

2021: International day for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict: UK statement

Thank you Chair

On 19 June, we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. We pay tribute to victims, survivors and those around the world who dedicate their lives to ending conflict-related sexual violence. Rape and other forms of sexual violence continue to be used as weapons of war in conflicts the world over. These crimes range from individual acts of brutality to deliberate torture and systematic campaigns of ethnic cleansing. The UK Government is committed to ending these horrific acts of violence.

Since we first launched the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative in 2012, the UK has committed more than £48 million to this vital cause. We are focussed on two key aims. Firstly, strengthening pathways to justice for all survivors, and holding perpetrators to account. And secondly, improving the support to survivors, including tackling the stigma they face. In doing so, we have a responsibility to make sure our policies are ethical and effective at supporting survivors. We need to listen to survivors. And put survivor-centred, and survivor-led approaches at the heart of our policies.

Last year at the Permanent Council, we spoke about strengthening justice for survivors, and the launch of global consultations on the [draft Murad Code](#) to prevent the re-traumatisation of survivors when collecting evidence of these crimes. The final version of the code will be launched next year.

Last year we also launched the [Declaration of Humanity](#) alongside faith and belief leaders. The Declaration, the first of its kind, calls for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and denounces the stigma too often faced by survivors. It unites multiple faiths and beliefs in a common front to challenge damaging societal norms and calls for support for survivors of sexual violence internationally.

Children born as a result of sexual violence in conflict can be amongst the most marginalised. We need to ensure they are not forgotten. In response, we are working to develop and launch the 'Model Framework for the Wellbeing of Children Born of Conflict-related Sexual Violence.' The Framework aims to fundamentally transform the way that children born of sexual violence are recognised and supported in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts.

At the recent G7 summit in Cornwall, the [Leaders' Summit communiqué](#) condemned the appalling nature of sexual violence in conflict, and underscored that these crimes may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. We committed to addressing the worrying global increase in gender-based violence that we have seen during the pandemic. We will do this through women's

empowerment and by scaling up support and implementation of evidence-based, survivor-centred action.

Madam Chair, the UK will continue to promote international action to prevent and end conflict-related sexual violence. We will work to ensure that survivor-centred approaches are at the heart of our international response and that children born out of sexual violence are supported, not marginalised. Thank you Chair