

# International Development Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 1223 Email: [indcom@parliament.uk](mailto:indcom@parliament.uk) Website: [www.parliament.uk/indcom](http://www.parliament.uk/indcom)

X (formally Twitter): [@CommonsDC](https://twitter.com/CommonsDC)

From Sarah Champion MP, Chair

Sir Philip Barton KCMG OBE  
Permanent Under-Secretary  
Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office

13 March 2024

Dear Sir Philip,

Thank you for sending the Committee the FCDO'S Supplementary Estimate memorandum for 2023-24. This is a vital document to allow the Committee to fulfil its remit of scrutinising departmental spending plans.

Given the FCDO's status as the primary ODA-spending department, we are concerned to see the scale of ODA funding allocated to the Home Office – primarily to address funding pressures associated with asylum costs.

For 2023-24, the Home Office now plans to spend £3.2 billion of the UK's ODA budget<sup>1</sup>. To put this in context, the previous ODA allocations set out in previous years' Supplementary Estimates for the Home Office are set out below:

- 2022-23: £2.6 billion<sup>2</sup>
- 2021-22: £981 million<sup>3</sup>
- 2020-21: £482 million<sup>4</sup>

This funding trend is deeply worrying. The Committee has previously raised concerns that using the ODA budget in this way is not within the spirit of the OECD DAC rules. Given the constraints on the ODA budget, this undoubtedly puts pressure on the programmes, projects and multi-lateral commitments that the FCDO is able to fund.

I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with details of:

- the overall proportion of ODA you expect the FCDO and Home Office to spend this year; and
- any FCDO programmes, projects or funding commitments that have had to be reprioritised or cancelled in 2023-24 to accommodate the increase in Home Office ODA expenditure.

I would like to thank FCDO officials for their efforts to improve the transparency of the estimate memorandum in recent years. However, as the primary ODA-spending department in the UK, the impact of the increasing use of the ODA budget from the Home Office on

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<sup>1</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43562/documents/216417/default/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43562/documents/216417/default/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9425/documents/161264/default/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9425/documents/161264/default/>

FCDO activity was not apparent from reading the memoranda. We would request that in future estimates memoranda, greater disclosure is made regarding:

- inter-departmental use of the ODA budget; and
- reprioritisation of projects and programmes that has taken place in-year to accommodate redistribution of the ODA budget between departments.

I would be grateful if you could send your considered responses to these questions by 20 March. The Committee will publish this letter and your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S', enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

**Sarah Champion MP**  
**Chair of the Committee**