

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

World news story

The UK delivered a statement on Namibia 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 commends Namibia's continued constitutional commitment to uphold human rights and tackle sexual and gender-based violence, but notes the high prevalence of violence against women.

We congratulate Namibia on its efforts in tackling human trafficking and encourage efforts to continue to increase public awareness of the issue.

We recommend that Namibia:

1. Enhance public education programmes on human trafficking and ensure sufficient resources to fully train law enforcement and judicial staff in support of the Combatting of Persons in Trafficking Act 2018.
2. Take steps to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence, including through funding women-led and women's rights organisations on the frontline and ensuring perpetrators are held to account.
3. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.

Thank you.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND HAS “MUCH TO BE PROUD OF” ON ANNIVERSARY OF GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND ACT**

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, has said that there is “so much for all of us to be proud of in modern day Northern Ireland” as the country marks the centenary of the Government of Ireland Act coming into effect.

The Act led to the formation of the United Kingdom as we know it today, and the UK Government is leading a programme of activity that has been designed in consultation with historians, cultural experts and the people of Northern Ireland to mark the Centenary year with respect and inclusivity.

[Her Majesty The Queen](#) and [Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#) both released statements marking the 100th anniversary of the Government of Ireland Act.

Reflecting on the significance of the 3 May 1921, the day when the Government of Ireland Act came into effect, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis said:

“Today marks an important milestone in Northern Ireland’s story. 100 years ago, the Government of Ireland Act came into force – creating Northern Ireland, and paving the way for the formation of the United Kingdom as we know it today.

“For me, and for the rest of the UK Government, it is a moment to reflect on Northern Ireland’s past – but more importantly it is also a chance to showcase everything that makes Northern Ireland the phenomenal place that it is today.

“There is so much for all of us to be proud of in modern day Northern Ireland – the people, the places and the products – the things that make Northern Ireland one of the greatest places to live, work and start a business in the entire world.

“And of course we are all so proud of those truly inspirational healthcare workers, the people who have been working tirelessly throughout the Covid pandemic across our emergency services, and particularly the health service, to keep us safe.

“As this year goes on, the Centenary programme will continue to mark this significant national anniversary. I hope that everyone in Northern Ireland

can engage with our schemes. Whether you take part in a Shared History Fund project, or secure a place on the Cultural Initiative, or help to plant a Centenary tree – thinking of our future and the environment – at a local school, or that you simply receive a letter bearing the Centenary postmark.

“There are so many fantastic events happening to celebrate Northern Ireland’s people, culture, traditions and enterprise throughout this Centenary year, so please do get involved in these great opportunities.

“A hundred years on, and Northern Ireland’s Story is still in the making.”

For more details of the NIO’s Centenary programme of activity, visit [www.ourstoryinthemaking.com](http://www.ourstoryinthemaking.com), which will be regularly updated throughout the Centenary year.

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## [G7 to boost girls’ education and women’s employment in recovery from Covid-19 pandemic](#)

G7 Foreign and Development Ministers meeting in London this week will invest \$15 billion in development finance over the next two years to help women in developing countries access jobs, build resilient businesses and respond to the devastating economic impacts of COVID-19.

They will also sign up to new global targets to get 40 million more girls into school and 20 million more girls reading by the age of 10 in low and lower middle income countries by 2026.

Educating girls is one of the smartest investments we can make to lift people out of poverty, grow economies, save lives, and build back better from Covid-19. A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live beyond the age of 5 years, twice as likely to attend school themselves – and 50% more likely to be immunised.

The \$15 billion in funding is for the 2X Challenge, a partnership between G7 Development Finance Institutions [DFIs] launched in 2018. It leverages funding from DFIs and Multilateral Development Banks to provide finance to female owned and staffed businesses or products or services that particularly benefit women, supporting female economic empowerment.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate and profound impact on women and girls, including losing precious school time, reduced access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services, a spike in gender-based violence, and increased risk of job loss.

Now, these fresh commitments by the world's leading democracies, driven by the UK, put gender equality at the heart of global co-operation to build back better from COVID-19.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Ensuring girls get 12 years of quality education and women can work and earn an income are some of the smartest investments we can make to change the world, transforming the fortunes not just of individuals, but whole communities and nations.

This year, as we build back better from the pandemic, the UK is putting girls' and women's rights at the heart of our G7 presidency, uniting countries that share our values so we shape a better path ahead.

The collective G7 agreement to meet girls' education targets comes ahead of the UK and Kenya co-hosted Global Education Summit in London in July, which will raise funds for the Global Partnership for Education.

The targets will be matched by the signing of the Girls' Education Political Declaration on Wednesday 5th May by G7 Foreign and Development Ministers, a bold new statement outlining the financial and policy commitments needed to achieve these aims.

The 2X Challenge – named after the multiplier effect of investing in women – has committed more than \$6bn of capital for investments that support women and girls in developing countries since it was launched in 2018.

The programme supports more women-owned businesses to thrive and increases access to better paid jobs with more flexible working. Projects supported under the scheme include PEG Africa, a solar power company providing home systems to customers in West Africa, which the UK's CDC has invested \$12.5 million in. As a result of the 2X Challenge, in Ghana the company has doubled the number of women in leadership positions from 22% to 44%.

Even before the pandemic, women in developing countries had significantly fewer economic opportunities than men and shouldered the majority of unpaid care work reducing their time for paid work. COVID-19 has compounded this, with new research showing \$1 trillion could be lost from global growth as female workers fall out of the workforce.

The G7 will also re-commit to collective action to defend and protect sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, scale up gender-based violence prevention and elimination, and ensure women's voices are included at local, national, and international decision-making in the COVID-19 recovery.

Foreign and Development Ministers from the G7 countries Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the US and the UK, plus the EU, are in London from today [Monday] for two days of talks on a range of issues, their first in-person meeting in two years. The Foreign Secretary has also invited

Australia, India, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, and the Chair of ASEAN to join parts of the meeting as guests.

Notes to editors:

- Development finance institutions are funded primarily by national governments and invest in developing countries and emerging markets to create jobs, boost growth and fight poverty. These institutions are designed to provide medium and long term investment. In the case of the 2X Challenge, the funding comes from G7 member states' DFIs, including , CDC (UK), Proparco (France), JICA (Japan), DFC (US), FinDev Canada (Canada), KfW (Germany) and CDP (Italy). These DFIs are funded through public money from G7 member states, and private funding in some cases, to invest in developing countries, and projects including the 2X Challenge. Other members of the 2X challenge include the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- G7 Ministers will set out the importance of the "3Es" – educating girls, empowering women, and ending violence against women and girls. In the G7 Foreign & Development communique, Ministers will commit to:

Educating Girls:

- The G7 will work in collaboration with developing country partners, multilateral institutions, civil society, and youth leaders, to tackle the barriers that stand in girls' way and empower girls to lead change including in peacebuilding and efforts to tackle the climate crisis. They will help mobilise the financial and technical resources needed get girls educated.
- The UK is partnering with Kenya and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing GPE 2021-2025 in London in July, urging world leaders to invest in education and improve access for girls. GPE is seeking up to \$5bn as a rolling target over five years to give 175 million children the opportunity to learn. A strong collective pledge from G7 countries would go a long way to achieving this.
- COVID-19 has also exacerbated the existing crisis in education. Even before the pandemic struck, nine out of 10 children in low income countries were unable to read a simple text by age 10 and two thirds of the world's illiterate adult population are female. Learning losses from COVID-19 are expected to equal the gains made by girls over the last two decades.

Empowering Women:

- The G7 is calling for the equal and active participation and leadership

of women and women's rights organisations at local, national, and international decision-making in the COVID-19 recovery. Despite women being at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, making up almost 70% of the health care workforce, they have been under-represented in leadership and decision-making processes.

- The G7 will launch the second phase of the 2X Challenge. The 2X Challenge is a global partnership, and its first phase was launched in 2018 by the G7 Development Finance Institutions to drive the investment industry to enable women in developing countries have greater economic participation.
- The G7 will also reaffirm its full commitment to the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of all individuals in recognition of the surge in high risk births, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, HIV infections and FGM during the pandemic.

Ending violence against women and girls:

- The G7 will commit to preventing, eliminating, and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) through scaling-up support and implementation of evidence-based, survivor-centred action.
- The G7 will reaffirm its support to the commitments on tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the aid sector made at the 2018 London Safeguarding Summit and through the 2019 DAC Recommendation on Ending SEAH.

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## [Limit on mourners at funerals to be removed](#)

- Legal limit on numbers of mourners at funerals to be removed in England at Step 3 of the roadmap
- Venues such as places of worship to set limits based on individual capacity
- All organisers must continue to be Covid secure and follow social distancing rules

Families and friends will shortly be able to pay their respects to loved ones in greater numbers, with numerical limits on funerals to be removed.

After careful consideration, the legal limit of 30 mourners will be removed as part of Step 3 of the roadmap, to take place from 17 May at the earliest. As the Prime Minister has said, the current data does not suggest any need to alter the dates at which restrictions will next be eased.

Instead, the number of people who can attend a funeral will be determined by how many people the venue, such as the relevant place of worship or funeral home, can safely accommodate with social distancing. This includes both indoor and outdoor venues. Capacities of venues will vary, but many will allow significantly more than 30 people to attend.

Limits for other life or commemorative events at Step 3, such as weddings and wakes, are expected to remain as set out in the roadmap.

Following Step 2 on 12 April, hospital admissions and cases of severe illness are in line with modelling provided by scientific experts, both when the roadmap was first published and ahead of Step 2.

Boosted by a successful vaccination rollout, with over 48 million doses given, the public's efforts to suppress the virus are working.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The British people have made huge sacrifices throughout the pandemic to protect the NHS and save lives, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the deeply painful restrictions on the numbers attending funerals.

Losing a loved one has been incredibly hard during the pandemic and I am pleased we are now in a position, thanks to everyone's continued efforts and the rollout of the vaccine, to remove these limits and allow more friends and family to come together and pay their respects.

I look forward to working with faith leaders responsible for places of worship, and those who manage venues such as funeral homes, to introduce the new arrangements in a way that continues to keep people safe.

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## **UK sends further life-saving support to India**

- The UK will send 1,000 more ventilators for use in India's hospitals
- The Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Adviser and NHS staff have given help and advice to their Indian counterparts

- Fresh assistance follows medical relief sent by the Government last week and a surge in support from the British people to India
- On Tuesday the Prime Minister will hold a virtual meeting with Indian Prime Minister Modi to discuss deepening cooperation between the UK and India

India's fight against a surge in coronavirus cases will be reinforced by new UK Government support announced by the Prime Minister today. 1,000 ventilators will be sent from the UK's surplus supply to Indian hospitals to help the most severe Covid cases.

This is in addition to 200 ventilators, 495 oxygen concentrators and 3 oxygen generation units the UK announced we were sending to India last week.

Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Patrick Vallance have also spoken to their Indian counterparts to provide advice, insight and expertise to the Indian healthcare system as it deals with the world's worse surge in Covid levels.

NHS England is also establishing a clinical advisory group led by Chief People Officer Prerana Issar to support India's Covid response. The group will work with Indian institutions such as the All India Institute of Medical Services to share experience on managing Covid outbreaks. The group will include researchers in public and global health, alongside nursing and other health professionals who have experience of the Indian healthcare system.

In a powerful demonstration of what Indian Prime Minister Modi has called the 'living bridge' between our countries, over the last week British people have come to the support of India in huge numbers. Businesses, civil society and the wider public have responded to appeals for help and launched funding drives.

This includes the British Asian Trust's 'Oxygen for India' emergency appeal, which is raising funds for oxygen concentrators to be rapidly deployed to Indian hospitals. The BAT appeal, which has been personally backed by the Prince of Wales, has raised more than £1.5m in the last week.

Virgin Atlantic also flew 200 boxes of oxygen concentrators to Delhi on Saturday, after partnering with Khalsa Aid. Further cargo space will be given free of charge on 6 flights to India in the next week, in association with The Red Cross.

India has also provided support to the UK throughout the coronavirus pandemic. As the 'pharmacy of the world' the country has kept its borders open to supply the UK with vital medicine and PPE – exporting over 11 million face masks and 3 million packets of paracetamol over the course of 2020.

On Tuesday the Prime Minister will hold a virtual meeting with Prime Minister Modi to agree a huge range of commitments to deepen cooperation between the UK and India, including on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:



The terrible images we have seen in India in recent weeks are all the more powerful because of the close and enduring connection between the people of the UK and India.

I am deeply moved by the surge of support the British people have provided to the people of India and am pleased the UK Government has been able to play our part in providing life-saving assistance.

The UK will always be there for India in its time of need.

The world is safer and stronger because of work between the UK and India. The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, for example, was developed in the UK, is currently being produced in the millions by India's Serum Institute and will be distributed to the world at cost through COVAX.

It is those shared values of openness and the pursuit of knowledge and scientific advancement for the betterment of our societies that lie at the heart of the relationship between the UK and India. During his call with Prime Minister Modi the Prime Minister will emphasise the importance of working with India to promote our shared values.

India is the largest democracy in the world, a fellow Commonwealth country and in June Prime Minister Modi will travel to the UK to attend the G7 Summit as a guest – one of four world leaders invited to join the Summit of leading democracies.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

This support will help urgently meet some of India's acute needs, particularly oxygen for patients. We are determined to help our Indian friends in their hour of need.

We need to all work together to defeat Covid-19. No one is safe until we are all safe.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

As a close friend of India, we have all felt the harrowing scenes and are determined to do all we can. Only a few months ago we felt the pressure of the pandemic here in the UK. This virus attacks all of us and in the battle against coronavirus, we're all on the same side.

This additional support will provide more capacity and expertise to help save lives and support India's healthcare system. We will continue to work closely with the Indian government during this immensely challenging time.