

# Global collaboration to achieve the SDGs

Thank you Madam President. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement by the European Union and its Member States.

Urgent action is needed to accelerate delivery towards the Sustainable Development Goals. This year, the UK was glad to join other Member States in presenting our first Voluntary National Review. We remain committed to accelerating progress, with a focus on leaving no-one behind.

We are facing a climate emergency. This risks undoing development gains made in recent decades and could push an additional 100 million people into poverty by 2030. September's Climate Action Summit is a pivotal moment for urgent action on cutting emissions, building resilience and mobilising finance. The UK is delighted to champion resilience and adaptation with Egypt and partner countries.

We are leading efforts to adapt and better cope with climate shocks. The UK has committed to align its Official Development Assistance with the Paris Agreement and is the first G20 economy to legislate for a domestic net zero emissions target by 2050. Internationally, we are on track to deliver our commitment to provide at least \$7.3 billion to help countries mitigate impacts of climate change and pursue clean economic growth. We look forward to working closely with the Secretary-General to deliver transformative outcomes at the Climate Summit and beyond.

Financing is another challenge. The UK is proud to spend the 0.7% target of GNI on official development assistance, but with an annual investment gap of \$2.5 trillion in developing countries, official development assistance alone is insufficient. For example, as a leading donor to regional preparedness for Ebola, we recognise that finance is urgently needed to further support preparedness in countries at risk of infectious diseases and to protect global health.

The UK's Voluntary National Review has reinforced the importance of partnerships. For example, we are focusing on mobilising private investment, and 'impact investing', by building the evidence base for public demand for sustainable investing at home. We want the international community to commit to a common framework for measuring impact, which will help unlock more impact investing capital to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

At this High Level Political Forum, the UK has sought to highlight peace, justice and strong institutions – all vital to achieving Agenda 2030. Concerted action and a whole-of-society approach are more important than ever to deliver Goal 16. Closing civic space and restrictions on media freedom are significantly undermining efforts. Last week, the UK conference on media

freedom announced up to \$19 million to pioneer bold approaches to keep media outlets independent.

Equality, including on gender, remains a priority for the UK. We must ensure global commitments are translated into real change on the ground. Inclusive growth to the benefit of all of society, including people with disabilities, must be prioritised. Our commitment to the Inclusive Data Charter highlights our determination to ensure that everybody is counted so that they have a fair opportunity in life.

Finally, the UK encourages Member States to commit to raising global ambition across all of the Goals, at the first SDG Summit in September.

Thank you very much.

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## [Lead Commissioner's speech on a positive vision for countering extremism](#)

Good morning everyone. My name is Sara Khan and I am the Lead Commissioner at the Commission for Countering Extremism.

It's great to be here – with a room full of people all committed to challenging extremism.

I'm honoured to be introducing the Home Secretary.

Today is one of the first major public interventions by government since the Counter Extremism Strategy was launched in 2015.

As the Commission's work has shown – and you all know this – we face very different challenges in 2019.

For the last 18 months, I've been discussing extremism...

With communities impacted by it; those working to challenge it and those who are sceptical of the agenda.

I've been sharing what I've heard with the government ahead of our report of my conclusions and recommendations due out in September.

I'm therefore looking forward to the Home Secretary starting to map out a refreshed direction for countering extremism.

If I've learnt one thing from my work over the last 18 months, it's this...

When we talk about 'extremism' we tend focus on what we're against.

I believe we need to start talking about what we stand for as a country and what we are defending.

Let's celebrate that we live in a wonderfully plural, tolerant and open-minded society.

An inclusive society embodied by our incredible and diverse world cup winning cricket team.

Let's be unashamedly patriotic, proud and positive when we're talking about countering extremism.

But I don't want to wait until September to share what I've found with you.

Today we have published academic papers on the Far Right.

Dr Chris Allen from University of Leicester, Dr Joe Mulhall from Hope Not Hate, and Dr Ben Lee from Lancaster University, have written about the modern and changing British Far Right.

From the violent and now proscribed neo-Nazi National Action to those targeting the mainstream with anti-Muslim politics, exploiting the free speech debate and distrust of the media and politicians.

Professor Hilary Pilkington and Dr Ajmal Hussain from Manchester University and experts from the Peace Foundation have brought together young men and women with Islamist and Far Right beliefs to begin a unique dialogue to help counter the extremist narrative

Finally, we have a paper from Dr Daniel Allington, Dr David Hirsh and colleagues, which uses innovative polling to explore the attitudes of the Far Left.

These are all important and powerful contributions.

Today we're also publishing figures from our call for evidence.

We had 3,000 respondents.

Many of you here today kindly shared your views and experience.

The headline is that just over half of respondents had witnessed extremism in some way.

Of these, two fifths reported seeing it in their local area and 45% had seen it online.

That's a shocking number and one I'm relieved government are responding to.

Our findings show extremism isn't confined to one race, one religion or political ideology.

People are scared that violent extremists will incite or carry out an attack.

People are also deeply worried about the non-violent impact of groups exploiting local tensions to spread hate and division.

There are concerns from women, minorities within minorities and LGBT people... concerned that their right to choose how they live their life, or to talk about what is important to them, has been stripped away by repressive activists and community leaders.

There is a real worry about the intolerance, abuse and polarisation in our public debate and how this is linked to extremism.

The voices of victims of extremism have been missing from traditional counter extremism policy.

I believe we can, and must, do more to address the concerns we have heard.

In 2019 the threat is broad, it's severe and we need to keep up.

Yet we must guard our right to debate and speak our minds.

Our right to be radical.

We are free to protest, to speak truth to power and to be offensive.

This is our amazing – and at times infuriating – democracy.

Making sure it stays that way, is for me, the vital role of counter extremism.

We shouldn't lazily throw around the word 'extremism'. We need to use it with precision and care

We need to develop proportionate, open-minded and fair responses, based on our rule of law and human rights standards.

Leadership is essential in challenging extremism.

The government's 2015 strategy was an important milestone that laid the foundations for vital work.

But as I have made clear to the Home Secretary, there's a real need to update the strategy to keep pace with the nature of the problems in 2019.

Yet in a democracy the state must only have a limited role in countering extremism. We must all play our different parts.

Our new figures show that people expect to see politicians, social media companies, the media, faith and civil society leaders taking on intolerance, harassment and abuse in their own backyards as well as sounding the alarm about hate from outside.

Politicians in particular – whatever party you represent – my message is you

all set the standard. And once this bar slips others are emboldened.

Before I finish I want to say thank you to the members of my expert group for their ongoing advice and challenge.

And he would hate this... but I'm going to single out Lord Anderson who is standing down after a year on the group.

I am so grateful for the time he put into the Commission. Few people bring such experience and thoughtfulness to this agenda.

Impartiality is crucial to this Commission.

In the last 18 months I've praised the government when they've made good decisions and I've criticised them when I don't agree with what they'd done.

I want to thank the Home Secretary for his unwavering support for my work and my approach.

But also, for his outspoken commitment to challenging extremism in all forms.

Few politicians have been as consistent and courageous in their approach.

Today he is going to start to set out plans for a new strategy.

I hope this work begins as I did today with a positive vision for the country we love...

I hope it unambiguously makes the case for our right to be radical...

And I hope it doesn't shy away from the breadth and severity of the challenges we face and the need for a proportionate, fair and open-minded response.

It is therefore with huge pleasure that I introduce Sajid Javid, the Home Secretary.

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## **Introducing the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on media freedom: Amal Clooney's speech**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be among so many distinguished guests today.

When I addressed the conference yesterday I noted that global media freedom has been in decline for over a decade, and we see evidence of this daily. In

the last month alone, Myanmar's authorities blacked out the internet in Rakhine state, where the army has committed horrific abuses of Rohingyas; Sudan's military rulers shut down the internet to silence reporting of crimes against protesters.

A journalist in Russia had drugs planted on him as revenge for his investigations. Chinese censors deleted reporting of the turmoil in Hong Kong, and Turkish prosecutors launched a criminal probe against Bloomberg reporters who Bloomberg said were reporting 'fairly and accurately on newsworthy events'. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, a country of 200 million people, the authorities continued to literally mute TV news content they considered unfavourable and even took the video feed of the main TV news program off the air.

I spoke yesterday of one of my clients, Maria Ressa, a brave journalist and former CNN bureau chief from the Philippines who dared to criticize the actions of her President and as a result has been the victim of every kind of government-sponsored harassment and persecution. She is attacked by online trolls who insult and threaten her in the vilest terms. The authorities tried to revoke the operating license of her news site, [Rappler](#), and applied laws retroactively to criminalise her work. And the justice department has now launched a succession of cases against her that threaten to bankrupt her and send her to prison for up to 63 years.

The current media crisis involves both the silencing of truth and the amplification of misinformation to levels we have never seen before. I believe that the way the world responds to this crisis will define our generation and determine whether democracy can survive.

So when the Foreign Secretary asked me to be the UK's Special Envoy on Media Freedom, and to serve on a dedicated [Panel of Legal Experts](#), I agreed.

In discussions with the Foreign Secretary, he made it clear that he wanted to establish a powerful new initiative that could create meaningful and lasting change, an initiative that should continue to operate regardless of which individual or political party was in power. He explained that the initiative would include the establishment of an independent and international panel of lawyers to advise governments on how they could better protect freedom of the press, and a Media Freedom Fund to help journalists access legal advice and training in the field.

I understood that the campaign was an opportunity for the UK and Canada to lead by example by supporting new initiatives to ensure that more robust international mechanisms would exist next time a journalist was arbitrarily arrested or attacked.

In these discussions with the UK and Canadian governments I set out my vision for the legal panel based on the issues that I think are priorities for reform:

- the institution and consistent use of sanctions regimes to impose serious financial consequences on state officials who abuse media

freedom

- enhanced consular duties when a journalist is detained abroad
- a system of visas for persecuted journalists seeking asylum
- an international investigative team – including lawyers and forensics experts – that could be deployed when a journalist is attacked; and
- the promulgation of model legislation to guide states on the free-speech guarantees that must be respected under international law

The legal panel will consider these issues and publish reports about what it believes can be done to better protect journalists and media freedom around the world. I am proud to say that the Chairman of the panel is one of the most distinguished judges in the world: Lord Neuberger, the former President of this country's Supreme Court; and he has asked me to serve as his Deputy Chair.

Together we have sought to identify the leading international experts on media freedom from a diverse group of legal backgrounds: judges, defence lawyers, academics, constitutional law experts, media specialists, and leading human rights practitioners. The panel includes:

- a former Vice-President of the European Court of Human Rights
- a United States federal appeals court judge
- a former Constitutional Court judge from Colombia
- the former Attorney-General of Canada
- leading barristers from the UK
- academics from the US and Korea; and
- lawyers who are at the forefront of advocacy to promote media freedom around the world including in Russia, India, Pakistan, Uganda, South Africa and the Middle East

Today, although 173 States have ratified a United Nations treaty – [the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) – that guarantees freedom of speech, many countries still have laws that allow the muzzling of journalists. That includes laws criminalising defamation, blasphemy and sedition; and vague laws on espionage, terrorism, fake news, public order and hate speech that have been written or applied to silence dissent.

I am proud to see the UK taking a leading role in the effort to review such laws, and it is right for it to do so. The UK is a UN Security Council permanent member that has traditionally supported international law and institutions. Many of the problematic laws that are being used to silence journalists around the world also came from British Commonwealth rule and the UK has experience in reforming or abolishing these laws to bring its legislation in line with its modern values and international human rights norms.

The UK's laws, for instance, used to criminalise blasphemy and over 40 countries still do, including many former colonial states. British law criminalising sedition was used in colonial India to prosecute Mahatma Gandhi and the offence is still on the books today in the world's most populous democracy, as well as other Commonwealth states.

By the time the UK officially repealed such laws just over 10 years ago they had long ceased to be used in British courts, but many Britons were concerned about the impact such laws could have on the rest of the world. During debates about their repeal in Parliament in 2009, the Justice Minister observed that the existence of such obsolete offences in this country had been used by other countries to justify the retention of similar laws that were used to suppress political dissent and restrict press freedom.

As a member of the House of Lords observed at the time: “[i]f our Parliament takes this step, it will be an example elsewhere”. This legal reform initiative in the UK was ultimately successful after a campaign by British media organisations, civil society groups, parliamentarians, and lawyers, and it can be a model for the international effort being launched today.

I know that some of you will be sceptical about an international campaign of this nature. I myself thought long and hard about whether this was likely to have impact, or be just another conference, establishing just another committee. But as I said yesterday, I believe that this campaign is important because the international system we have in place is broken.

It is so broken that we have record levels of journalists being killed, and jailed. So broken that people like Jamal Khashoggi can be murdered on foreign soil without any coordinated investigation, open trial or effective accountability. So any new initiative that has the potential to move the needle in the right direction is worth considering.

As Eleanor Roosevelt has said: “universal human rights begin ...[i]n small places, close to home...[W]ithout concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world”. So I believe that each of us has a role to play.

I believe that it is the responsibility of journalists to do their job by engaging in fact-based reporting that values accuracy over speed or clicks. I believe that legislators and judges should ensure that their country’s laws comply with the international standards that their government has signed up to, and that such laws are not being abused to prosecute dissent. I believe that governments that respect press freedom should stand up to those that don’t – by imposing real world consequences on officials who abuse human rights.

For my part, I will work with my colleagues on the Legal Panel to research and produce recommendations for change. We will seek advice from civil society, academia and the legal profession where necessary and we will consult with journalists on what they think is needed to keep them safe. And, when the time is right, I will report honestly on whether States are listening.

The world is turned upside down when those who commit the worst abuses are free, while those who report on them are not. And if we don’t turn things around democracy cannot survive. The global decline in press freedom has been hastened by rhetoric from the leader of the world’s most powerful democracy and it will not be reversed without strong leadership from others.



So I thank the governments of the UK and Canada for bringing us together today; I celebrate the opportunity that this gathering represents; and I hope that we will look back on this day as the beginning of an era of change.

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## Addressing threats to media freedom: Amal Clooney's speech

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for inviting me to address you today.

I am a human rights lawyer and my work has shown me that advocacy for human rights is often a fight for the next generation. We can easily take for granted rights that we only enjoy because of the courage of those who came before us. I can only practise as a barrister because 100 years ago women in this country fought for the right to study and practise law on the same basis as men. A gay person can today marry the person they love only thanks to advocacy campaigns that began a generation ago.

But progress is not inevitable. We can also move backwards. And when it comes to the right to a free press we are seeing – according to Freedom House – the [13th consecutive year of decline across the globe](#). This decline in media freedom does not only mean that journalists have fewer rights, it means we all have. Because as James Madison, one of America's founding fathers, warned us more than 200 years ago: the right to a free press is “the only effectual guardian of every other right.”

Yet today, journalists are under attack like never before. They are dying not only while covering wars – but because they are being targeted for exposing crimes committed in war and for speaking the truth about abuses of power in peacetime.

In the last 18 months, over 100 journalists and media workers have been killed. India and Brazil, 2 of the world's largest democracies, have some of the highest murder rates. And the vast majority of these murders have gone unpunished.

Last year when Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi was tortured to death and dismembered by Saudi Arabian officials in Istanbul, world leaders responded with little more than a collective shrug. And journalists are being jailed in record numbers, with the highest rates reported in Turkey, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

I am a witness in my legal practice to the challenges faced by journalists. I have represented journalists targeted by their governments for reporting corruption and human rights abuses from Azerbaijan to the Maldives, to Cairo. And my foundation's [TrialWatch initiative](#) monitors the prosecution of

journalists all over the world.

Over the past year I have also spent hundreds of hours working on the defence of Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, heroic young reporters imprisoned in Myanmar for allegedly violating the Official Secrets Act after they wrote an article about the execution of 10 Rohingya men by security forces.

The government's treatment of the journalists was so outrageous it is hard to believe: the phone rings one evening at the Reuters office; a police officer asks the journalists to meet at a café; when they walk into the café the officer hands them rolled-up documents; when they walk out they are arrested for espionage. When the journalists were in custody the police did not even pretend to be interested in supposedly secret documents they were carrying; they asked only about the sources for their Rohingya report, offering to drop the charges if Reuters dropped the story.

When this offer was refused the journalists were put on trial. And then, in an extraordinary twist, a policeman called to give evidence confessed that the journalists' arrest was set up. But the judges convicted them anyway and sentenced them to 7 years' imprisonment.

It took over a year to secure a pardon for the journalists. But on the 6th of May, they walked out of the prison gates to be reunited with their wives and baby daughters, one of whom had been born while her father was in prison. And 6 weeks ago they went to New York to collect a Pulitzer Prize for that Rohingya report.

More recently I have been appointed as counsel for another award-winning journalist, Maria Ressa. Ms Ressa was CNN's bureau chief in Jakarta and Manila before she teamed up with 3 other women to set up an independent news site. Their site, [Rappler.com](http://Rappler.com), quickly became one of the leading online news portals in the Philippines, known for its hard-hitting stories about human rights abuses under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Last year, [Ms Ressa was 1 of 4 journalists named Time Magazine's Person of the Year](#) for taking 'great risks in pursuit of greater truth'. The government's response has been to arrest her and initiate a series of civil and criminal cases that expose her to a maximum sentence of 63 years in prison.

The Maria Ressa case in the Philippines, like the Reuters case in Myanmar, exposes a cruel irony that I see time and time again in my work: journalists who expose abuses face arrest, while those who commit the abuses do so with impunity. Crimes allegedly committed by the authorities in Myanmar and the Philippines are being examined by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. But so far it is only the reporters being sent to jail.

You may think that these problems only affect people in far-off lands; but that is not true. These problems are global. They exist even in democracies that otherwise have a strong tradition of free speech; and no region is untouched.

Many people don't know that journalists have been murdered because they are journalists, even here in Europe, in places like Malta and Slovakia. Australia's Parliament just launched an inquiry into press freedom after police raided the Sydney headquarters of ABC News alleging that classified material was used in a report on killings by Australian forces in Afghanistan.

In this country, 2 journalists were recently arrested for using a leaked ombudsman report in a documentary alleging police collusion in a murder in Northern Ireland during The Troubles. And the indictment against Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has alarmed journalists at newspapers around the world, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and The Guardian because, as the editor of the Washington Post has put it, it 'criminalis[es] common practices in journalism that have long served the public interest'.

With many governments also insulting and threatening journalists, and seeking to throttle media organisations through strict controls on ownership, licensing, and online activity, we have reached the point where there are few places in the world where journalists are not surveilled, harassed, disenfranchised or subjected to self-censorship.

I should not need to explain why this is so consequential. In the last story that Jamal Khashoggi wrote in the Washington Post, he lamented the fact that the vast majority of countries in the Arab world lack a free press, and that as a result, millions of Arabs are either uninformed or misinformed. This is of course true of other regions as well. Meaning democracy cannot work. Progress is restrained or thwarted. And any human rights abuse can occur in the dark.

So it is clear that the challenges to media freedom are urgent and they are global. But an [international campaign like the one being launched today](#) can bring positive change only if governments are willing to pay more than lip service to the ideal of media freedom. All governments say they believe in a free press: the right is even enshrined in North Korea's constitution. What matters is enforcement of this right. And enforcement depends on states.

So I am grateful to the Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, and to Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland for bringing us all here today. I am grateful for their assistance in cases where I have represented detained journalists; and I am grateful that today they are shining a light on the importance of media freedom around the world.

But my message to all the ministers who are here is that signing pledges and making speeches is not enough; they must make sure that their laws respect media freedom, and that their police, prosecutors, judges and citizens do the same. States must ensure that when a journalist is attacked, this crime is investigated and that those responsible are held to account. States should ensure that when a journalist is detained, they have access to legal advice and open monitoring of their trial.

States can provide more robust consular assistance when their nationals are

arrested abroad for their reporting. They can provide special visas for persecuted journalists who need asylum. And they can impose targeted sanctions and other penalties on states that try to silence critical speech by detaining or killing journalists. States can make a concrete commitment today by contributing to the Global Media Defence Fund that will help journalists access legal assistance and training. And I hope they will support the work of the new [international independent legal panel](#) that I will introduce tomorrow.

Recent reports suggest that today, only 1 in 10 people in the world lives in a country with a free press. And today the country of James Madison has a leader who vilifies the media, making honest journalists all over the world more vulnerable to abuse.

With authoritarianism, isolationism and nationalism gaining ground, the relevance of international institutions and respect for international norms are seriously in question. I believe it is this crisis of the international rule of law that makes this initiative compelling. It is compelling not because the international system works; but because it is broken.

So we need to think outside the box. We need groups of like-minded states that will move forward on one issue, even if they are paralysed on others. That is why I am supporting this campaign, and I look forward to working with many of you here to see what we can achieve.

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## [Letter to academy trust accounting officers: July 2019](#)

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