



**Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office**

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH
Tel: 0207 008 5000

Email:
fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/fcdo

Alicia Kearns MP
Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

15 November 2022

Dear Alicia,

I was pleased to appear before the Foreign Affairs Committee on 14 November, alongside Sir Philip Barton (Permanent Under-Secretary). During the session, I agreed to follow up on a number of topics.

Roman Abramovich frozen funds

The Committee asked for information on how the frozen Abramovich funds are being managed. An independent foundation is being established by humanitarian experts to manage and distribute the funds from the sale of Chelsea FC for humanitarian purposes in Ukraine. The foundation is being set up by Mike Penrose, former executive director of UNICEF UK. There are strict reporting requirements associated with any payments to anyone involved in establishing the foundation.

I can reassure the Committee that those involved in setting up the foundation are not associates of Roman Abramovich or other designated persons.

Mr Bryant also asked why we can't use DEC to disburse the funds. In a statement announcing the sale and in subsequent statements, Mr Abramovich stated the proceeds of the sale would be used to establish a foundation for the benefit of all the victims of the war in Ukraine.

Any movement of the proceeds requires an application from Mr Abramovich to do so, as the proceeds are not Government funds. The government is open to any application for the proceeds to be used for humanitarian purposes in Ukraine, but as you would expect, we must closely scrutinise the details of any proposal to maintain the integrity of the sanctions regime.

Raising human rights with Gulf countries

The Committee asked for a list of meetings when I and other Ministers had raised human rights with counterparts in Gulf Countries, and whether we had raised the murder of Jamal Khashoggi with Saudi Arabia.

As you will know, there are two FCDO human rights priority countries in the Gulf: Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

In terms of Saudi Arabia, no aspect of our relationship with the Kingdom prevents us from speaking frankly about human rights. We regularly raise concerns with the Saudi authorities through diplomatic channels, including Ministers, our Ambassador, and the British Embassy in Riyadh.

The FCDO Minister responsible for Human Rights (Lord Ahmad) raised concerns relating to freedom of expression, including individual cases, with the Saudi Ambassador on 25 August. The former Prime Minister raised human right concerns during his visit to the Kingdom in March.

I had a call with the Saudi Foreign Minister on 26 October where we discussed Russia/Ukraine and regional security.

The former Foreign Secretary raised the murder of Jamal Khashoggi during his visit to Riyadh in March 2020. We have consistently set out our grave concerns - both publicly and privately.

Claudia Uruchurtu

The Committee requested further information on potential escalatory steps, including sanctions, that the UK is considering in the case of Claudia Uruchurtu in Mexico. As you are aware, we do not publicly speculate on future sanctions designations. We continue to follow the case of Claudia Uruchurtu closely. We have raised it with the authorities many times, urging action, including with Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard and with the National Search Commission. British Embassy Officials will also be attending court proceedings later this month to help ensure transparency in investigatory and judicial processes and keep international interest on the case. Human rights violations in Mexico are worryingly high, and the British Embassy is currently establishing a bilateral UK-Mexico Human Rights Dialogue. This will provide us with a more formal mechanism through which we will be able to raise concerns and urge action.

Arms exports to Taiwan

The UK's approach to export licensing for Taiwan has not changed. The UK operates one of the most transparent export licensing systems in the world, publishing quarterly and annual statistics on all our export licensing decisions, including details of export licences granted, refused and revoked, including those to Taiwan. Quarterly statistics published by the Export Control Joint Unit earlier in the year show that the UK has not ceased issuing arms export licences to Taiwan. All applications are considered on a case by case basis against the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. Licences for exports of controlled goods will only be granted where consistent with the Criteria.

The UK's longstanding policy on Taiwan has not changed: we have no diplomatic relations with Taiwan but a strong, unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties.

The latest statistics can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>

UK training of Chinese police and security services

The Committee requested further information about whether the UK is training Chinese police or security services.

The MOD have responded to a number of parliamentary questions regarding training of military personnel, confirming no training is currently offered to Chinese service personnel and there are no plans to offer any in the future. The decision to cease all MOD provided training of Chinese service personnel was taken in December 2020, in response to China's continued breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration caused by the 2020 National Security Law. The UK has never provided training that contained any sensitive or classified information and it did not compromise the Official Secrets Act.

I am aware of concerns raised by a report from Freedom from Torture regarding a British Council partnership with London Policing College (LPC). This project was part of a regional programme that included efforts to reduce human rights violations and other malpractice through better policing. Neither the Xinjiang Policing College, nor the People's Public Security University of China participated in the project, and no funds were distributed to any overseas institutions. The LPC have now ceased all programme partnerships in China.

Huang Xueqin

The Committee asked about a Chevening scholar who was detained in China. The UK Government has repeatedly raised our concerns directly with the Chinese authorities over the detention of journalist Huang Xueqin (known as 'Sophia'), who was on her way to the UK to take up a place at Sussex University as a Chevening Scholar. Lord Ahmad tweeted about Huang's case on 2 November, stressing that "nobody should be detained for reporting or campaigning". We remain in touch with Sussex University on her case.

Chinese companies subject to controls

The Committee asked about the number of Chinese companies subject to UK controls. UK export controls operate differently from US export controls, and we do not publish an Entity List. However, as with all destinations, the UK's export control regime applies to all firms exporting items on the Strategic Export Control Lists to China. In May 2020 China was also added to the list of destinations subject to the Military End-Use Control, which applies to non-listed items. This gives the Government increased powers to prevent exports to China that might be used to facilitate human rights violations or pose a threat to national security.

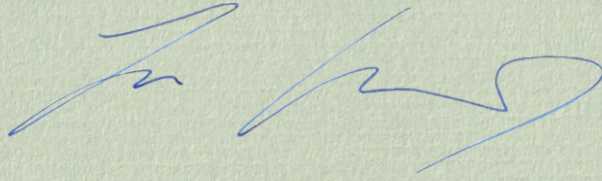
Special Drawing Rights

The general allocation of \$650bn Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) was a priority of the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021, as was the subsequent global ambition to 'channel' \$100bn SDRs to vulnerable countries, which was first agreed by G7 leaders in Carbis Bay in July 2021.

In October 2021, the UK pledged to channel 20% (SDR \$4bn) of our new SDRs to vulnerable countries. This has helped mobilise further commitments from others, and we have called on other advanced countries that have not yet done so to channel some of their SDRs to vulnerable countries.

Of this SDR \$4bn channelling commitment, we have pledged SDR \$1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust and are aiming to contribute SDR \$2.5bn to the IMF's newly established Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST). The RST fills a crucial gap in the IMF's toolkit, providing affordable long-term financing to low-income countries and vulnerable middle income countries to address challenges such as climate change, energy security and pandemic preparedness. We are also working with the African Development Bank to develop on a mechanism that would allow SDRs to be used to scale up their financial support to countries.

Our 20% commitment is in line with the majority of partners, and with fair burden sharing.
We are pleased to see that internationally, \$81bn of SDRs have been pledged to date.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Cleverly', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON JAMES CLEVERLY MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary