



**Foreign, Commonwealth
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Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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29 July 2022

Dear Tom,

I was pleased to appear before the Foreign Affairs Committee on 28 June, along with Sir Philip Barton (Permanent Under-Secretary) and Kumar Iyer (DG Economics, Science and Technology). During the session, we agreed to follow-up on a number of topics.

When will the FCDO hire the last person on old terms and conditions?

A single set of terms and conditions will be offered for all FCDO roles advertised after 1 August 2022.

When did the Foreign Secretary last raise human rights with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Countries?

James Cleverly (then Minister for Middle East, North Africa and North America) and I met foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Secretary General of the GCC at Chevening on 20 December 2021. A wide range of issues were discussed, including human rights.

The UK has a strong record of protecting human rights and promoting our values globally. We regularly encourage Gulf States to uphold international human rights obligations. Our close relationship with Gulf counterparts allows us to raise sensitive human rights issues, in private and in public. Our views, including our opposition to the use of the death penalty, are well known.

I have enclosed a list of recent Ministerial engagements with GCC countries.

How many staff were deployed to work on the Ukraine response, from where, and were any areas deprioritised?

As I set out in my letter in March to the then-Chancellor the invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed the world in which we are operating, with economic and security impacts being felt both internationally and in the UK.

Following Russia's invasion, we deployed over 840 staff to work on our response, including staff surged from across the FCDO and those whose existing roles were adapted to focus on this issue. We subsequently aligned our workforce to emerging pressures on account of the situation in

Ukraine, and the priorities set out in my Mansion House speech. This included a restructure of Directors General, and agreeing workforce funding allocations for 2022-23.

At the outset of the FCDO's Ukraine response, staff were surged from our Directorate crisis lists. Over time, as our response expanded, we drew on additional staff, including from our overseas network and some country-based staff. Each DG area was asked to contribute, based on their size, previous contribution, the next three months' priority deliverables and the direction of travel in workforce allocations for 2022-23.

Our decisions took account of a strategic workforce planning exercise in summer 2021, which identified areas where we needed to enhance capability and resources. The FCDO's initial response on "Civil Service 2025" has made clear my commitment to driving radical, creative reform of the public sector, while recognising that we must have the people we need to deliver the Government's international agenda.

What additional resources had the FCDO allocated to the British High Commission Kigali and how many Home Office officials are deployed?

There are currently 21 UK-based (UKB) staff positions at the British High Commission (BHC) in Kigali, including one Home Office official. The Home Office are recruiting additional staff to support delivery of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEPD) with Rwanda. The FCDO has not increased the number of UKB staff in Kigali, but has reviewed and reallocated portfolios in order to support the cross-government prioritisation of the MEDP.

BHC Kigali led initial conversations with the Government of Rwanda regarding the MEPD. Since then, the FCDO has supported the Home Office in negotiations and facilitated virtual discussions and visits by Home Office officials.

When will the FCDO publish the China Strategy?

Work on the Integrated Review China sub-strategy has been underway since the publication of the Integrated Review. My officials and I have been closely involved in shaping this strategy to respond to the geopolitical implications of a more assertive China, and to equip the UK for the challenge of China as a systemic competitor.

We have not committed to publishing this strategy once completed, and it remains the case that we do not publish National Security Council strategies on China or other issues. I will of course continue to keep Parliament informed of our approach towards China, as we have done since the publication of the Integrated Review.

Why hasn't the UK sanctioned the Sudanese Central Reserve Police?

We remain concerned at the continued violent repression of demonstrations in Sudan, in which at least 114 protestors have been killed since the military coup in October 2021. We have repeatedly condemned the actions of the Sudanese security forces, who include the Central Reserve Police, and we continue to press the Sudanese military rulers to allow for peaceful protests.

Strong monitoring and reporting on human rights across Sudan is vital and we welcome the work of the UN Expert on Human Rights in Sudan, whose mandate we helped to renew this month. We are also considering how we can increase pressure on the security forces to end violence, including the use of sanctions. However, it would not normally be appropriate to speculate about sanctions targets, as to do so could reduce the impact of sanctions.

Does the Government want to amend international law on mercenaries?

Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1977 provides that mercenaries are not entitled to be treated as combatants or prisoners of war. The UK and 174 other states have ratified Additional Protocol I and given effect to it in domestic law. The UK is not a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries 1989, which has been ratified by only 37 states.

UK law focusses on the activities of UK citizens abroad, which may be prosecuted in the UK where UK law makes such provision, for example for certain crimes such as murder and sexual abuse of children committed overseas. The International Criminal Court Act 2001 and International Criminal Court (Scotland) Act 2001 provide jurisdiction to prosecute genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by British nationals either in or outside the United Kingdom. These legal provisions would enable British nationals accused of committing such crimes overseas while engaging in mercenary activity to be prosecuted in the UK. As such the UK is not currently considering any revision to the existing laws.

Why hasn't the UK sanctioned the former head of Evin Prison, Iran, unlike the EU?

The former head of Evin prison, Gholamreza Ziyayi, was sanctioned by the EU in April 2021. All relevant factors are taken into account when deciding whether to pursue potential designations. The UK keeps potential targets under review, guided by the evidence and objectives of the relevant sanctions regime and our wider foreign policy objectives. The UK continues to work with our international partners to encourage Iran to comply with international human rights law and to respect human rights, including through diplomatic engagement with the Iranian Government, public diplomacy, action in multilateral fora including the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council, support for the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Iran, and by imposing sanctions on human rights violators.

We made tackling arbitrary detention a priority for our G7 presidency, coordinating firm action to deter the practice of arbitrary detention. We were a leading proponent of the discussions which resulted in the agreement and launch of Canada's Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations in February 2021. The UK has designated 78 individuals and one entity under the Iran (Sanctions) (Human Rights) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and, while it would not normally be appropriate to speculate about future designations as to do so could reduce their impact, I can assure the Committee that we continue to keep all potential designations under close review.

What measures have been put in place to improve the FCDO's atrocity prevention capabilities?

The Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM) is creating a dedicated hub for prevention to design and test a comprehensive approach to upstream conflict and conflict-related atrocity prevention. This will include testing and establishing an approach to, and dedicated support for, monitoring, evaluation and learning which will be used to measure impact in pilot countries and support learning across the FCDO.

Lessons learned from the violence witnessed in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017 helped to inform decision-making, including on improving information flows on atrocity risks, and Myanmar's Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) has been updated to include a specific recognition of the risk of identity-based violence and mass atrocities. Atrocity prevention is now central to the UK Embassy's strategy in Yangon, with a dedicated human rights and atrocity prevention officer, and is an explicit part of my strategic objectives on Myanmar.

How is the UK engaging with small island Pacific states?

The Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) is a new initiative between the UK, US, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and our Pacific partners. It will help better coordinate our approach and support the Pacific Island Countries in line with the Pacific Islands Forum's upcoming 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. This will ensure that our support is properly informed by what Pacific Islands Countries themselves need, and that our governments have stronger and regular engagement on Pacific issues and priorities. The countries will continue to work together in partnership as plans for PBP develop.

Has HMA Tripoli met Abdul Hamid Dabaiba and Fathi Bashagha?

HMA Tripoli regularly speaks to a range of Libyan political actors including the Government of National Unity (GNU) interim PM Abdul Hamid Dabaiba, whom she last met on 26 June, and Government of National Stability (GNS) designate PM Fathi Bashagha, whom she last spoke to on 19 May. Beyond HMA engagement, Director Middle East and North Africa Directorate in the FCDO also met Bashagha on 23 June.

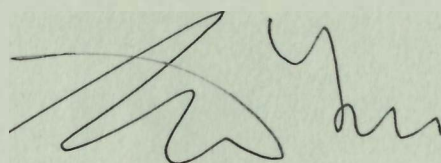
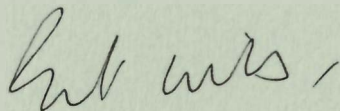
Recent engagement with GCC countries on human rights

Saudi Arabia

- On 26 October 2021, Lord Ahmad, the Minister responsible for human rights spoke to Dr Awwad al-Awwad, President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission. Lord Ahmad raised his concerns regarding the use of the death penalty in the Kingdom, enquiring specifically into the cases of Abdullah al-Howaiti and Mohammad al-Faraj (both believed to be minors at the time of their crimes). They also discussed the possibility of extending labour law reforms to domestic workers and trial access for international observers.
- The Saudi Justice Minister visited the UK from 24-7 January 2022. Lord Ahmad discussed justice-themed human rights concerns, including international trial access, Saudi justice reforms, the death penalty and three priority human rights cases with the Minister. [For awareness: cases discussed were Muhammad al-Faraj, Hassan Farhan al-Maliki and Hussain Abu al-Khair]
- Lord Ahmad visited Saudi Arabia from 6-7 February 2022 to advance UK strategic engagement on Human Rights. Key policy areas included: promoting FoRB, lobbying on individual HR cases of concern, Afghanistan and supporting justice reforms.
- On 23 May 2022, Minister Milling raised recent executions, including executions of 12 March, with the Saudi Ambassador to the UK. During the meeting, Minister Milling raised the case of Abdullah Al-Howaiti.

Bahrain

- Officials and ministers have regular discussions with senior Bahraini counterparts on human rights, including most recently, in June, when Minister Milling co-chaired the UK-Bahrain Joint Working Group with the Bahraini Foreign Minister, when Minister Milling travelled to Bahrain. As well as in July, when Lord Ahmad met with the Bahrain Foreign Minister.



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