

# 38th Universal Periodic Review of human rights: UK statement on Sierra Leone

World news story

The UK delivered the statement on Sierra Leone at the 38th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

The United Kingdom recognises Sierra Leone's progress on human rights issues since its 2016 review, most notably in the field of media freedom. We call on Sierra Leone to ensure these principles of freedom of expression are protected in all future legislation including potential legislation on digital space.

The UK welcomes President Bio's public commitment to abolish the death penalty. It is encouraging that Sierra Leone is taking tangible steps to abolish the death penalty from the statute books.

We recommend Sierra Leone:

1. Criminalise forced marriage and provide ongoing support to victims of forced marriage and victims of modern slavery;
2. Implement its public ambition to abolish the death penalty as soon as possible via promoting relevant legislation through parliament this year;
3. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.

Thank you.

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## New UK Government Covid testing centre opens in Glasgow

The UK Government has today, Wednesday 12 May, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at Glasgow Green Hockey Centre (G40 1HB).

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises eight drive through sites, 47 walk-through sites, 42 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all COVID testing and test processing outside of the NHS.

PCR tests must be booked in advance

at: [www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect](http://www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect) or by calling 119. People should only book a test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) or have been instructed to do so by a clinician or NHS contact tracer.

Lateral Flow Test Kits are also now available for pick up without an appointment at the majority of our local walk-in or drive-through test sites from 3.30pm each day. Tests can also be ordered online or by phone by calling 119. For more information and to order a test kit online, go to: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested in Scotland – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-getting-tested-in-scotland)

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of testing in Scotland, a programme which is vital to our recovery from this pandemic. Alongside the roll-out of UK Government-funded vaccines, testing is helping us to manage the virus, slow down the rate of transmission and protect communities.

I'd like to thank the public for continuing to do the right thing by coming forward to be tested if they show symptoms.

This new walk-through facility in Glasgow is the latest in our extensive network of testing centres supporting people in all parts of the UK.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Glasgow Green, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

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## Collaborative, professional and highly valued

### News story

In our latest client feedback exercise, GAD clients rated us 4.6 stars out of 5 for being highly valued.



Clients of the Government Actuary's Department (GAD), have shared their views

about the department in the latest [client engagement survey](#). We sent 229 survey invitations to 84 of our clients over the 12 months to March 2021.

In survey responses, more than 90% of respondents awarded GAD a rating of at least 4 stars out of 5 for being highly valued.

This year we supplemented the insights with qualitative feedback from 24 in-depth client interviews. Clients were asked which 3 words they'd use to describe GAD and findings were consistent with the survey comments. In response, GAD was described as collaborative, professional, helpful, insightful, proactive, influential and innovative.

## **Service and updates**

GAD strives to improve the quality and value of our professional services. In response to client feedback and as part of our ongoing commitment to improvements we are devising new ways of working. This includes implementing a new project management strategy to strengthen our management of work from initial scoping through to final delivery.

## **Important exercise**

In his comments about the survey results, Martin Clarke the Government Actuary said: "Feedback from our clients is vital for assessing our performance and helping us evolve to better meet their changing business needs.

"We are always seeking to improve. Our client survey provides valuable insights and allows us to evaluate our services objectively."

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## **[Preventing looming famine and alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people](#)**

Thank you very much, Mr President. It seems an opportune time to thank you both, Martin and Mark, for your indefatigable efforts over the last few years to alleviate the Yemeni people's suffering and to end this horrific conflict. You have our full support but, just as importantly, so do the teams working so hard with you.

Since Saudi Arabia's statement of support for a nationwide ceasefire, peace talks, and for the lifting of restrictions on Yemen's ports and Sana'a

airport, the Houthis' stated commitment to peace has been put to the test. As things stand, they are clearly failing this test.

By refusing to meet the SRSG in Muscat or allowing him to travel to Sana'a, the Houthis have passed up a vital opportunity to show they are ready to work towards peace. They say they are putting the humanitarian situation first, but their actions show they are playing for time to try to take more ground.

If the Houthis were serious about alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people, they would cease their offensive on Marib, which threatens to displace up to one million vulnerable displaced people, and they would remove their restrictions on humanitarian access, which are strangling the humanitarian response. If they were serious about protecting the future generation, they would stop recruiting children to fight and die on their front lines.

If the Houthis were serious about saving the lives of the most vulnerable, they would acknowledge the second wave of COVID sweeping across Yemen and accept COVAX vaccines. If they were serious about the long-term prosperity of the Yemeni people, they would give the UN mission the formal written assurances and permissions to assess and repair the FSO SAFER, to prevent an oil leak that would devastate Yemen's fishing and farming.

Regrettably, the Houthis have shown they are not serious about peace, or about ending the suffering of the Yemeni people. If this doesn't change, and change soon, this Council will need to consider stronger actions if we are to achieve peace in Yemen.

Mr President, all of our interests lie in a strong, prosperous Yemen, free from external interference and with an inclusive government. A nationwide ceasefire and Yemeni to Yemeni talks are the only way to achieve this. Until this is possible, we will continue doing all we can to prevent looming famine. We must continue to pressure the Yemeni parties to ensure the free flow of goods and commodities into and through Yemen, and ensure a well-funded UN humanitarian response. But we know that only a serious commitment to peace can banish the spectre of famine for good.

I wish all Yemenis a blessed Eid and I hope the next year brings them the security, stability and peace they deserve.

Thank you, Mr President.

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**Joint Statement by Embassies and High Commissions on upcoming Zambian**

# elections

World news story

Joint Statement by the Embassies and High Commissions of Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, UK, and the US Accredited to the Republic of Zambia.



As Friends of Zambian Democracy, we welcome the Zambian government's stated commitment to holding democratic and credible elections on 12 August 2021.

Specifically, we welcome assurances that the elections will be conducted in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia and in line with international standards, such as the Southern African Development Community Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. We look to all Zambians to commit themselves to the principles of democracy, good governance, rule of law, and the respect for human rights, as enshrined in the Zambian constitution.

This is the basis for upholding Zambia's longstanding ethos of "One Zambia, One Nation". As the election campaign begins, we encourage an electoral process that is free, fair, and absent of violence. All parties and candidates should be afforded equal rights and protections. The Zambian people have the right to express their will through freely cast ballots.

As fellow members of the global community of democracies, we stand side-by-

side with the Zambian people and look forward to this right being honoured, and to an election process that further strengthens and consolidates Zambia's parliamentary democracy.

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