence Industries. There are also suspended targeted measures in place against three current and former security sector chiefs. The UK remains aligned to the EU's restrictive measures on Zimbabwe during the Transition Period. The UK will continue to assess the appropriateness of these measures in light of recent developments on the basis of human rights and progress towards genuine political reforms.

*Asked by Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have had ministerial discussions with the government of the Republic of South Africa on a joint approach to the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe following

(1) reports of the violent assault and torture of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimбири and Netsai Marova, and (2) the decision of the Zimbabwe authorities to conduct a trial against them for demonstrating against food shortages in hospital. [[HL5233](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** We have not discussed the situation in Zimbabwe with South Africa at a Ministerial level since recent reports emerged regarding the abduction and torture of three female opposition activists in Zimbabwe. However, the UK regularly discusses the economic situation in Zimbabwe with its international partners, including the Republic of South Africa. The UK is committed to working in partnership with South Africa, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union as well as other international organisations.

The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation in Zimbabwe and these recent reports regarding the treatment of three opposition activists. The Minister for Africa spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June and expressed his deep concern. He urged the Foreign Minister to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights, including investigations into violations.

It is vital that the Zimbabwean authorities adhere to their international human rights obligations and respect their Constitution, which prohibits enforced disappearances and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The UK will continue to monitor developments in Zimbabwe closely and call for the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights.

## **Zimbabwe: Commonwealth**

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the application by the government of Zimbabwe to re-join the Commonwealth is suspended until any violations of human rights cease and are addressed, including the reported arrest, abduction and torture of Joana Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimбири on 13 May. [[HL4975](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The decision regarding Zimbabwe's readmission would be for all Commonwealth members. However, the UK will only support readmission when Zimbabwe meets the admission requirements, complying with the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter. These principles include respect for human rights and the rule of law. Disproportionate use of force by Zimbabwe's security forces, as seen in January 2019 and August 2019, and recent reports regarding the abduction and torture of three opposition activists, are clearly inconsistent with the Commonwealth Charter. The Minister for Africa made this clear when he spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June.

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