

Ending the use of sexual violence in conflict

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to our briefers for their compelling and informative testimonies. The UK is proud to be a partner in this vital work.

Sexual violence is a feature of conflict in countries around the world.

We are particularly concerned about the credible and widely corroborated reports of rape and sexual violence in Tigray. We urge Ethiopia to work closely with the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to address this.

Caroline Atim's briefing reminded us, too, of the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on women and girls in South Sudan. There have been ambitious commitments but little peace dividend for women and girls in South Sudan. We look to South Sudan to expedite the establishment of the Hybrid Court, and to partner with the UN to deliver justice.

In these and other post-conflict situations, survivors carry the effects of their trauma, while perpetrators most often walk free.

So first, I want to underline the UK's commitment to tackling sexual violence in conflict. We are the only country with a Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, with a dedicated team and funding.

Since 2012, we have committed over £48 million to supporting survivors, tackling stigma and reducing impunity, supporting projects across 29 countries.

Second, I want to emphasise, as we've heard from our speakers, the importance of a survivor-centred and human rights based approach, which prioritises the rights and needs of survivors. That includes the right to accessible sexual and reproductive healthcare services and access to justice, which take into account the specific needs of victims and survivors living with disabilities, LGBTQI individuals and other at-risk groups.

The UK has committed £1.3 million to the Global Survivors Fund, run by Dr Mukwege, which works to ensure survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have access to reparations and other forms of redress in conflict and post-conflict countries.

In the last year, the UK has also launched two key tools to support survivors.

First, last June, Lord Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Representative, launched the draft Murad Code for global consultations. This is a code of behaviour for those collecting evidence, to respect survivors' rights, and

ensure investigation is safer, more ethical, and more effective.

Second, last November, Lord Ahmad inaugurated the Declaration of Humanity by faith and belief leaders, which calls for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and denounces the stigma faced by survivors, including by children born of rape.

Finally, alongside supporting survivors, we must do all we can to ensure accountability for the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. As the SRSG said, zero tolerance cannot have zero consequences.

The recent UN Security Council Resolution 2564 sanctions against Sultan Zabin demonstrated that the international community can and will take action against perpetrators of torture and sexual violence in conflict.

But there is more we can do to strengthen accountability for these crimes in UN-supported international and hybrid criminal courts and tribunals so that perpetrators are justly prosecuted.

As we've heard, there are millions today who are affected by conflict-related sexual violence – survivors, children born of sexual violence, families, entire communities. I thank the Presidency for convening this debate and our briefers for highlighting the problem and what can be done. I assure you of our continuing support to end the use of sexual violence in conflict and as a weapon of war.

Thank you.

NATO North Atlantic Council support for Afghanistan

News story

The UK will continue to work closely with the US and our NATO Allies and partners to support a secure and stable Afghanistan.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

“The UK stands with NATO and the people of Afghanistan to support a more stable, peaceful future for the country, and the wider region. We will support an orderly departure of our forces, whilst building up Afghanistan’s capacity for self-governance, and continuing counter-terrorism support – to protect the gains made over the last 20 years.”

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[The need for all parties to work to address the legacies of conflict in Kosovo](#)

Thank you, Mr President. And thank you to Special Representative Tanin for his briefing. Welcome to Minister for Foreign Affairs Selakovic and Foreign Minister Gervalla and thank you for your statements.

Firstly, we want to applaud Kosovo’s authorities and the people of Kosovo on the handling of the recent Parliamentary elections, and congratulate them on the appointment of a new President, both reflecting the strong will of the people. The smooth conduct of the elections, the certification of the final results, and the successful formation of a new government shows just how far Kosovo has come and the strength of its democratic institutions. We note in particular that Kosovo has elected its second female President and that women now represent 6 out of 15 Cabinet Ministers, and 43 out of 120 members of the Assembly – real progress in gender representation that we hope will set an example to others in the region.

We note the concerns raised in the report about the difficulties experienced by candidates running in opposition to Serbian List candidates in some areas. These concerns were also reflected in the conclusions of the UK’s own election monitoring mission. It is imperative that Kosovo Serbs have the

opportunity to vote for a variety of candidates and to participate in credible elections.

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I welcome the formation of the new government in Kosovo and we look forward to a period of much-needed stability at a challenging time when Kosovo, alongside other nations, battles the health and economic threat of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, we are very pleased to note the commencement of vaccination programmes in Kosovo following the arrival of the first vaccine doses through the COVAX facility. We praise the work of UNMIK in assisting with the fight against Covid-19, particularly addressing the needs of minority communities through language resources. UK-funded work with UN agencies in Kosovo is further supporting the pandemic response.

We also welcome PM Kurti's commitment to addressing rule of law challenges in Kosovo and, as ever, stand ready to support Kosovo in this important work.

The new government's popular mandate brings further opportunities for Kosovo to make progress. This includes commitment to the EU-facilitated Dialogue with Serbia under EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajcak. We encourage Kosovo and Serbia to continue working constructively towards a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement that will benefit the people of both countries.

As part of this process, it is essential that all parties work hard to address legacies of the conflict. The work of the KSC is a significant part of this, but it is also important that both parties ensure justice for victims of all crimes committed during the 1998/1999 conflict. This includes continued efforts to prosecute the perpetrators; support victims, including those of conflict related sexual violence; and work together on resolving issues such as missing persons that continue to impact the daily life of families in Kosovo and Serbia.

Once again we call upon all those in positions of authority to refrain from inflammatory and derogatory language. Such rhetoric is disrespectful to the memories of the victims of conflict and their families and does not contribute to the reconciliation that is strongly in the interests of all people of the region.

Kosovo has made huge progress since 1999 when UNSCR 1244 was passed. UNMIK has played an important role in helping Kosovo to develop into a stable and inclusive democracy. But the conditions on the ground almost 22 years since UNMIK was founded are completely different. It is therefore time for a review of UNMIK's role and responsibilities to ensure that its mandate remains relevant and the Mission operates efficiently.

Finally, we welcome the appointment of Michael Davenport as the new head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and wish him luck. We welcome continued close coordination of efforts between UNMIK and OMIK, notably on human and minority community rights.

Surge testing to be deployed in Finchley, Barnet

Press release

Additional testing will take place in N3 in Finchley, Barnet, where a confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.



Working in partnership with the local authority, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing in a targeted area within N3 in Finchley, Barnet, where a confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa has been found. Genomic sequencing results indicate that this case is not linked to the cluster identified in South London.

Everybody aged 16 years and over in this area who is contacted and invited to take part is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern. This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period in order to determine the route of transmission. The confirmed case is self-isolating and their contacts have been identified.

By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

People with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone so they can get tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to them at home. Those without symptoms should [visit the local authority website](#) for more information.

People in this area should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing

alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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Government sets provisional fishing catch limits for 2021

Press release

Provisional fishing catch limits reflect progress made in negotiations to this point.



The Government has today (14 April 2021) set [provisional catch limits](#) for UK-EU shared fish stocks for the remainder of 2021, or until an agreement is reached with the EU.

Today's announcement follows the [Government's commitment to extend provisional catch limits](#) for the rest of the year if agreement on fishing opportunities with the EU had not been reached by 14 April. The EU recently announced their intention to extend their provisional catch limits until 31 July.

The UK remains committed to working closely with the EU on the sustainable management of shared stocks and to seeking an agreement on outstanding fisheries issues for 2021. If catch limits are agreed with the EU then these will be updated accordingly.

The provisional catch limits for UK vessels set today are consistent with the approach and new quota shares outlined in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. While differences remain between the two parties, these catch limits reflect progress in negotiations up to this point.

The full details of the new provisional catch limits for 2021 can be found in the [updated provisional determination](#).

The determination also includes footnotes and special conditions for UK vessels which set provisional rules on use of quota and allows for quotas to be transferred between certain fishing areas (inter-area flexibilities). These will remain subject to review and may be adjusted if appropriate.

The exchange or 'swap' of fishing quota is a usual feature of annual discussions between coastal States. The UK remains open to exchanges with the EU for 2021 and both parties will continue to explore the benefits of these swaps for their fishing industries.

The Government has also set out how additional fishing quota gained since leaving the EU will be allocated to the English fishing fleet. Further details on the new allocation method is outlined in the [Government response to the English additional quota consultation](#) published today.

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