

UK announces first sanctions under new global human rights regime

Forty-nine individuals and organisations involved in some of the most notorious human rights violations and abuses in recent years have been designated for sanctions under a [powerful new regime](#) established today by the UK, the Foreign Secretary has announced.

The individuals and organisations are the first wave of [designations under the new regime](#), with further sanctions expected in the coming months.

From today, the ground-breaking global regime means the UK has new powers to stop those involved in serious human rights abuses and violations from entering the country, channelling money through UK banks, or profiting from our economy.

The measures will target individuals and organisations, rather than nations.

It is the first time that the UK has sanctioned people or entities for human rights violations and abuses under a UK-only regime, and will allow the UK to work independently with allies such as the US, Canada, Australia and the European Union.

The UK's first wave of sanctions under this new regime targeted:

- 25 Russian nationals involved in the mistreatment and death of auditor Sergei Magnitsky, who uncovered widespread Russian corruption by a group of Russian tax and police officials
- 20 Saudi nationals involved in the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi
- 2 high-ranking Myanmar military generals involved in the systematic and brutal violence against the Rohingya people and other ethnic minorities
- 2 organisations involved in the forced labour, torture and murder that takes place in North Korea's gulags

Underlining the UK's position as a global force for good, this new regime showcases our commitment to the rules-based international system and to standing up for victims of human rights violations and abuses around the world.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, said:

Today we're designating 49 people and organisations for responsibility in some the worst human rights abuses in recent memory.

This is a demonstration of Global Britain's commitment to acting as a force for good in the world.

Following his [announcement in Parliament](#), the Foreign Secretary will meet with Sergei Magnitsky's widow and son Natalia and Nikita, along with his friend and colleague Bill Browder, at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

The regime will allow the UK to target individuals and organisations around the world unlike conventional geographic sanctions regime, which only target a country.

It could also include those who commit unlawful killings perpetrated against journalists and media workers, or violations and abuses motivated on the grounds of religion or belief.

A special unit will consider the use of future sanctions, with teams across the department monitoring human rights issues.

They will ensure targets under the landmark regime will have to meet stringent legal tests before the UK decides to designate, ensuring the sanctions are robust and powerful.

The suite of measures can also apply to those who facilitate, incite, promote, or support these violations/abuses, as well as those who financially profit from human rights violations and abuses.

The UK will continue to utilise a range of tools to tackle serious human rights violations and abuses around the world, including the UN and EU multilateral sanctions regimes.

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UN Human Rights Council 44: Statement for Interactive Dialogue with UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women

The United Kingdom commends the work of the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls on protecting women's human rights in the changing world of work. Addressing this issue is critical as societies respond to, and recover from, COVID-19.

When women have access to opportunities for economic participation, the benefits extend far beyond individual girls and women to societies and

economies as a whole. Therefore, we must make women's economic empowerment and women's rights, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, central to the global COVID-19 recovery.

Education is the key to unlocking economic growth and sustainable development. That is why we reaffirm our commitment to 12 years of quality education for every girl everywhere.

We welcome the Working Group's report which identifies barriers to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work such as the persistent gender pay gap – the UK upholds our commitment to equal pay for equal work. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we must accelerate action to tackle these obstacles.

We would welcome advice from the Working Group on how Member States can best support their work to counter a global roll-back on women's rights.

Thank you.

[Prosecution of journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation: UK statement](#)

World news story

Delivered by Nicola Murray, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the OSCE Permanent Council on 2 July 2020.



The UK shares the concern expressed by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media regarding the ongoing prosecution of Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation. Ms Prokopyeva faces a charge of “publicly justifying terrorism” which can carry a prison sentence of up to seven years.

Ms Prokopyeva, a journalist with Radio Ekho Moskv, had been commenting on a terrorist attack in October 2018. As the RFOM said in his statement of 17 March this year, Ms Prokopyeva's comments, however critical, had nothing to do with the promotion or support of terrorism, and we echo his call for the charges to be dropped.

We note this prosecution takes place in the context of ongoing pressure on the few remaining domestic independent media outlets in Russia and continued impunity for those who have committed violent crimes against journalists. We remind the Russian delegation of our many commitments on the right to freedom of expression, including, as set out in Moscow 1991 "the right of the media to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions".

As States agreed, any restriction in the exercise of this right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards. We reiterate that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government, and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Published 6 July 2020

[Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee UK-US Data Access Agreement](#)

News story

Independent Investigatory Powers Commissioner will provide oversight of the UK's use of the UK-US Data Access Agreement.



The Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC), Sir Brian Leveson, will be responsible for providing independent oversight of the UK's use of the new UK-US Data Access Agreement when it comes into use later this year, the government announced today.

The agreement, a world-first, will allow certain UK public authorities, including law enforcement, to request electronic data directly from US telecommunications operators through a court-approved order or a warrant, speeding up investigations and the prosecution of serious criminals.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

My priority is to give law enforcement the powers they need to go after criminals and better protect victims. This landmark Agreement will dramatically speed up the investigation and prosecution of the most serious offenders.

I am grateful to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner for providing this essential independent oversight of the UK's use of the Agreement.

As part of the agreement, both the UK and the US are required to ensure that the agencies which use the agreement maintain high standards of data protection and privacy safeguards.

The UK government has therefore set out in law that the IPC shall keep the compliance of UK agencies with the Agreement under review, providing independent oversight to help ensure that it is being used in accordance with its terms.

The IPC provides independent oversight and authorisation of the use of investigatory powers by intelligence agencies, police forces and other public authorities, reflecting the UK's international reputation for transparency and the protection of human rights.

The UK/US Data Access Agreement completed its ratification in Parliament earlier this year. This month, the agreement will also complete its scrutiny process in the US Congress – another significant milestone in bringing the agreement into use.

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UK statement to the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees High Level Meeting

High Commissioner, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by welcoming the Support Platforms launched at the Global Refugee Forum, including the regional platforms for Afghan Refugees. We are

interested in the Core Group of States, and wish to hear further about the role they will play and the proposed timeline. We are willing to offer our political and facilitation support.

We note that the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees will support the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees, which must be done in conditions of dignity and safety. It is essential that any process outlines the favourable conditions for returns, including economic opportunity, security, and access to health and education, and assesses that these have been met. The challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for Afghan refugees and host communities alike.

The UK is committed to supporting the voluntary, safe and dignified return of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan. We welcome the work that UNHCR is doing in those countries to support host governments and continue to provide substantial support through IOM, to offer registration and assistance for the most vulnerable portion of those returning from Iran and Pakistan. The UK is one of the only countries providing resettlement opportunities to Afghan migrants from Iran this year, hoping to resettle up to 100 refugees.

We welcome the essential work that UNHCR and international non-governmental organisations, including Relief International and the Norwegian Refugee Council, are doing with the Iranian authorities to ensure the resilience of vulnerable Afghan communities. We appreciate the support that the Government of Iran provides to its Afghan community, and are open to exploring opportunities for assistance.

We recognise the willingness of the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to co-operate on the orderly, voluntary and principled return of Afghan refugees for whom repatriation to Afghanistan is a viable option. In line with the aims of the regional platform, UK assistance to Pakistan is helping deliver education to host and refugee children alike.

The UK has invested in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, working with host and migrant populations to ensure that all children can be immunised. We harmonised this with our polio programme in Afghanistan to ensure that all children in both countries, and those moving between them, are immunised. We also sought to establish vaccination sites in areas that migrant Afghans are known to travel through. Our polio campaigns have been paused due to COVID-19, but we hope they will be resumed shortly.

The UK remains strongly committed to Afghanistan, proving £210 million in humanitarian assistance over a five year period to 2024. In the long-term, this will help to establish conducive conditions for returns by supporting resilience for returnees and displaced people at the community level, as well as targeting those areas of the country with the greatest potential for high numbers of returns from Iran and Pakistan.

Thank you.