

News story: Sexual violence abuses against the Rohingya in Burma

The PM's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

The harrowing reports of mass rape and sexual violence against the Rohingya community people in Burma are deeply disturbing.

As well as rape, gang rape, invasive body searches, and murder, the reports suggest that evidence of these crimes is being deliberately destroyed to stop those responsible being brought to justice. These abuses are a clear human rights violation and must cease immediately.

The Head of Team for the FCO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) visited the region alongside the UN to meet with survivors, support workers, and government officials. We will also shortly be sending two experts to Bangladesh to provide further support on responding to sexual violence, including on investigating and documenting these abhorrent crimes.

The international community have united come together to deliver a global response to the dire humanitarian situation and human rights abuses. We also acknowledge the Bangladeshi government have been instrumental in helping those most in need.

Background

The Head of Team for the FCO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative visited Bangladesh alongside the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten. They visited Dhaka and Cox's Bazar and met survivors, service providers and government officials.

The FCO is working with the Stabilisation Unit to deploy two Deployable Civilian Experts (DCE) to Bangladesh to conduct a needs assessment of the extent of reported sexual violence and service provision. The DCEs are experts in gender issues and criminal law, including sexual violence in conflict, they will look at the extent of reported incidents of sexual violence, services being provided to survivors and their families, identify gaps in service provision and make recommendations for the UK Government. Part of the assessment will be a deep dive on investigation and documentation of sexual violence.

The PSVI Team of Experts (ToE) was established in 2012 to strengthen the specialist capabilities that the UK is able to bring to bear on these issues.

The ToE is owned by the FCO and housed in the Stabilisation Unit, forming part of their wider Civilian Stabilisation Group, which is a roster of Deployable Civilian Experts. The ToE currently consists of criminal lawyers, policing advisers, gender based violence experts, international investigating officers, training experts, psychosocial experts, social workers, and sexual offences examiners. Each deployment is tailored to local needs and circumstances.

The ToE does not collect evidence or investigate sexual violence. Instead the deployments are designed to complement and reinforce the work of others, including governments UN and NGOs. Since November 2012 we have deployed 74 experts to 13 countries in support of 22 projects. Further information about the ToE can be found [here](#).

Burma is a priority country for PSVI and Women, Peace and Security including in the UK's National Action Plan and Implementation plan which runs from 2014-2017. The National Action Plan enables the Government to articulate our priorities on Women, Peace and Security and coordinate implementation of our work at the national level.

[News story: Sellafield decommissioning reaches new heights](#)

A chimney on top of the oldest reprocessing plant on the nuclear site, will be crunched away at a rate of 1 metre a week.

The tower will be gone by 2020, resulting in a permanent change to the Sellafield skyline.

The stack sits on top of the First Generation Reprocessing Plant and provided ventilation to a fleet of reprocessing plants.

The 60 year old structure no longer meets modern construction standards, therefore must be removed as a priority.

[What went up must come down](#)

At 61 metres tall, on top of a 61 metre building, it was the tallest structure on the site, until a modern replacement was built.

It's position on one of the most congested nuclear sites in the world has made this a complicated and lengthy process.

Conventional demolition techniques like explosives and cranes can not be used in such a crowded, hazardous environment.

Stuart Latham is head of remediation at Sellafield Ltd, he said:

Cleaning up our legacy facilities safely, quickly and cost-effectively is our absolute priority, so are delighted to now see the stack coming down after 4 years of preparation.

Given the structural integrity of the stack, its location in the heart of the site and the fact that this new technique has never been used here before, the planning has been comprehensive. The project demonstrates the challenges of decommissioning the Sellafield site.

We couldn't move a crumb of this chimney without building a modern replacement first, so this has been a complicated project, made easier by working closely with our supply chain.

Safety is the number one priority, so thorough testing has helped us ensure everything works as it should.

Sellafield Ltd has worked with Nuvia Ltd and Delta International; who have brought specialist demolition expertise and innovative ideas to the project.

This work saw Nuvia win the Technology Innovation Implementation award at the 2017 NDA Estate Supply Chain Awards.

A self-climbing platform has been designed, engineered and installed to act as a podium so that workers can safely access the 650 tonne chimney.

Using hand held tools like drills, hydraulic breakers, concrete crunching jaws and plasma steel cutting torches, workers will remove each piece of concrete and steel from the stack by hand to a waiting waste skip.

The demolition started in October, with workers accessing it from the circular platform, which is held in place by friction, and moves up and down the barrel of the stack.

Mina Golshan, Director of ONR's Sellafield, Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste Division, said: "Starting demolition of this redundant stack is a key achievement by Sellafield and another important step towards reducing the risk and hazard posed by legacy facilities on site in order to further enhance safety. This is the focus of our regulatory strategy for the site.

"Our inspectors have engaged with Sellafield Ltd during the design, build, testing and commissioning phases and gathered evidence that assured us of the suitability of the proposed demolition activity and Sellafield's supporting safety case."

Press release: M5 Oldbury viaduct team gives gardeners a helping hand

A team working on the M5 Oldbury viaduct repair scheme is helping to transform a former derelict site into a community garden so it can be used by local charity, Ideal for all.

The derelict land, near junctions 1 and 2 of the M5 at Oldbury, is part of a programme of projects to give something back to local communities where work is currently being carried out by contractors BMV on behalf of Highways England to repair the viaduct.

Highways England is working with Ideal for All, a registered charity run by disabled people for disabled people in the Black Country, to create a fully functioning therapeutic garden and community learning space at Barlow Road in Wednesbury.

Ideal for All, through its award winning Growing Opportunities project, has already successfully developed two existing gardens; Salop Drive Market Garden (Oldbury) and therapeutic unit Malthouse Gardens (Smethwick). They are now working alongside the local community, M5 Oldbury viaduct team and Power to Change Community Business Fund to expand the project into Wednesbury (Barlow Road).

The site has already undergone phase one and one of development, being initially overgrown and unused for many years. Since the start of the Oldbury viaduct scheme, the team are carrying out further phase three development works and clearance across the Barlow road site.

In July, workers from contractors BMV attended the Ideal for All 'volunteer day'. This involved working alongside local volunteers and project participants, weeding and hedge trimming around the existing orchard. More recently the team has been back on site carrying out some rotovating and larger scale orchard clearance work.

Highways England senior project manager, Zbigniew Twarowski, said:

We appreciate the impact that M5 Oldbury viaduct project currently has on the local community.

We are always looking to minimise the disruption, but we know that there is a limit to what we can do. We are therefore looking to create a lasting legacy for the project. We will return a refurbished viaduct but we also want to support communities and improve lives.

Ideal for All's CEO, Khatija Patel, said:

We are excited to be working with local people, businesses and Power to Change. Together we're working hard towards the final transformation into a full functioning local asset, complete with community gardens, accessible buildings and community spaces.

The project will provide health, mental health and wellbeing opportunities alongside employment and skills training; benefiting local people, protecting the natural environment and creating opportunities to support and sustain economic regeneration of the area.

Seeing the project develop through the generous support from the Oldbury viaduct scheme has been fantastic and we cannot thank you all enough!

Ideal for All provides a range of social and health care services for disabled people, carers and disadvantaged groups.

The aim is to help people to learn new skills and live as independently as possible, regardless of background or additional needs. The charity offers a range of services to promote independent living, health and wellbeing and employment and skills and brings people together through peer support and social events.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Volunteers in drive to give school facelift](#)

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School received a much-needed facelift after 80 employees from 12 different organisations provided materials to carry out the work over a two-week period.

Among the many tasks achieved, communal areas were cleaned, walls and woodwork painted and 275 old coat hooks replaced with brightly coloured, matching ones. New plastic sheeting was also installed around busy places near banisters and the canteen, so they can be wiped clean more easily.

There were major improvements outside as well. Benches were given a new lease of life while planters were built out of fence posts that create a welcoming entrance to the building. The playground has had new long-lasting rubber surface laid to ensure that pupils are able to play in a safe environment.

This hugely impressive team effort was made possible through close collaboration between the various organisations working via East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) for Highways England. They include maintenance and response contractor Amey, design contractor Kier and 21 other suppliers.

Amey's Principal Operations Manager Katy Stephens, who was a key organiser of the event, said:

This was a great community involvement project which saw the many partners in EMAD really work together and get a brilliant result. Not only does this primary school in the heart of Kettering now look significantly improved but this was a wonderful opportunity for the various organisations in EMAD to further cement their working relationships. A great project which was an honour to take part in!

Highways England regional director, Catherine Brookes, joined colleagues in carrying out the facelift. She said:

We were delighted to get involved and do our bit to help the school. It's great to see organisations coming together like this to support the local community.

Fraser Donald, Headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, said:

I would just like to say a huge 'thank you' to Amey, Highways England and their suppliers for all their hard work, commitment and vision to our summer renovation project at school. The work was carried out to a high standard and I am so pleased with the fresh start they have given to all of our school family at St Thomas More. Thank you again for everything and please know that you are always welcome back – you are part of the family now!

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[News story: Dr Gillian Tully reappointed in key role for setting standards for forensic science](#)

The Home Office has today (14 November) announced the reappointment of Dr Gillian Tully as Forensic Science Regulator.

Dr Tully's term has been extended from 3 to 6 years with her contract now expiring on 16 November 2020.

Dr Tully was originally appointed for a 3-year term ending on 16 November 2017, and has spent over 25 years working in forensic science, including a 4-year period as Head of Research and Development for the Forensic Science Service.

The Forensic Science Regulator is an independent role responsible for establishing and enforcing quality standards for forensic science used in the investigation and prosecution of crime.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, said:

Dr Gillian Tully has demonstrated her experience, judgement and talent in the role to date and I congratulate her on her reappointment in this key role of setting the standards for forensic science.

Dr Gillian Tully:

I am pleased to have been reappointed to my role as Forensic Science Regulator. I look forward to overseeing the introduction of standards across the remaining areas of forensic science in the criminal justice sector over the next three years, and will seek to build on the quality improvements made to date.