



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

“Media freedom is under attack”: The FCO’s defence of an endangered liberty: Government Response to the Committee’s Twenty First Report of Session 2017–19

Second Special Report of Session 2019–21

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

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Second Special Report

On 9 September 2019, the Foreign Affairs Committee published its Twenty First Report of Session 2017–19, [“Media freedom is under attack”: The FCO’s defence of an endangered liberty](#) (HC 1920). The Government’s response was received on 19 March 2020 and is appended to this report.

In the Government’s Response the Committee’s recommendations are shown in **bold** type, and the Government’s responses are shown in plain type.

Appendix: Government Response

Overview of Progress of the Campaign

We welcome the Committee’s report on the Media Freedom Campaign and thank them for their recommendations.

Since the Global Conference in July, we have maintained momentum on the campaign. We have continued to mobilise a global spotlight on media freedom and taken actions to increase the costs to those who restrict it. We have taken forward the initiatives we announced at the Conference, moving from design and well into the implementation phase. We share the Committee’s focus on sustainability, and during 2020 our priorities are delivering on our initiatives and ensuring they are on a sustainable footing as we hand over leadership to Canada later in the year.

On the Media Freedom Coalition, we have continued encouraging signatories to the Pledge. Cyprus have recently submitted their formal application to join the Coalition. We also expect Japan to do so shortly, after a recent visit from the Foreign Secretary. This would bring membership of the Coalition from 35 to 37.

We held a launch event at the UN General Assembly, formed an Executive Group to steer the Coalition and convened the first full meeting of the Coalition at senior official level:

- We formally launched the Coalition at a Ministerial event in the margins of the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2019. The event was hosted by Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon and chaired by Special Envoy on Media Freedom Amal Clooney. It included contributions from the Prime Minister of Sudan, Abdalla Hamdok, UNESCO DG Audrey Azoulay and Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian as well as a range of Ministers from Coalition countries. The concluding statement from the Ministerial event.¹
- The UK and Canada act as the current co-chairs of the Coalition. We established an eight-member Executive Group to act as a steering committee for the Coalition as a whole, which includes the UK and Canada plus the US, Latvia, the Maldives, Germany, Ghana, and the Netherlands. UNESCO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and representatives of civil society also form part of the Executive Group. We

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-ahmad-there-is-a-moral-imperative-to-stop-threat-to-media-freedom>

held the first meeting in December at Canada House in London. The first full meeting of the Coalition took place at senior official level in Geneva on 29–30 January 2020, where we agreed operating procedures, identified priorities for 2020 and reviewed the media freedom landscape. The first statement of the Coalition² was launched at the Human Rights Council in February 2020 by Lord Ahmad on behalf of the Coalition.

- We have worked closely with civil society throughout this process, with key partner organisations—both NGOs and networks of practitioners—providing an important challenge function but also collaborating on the design and approach to the Coalition. They have now formed an Advisory Network to contribute to future discussions and meetings.
- We will work with Canada and coalition members to grow membership by prioritising those countries which have a particularly strong record and/or would improve the Coalition’s geographical coverage.

We signed a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO in New York on our shared commitment to the campaign, in particular on the Global Media Defence Fund, which UNESCO will administer, and on work to promote National Action Plans to deliver the objectives of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The Fund is likely to open for bids from civil society in March/April 2020. We are working with UNESCO and other organisations such as OSCE and the Open Government Partnership to establish an international task force that will support countries to develop National Action Plans and draw on best practice. DCMS continue to work across government on establishing the UK National Committee for the Safety of Journalists which will advise on the development of a UK National Action Plan.

We continue to engage with civil society and support initiatives which align with the campaign’s objectives. We took part in the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s International Parliamentary Seminar on Media Freedom in September 2019 (which was inspired by the campaign); the OSCE’s Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw and the One Young World Summit in London, amongst others. We marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on 2 November with activity across the FCO network, including at the main event in Mexico, and our missions continue to raise media freedom and lobby in their bilateral engagement.

During 2020, we anticipate continuing UK leadership of the campaign jointly with Canada, handing over leadership to them at the second Global Conference that they will be hosting in Quebec on 17–18 September. The first annual Ministerial meeting of the Media Freedom Coalition is expected to take place at the Conference. The UK will remain strongly engaged as a co-chair of the Coalition, through our membership on the Steering Committee of the Fund and through active lobbying and engagement through our network of Posts, as well as in multilateral fora and through the programmes we fund bilaterally. We are partnering with the Netherlands, who will be hosting the World Press Freedom Conference in The Hague, together with UNESCO, to reinforce the attention given to this issue around the world. The Conference itself has been postponed because of Coronavirus from 22–24 April to the Autumn, but we are continuing plans to mobilise action across

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/media-freedom-coalition-january-2020-meeting-statement/statement-by-the-media-freedom-coalition-on-its-first-meeting>

our network around World Press Freedom Day on 3 May. We are also engaging through the Commonwealth to encourage support for the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and to translate international commitments into practical action.

In future years, we anticipate an annual programme of events, with the highlights being World Press Freedom Day (3 May), the Global Conference together with the annual Ministerial meeting of the Media Freedom Coalition, and the International Day to End Impunity (2 November) as well as systematic engagement in other multilateral fora. The co-chairs of the Coalition and membership of the Executive Group are expected to rotate, but with Canada and the UK, as the original founders, remaining strongly involved.

The FCO must now demonstrate the impact, and sustainability, of its policies and initiatives. (Summary 1)

However well intentioned, the credibility of the FCO's proposals to defend media freedom will face significant doubt. This is not the fault of the UK alone. Around the world and across the years, empty words have bred cynicism among journalists and their supporters. But there has been criticism of the FCO's past performance in this field. Currently, there are concerns that the FCO has allocated too few resources, given too little detail about how it will fulfil its campaign, and taken too passing an interest in how to make it sustainable. There is anxiety that this vital initiative by the FCO risks becoming a disappointment. *The FCO must now move beyond the rhetoric to demonstrate impact in defending media freedom. It must move beyond assurances to demonstrate working structures that will sustain that impact beyond the current year, the current campaign, and the past tenure of Jeremy Hunt as Foreign Secretary. We ask the FCO to provide updates every six months on its work in this area. We will return to this topic to assess the FCO's progress.* (Paragraph 12)

The Foreign Secretary is clear that we should sustain our Media Freedom work as a Global Britain priority in 2020 and beyond. During his visit to Canada in January 2020, he agreed with the new Canadian Foreign Minister to continue and reinforce our partnership over the campaign. All of our campaign initiatives are driving towards tangible outcomes. We have enlisted the support of other countries, civil society and multilateral organisations to advance these outcomes and ensure the campaign has a global reach and sustainable impact.

From the very outset, we aimed to place the campaign on a sustainable footing by developing it and the initiatives together with partners, who will continue to champion respective efforts internationally. This means that each initiative or area of activity is designed not to be dependent on UK leadership.

Canada, with whom we co-hosted the London Global Conference in July, will host the next Global Conference on Media Freedom in 2020, with a number of countries already indicating their desire to host thereafter.

We have assembled a Media Freedom Coalition, a group of 35 countries so far, including several countries that have not previously been vocal on this agenda but have signed the Global Pledge and committed to work together to engage on this issue. The Coalition will be the main vehicle for sustaining the attention on media freedom and the political will generated at the July Conference over coming years. Our priority for the Coalition is to develop a strong and effective network of countries that will take action on individual

cases, respond to emerging and ongoing threats and encourage due process to reduce cases of impunity. It will meet annually at both Ministerial and senior official level, with the eight member Executive Group (with rotating membership) setting direction. The Coalition will work closely with multilateral organisations and civil society to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication and reinforce existing support mechanisms. This is the first international grouping of its kind committed to taking action to defend media freedom.

We made a founding contribution to the Global Media Defence Fund, administered by UNESCO. This Fund will provide sustained financial support to civil society and journalists defending against abuses of the media. The UK has committed £3m over a period of 5 years, Canada \$1m (Canadian), and several other countries have either committed to make a contribution or indicated that they intend to do so. The UK and Canada sit on the Steering Committee for the Fund and are working with UNESCO to ensure the Fund adds value and results in sustainable support for journalists under threat or in need of assistance. We are seeking to mobilise more funding for the Fund from governments, philanthropists and media organisations.

The High Level Legal Panel, convened by Special Envoy Amal Clooney and chaired by Lord Neuberger, includes legal experts from across the world and will work independently of the FCO through 2020 to produce model laws and best practice for states seeking to improve media freedom. The Panel's work is well underway, and their first report—on the use of sanctions as a tool to protect media freedom—was launched on 13 February 2020. The Panel's recommendations are intended to help governments develop better legislation and policies, and also to challenge them to set a higher bar of standards on translating commitments into practical frameworks and initiatives. We are working with the Panel to identify countries for which the recommendations would be especially beneficial and support implementation of recommendations.

We are working with UNESCO and others to support countries to take action at a national level and will continue to use our bilateral engagement and programming to complement these efforts.

We will be happy to provide an update on this work in six months as the Committee requests, with the next report in Autumn 2020.

The Government should support training for law-enforcement organisations around the world to help them protect journalists. (Summary 2)

The FCO should consider supporting an international mechanism to investigate and punish the abuse of journalists if governments will not. (Summary 3)

We welcome the FCO's aim of assisting countries to ensure that their laws protect media freedom (even though witnesses asserted that the UK itself could improve in this respect). We worry nonetheless that those most likely to abuse the media are those least likely to comply with 'Pledges', 'Action Plans', or a 'High-Level Panel of Legal Experts', for as long as these remain voluntary and non-binding. Laws must be enforced and, when protections for journalists are flouted or absent, those who violate media freedom must be punished.

- *The UK should support training to the law-enforcement branches of countries so that they are willing and able to protect journalists.*

- ***The FCO should give more consideration to supporting an international mechanism for investigating and punishing the abuse of journalists when governments cannot or will not do so.*** (Paragraph 20)

We agree that there should be costs to countries that abuse the media. There are a range of ways to impose these costs, including through diplomatic means, legal frameworks, sanctions and multilateral fora. The Committee is right that most of our initiatives, by their nature, focus on those countries that are willing and able, or willing but lacking capacity to promote and protect media freedom. We agree that different approaches are needed for those who are unwilling to act, or purposefully taking action against media freedom.

Our diplomatic missions will always consider their interventions based on their understanding of the local context and, for example, whether the threats to journalists come from state or non-state actors. The FCO funds a range of programme activity to support this work, including projects convening governments and civil society to review restrictive policy and law; providing safety and security training for journalists and training the authorities on how to support freedom of expression and protect journalists. We are also supporting UNESCO's work on the development of national mechanisms for the safety of journalists.

The Foreign Secretary and Special Envoy Amal Clooney have discussed the importance of holding abusers to account. The High Level Legal Panel has produced a report on sanctions, and will be producing a report on international investigatory mechanisms and one on transparency. We have a strong partnership in place with the International Bar Association who are providing the secretariat for the Legal Panel. The Legal Panel has offered to provide support to countries wishing to refine legislation or to establish legal or other protection mechanisms at national level as appropriate.

We also support the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. We have been discussing with them, OHCHR and others what more can be done to reinforce UN-led efforts in this field and look forward to their recommendations. We work closely with advocacy groups and civil society that raise these issues with governments publicly and in private.

The FCO should do more in public to shame those who persecute the media. We refer to examples in Malta, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. (Summary 4)

We praise the work of the FCO to raise the cases or attend the trials of persecuted journalists. We also welcome the FCO's convening of a coalition to lobby in unison and amplify its impact through coordination with other countries. However, the FCO must do more in public to shame perpetrators; including when those perpetrators are governments. There is concern that the FCO's preferred method is a firm word behind closed doors, especially when other UK interests are involved. The UK is seen, quite literally in some cases, as trading away its values. Three cases were repeated among those raised by our witnesses:

- *As part of its campaign to defend global media freedom, the FCO should publicly press for an independent judicial public inquiry in Malta into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Her death should set a precedent for accountability and not, as it does currently, for impunity.*
- *Likewise, in one of its submissions, the FCO referred for the first time to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi “by Saudi Arabia”. It should build on that acknowledgement, and work with international partners, to achieve accountability through public criticism and sanctions against Saudi perpetrators.*
- *Severe reductions in media freedom have taken place in Turkey. The journalists who wrote to us from there were too fearful of reprisals to have their names or views published. The FCO should designate Turkey a Human Rights Priority Country. It should criticise the violations taking place there publicly and forcefully.* (Paragraph 21)

The UK is committed to raising these challenging human rights issues at all levels. We do not shy away from delivering tough messages, including in public. The decision about how to raise an issue is always based on which approach is most likely to lead to a tangible outcome. On some occasions, an intervention in private is assessed as the best way to make progress; on others, a public intervention is better suited. We agree with the Committee’s underlying recommendation that there must be consequences for those who abuse or restrict media freedom—that is one of the prime objectives of the campaign. Now that we have left the EU, in serious cases of human rights violations, we will consider how to apply our new Global Human Rights Sanctions regime (see next section).

We have not shied away from publicly raising individual cases in the course of the campaign. At the “Media Freedom: A Global Responsibility” event at the UN General Assembly in September, Lord Ahmad—standing in for the Foreign Secretary—raised several by name:

- Martin O’Hagan (UK)
- Jamal Khashoggi (Saudi Arabia)
- Daphne Caruana-Galizia (Malta)
- Javid Noori (Afghanistan)
- Luis Carlos Diaz (Venezuela)
- Huang Qi (China)
- Christopher Allen (South Sudan)
- Erick Kabendera (Tanzania)
- Maria Ressa (the Philippines)

Lord Ahmad also highlighted Turkey, Egypt and Eritrea, and Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian spoke on the panel about his 544 day imprisonment in Iran. Ministers continue to raise media freedom in their bilateral engagement.

One of our key objectives with the Media Freedom Coalition is to ensure we are lobbying and raising cases in a more systematic way, so we can deliver those messages more forcefully and have a greater impact. Coalition members agreed at their meeting in January a collective intent to speak out publicly and lobby in private on individual cases and situations of concern. The Executive Group is mandated to keep under active review the most urgent and other cases where Coalition action may be appropriate and to recommend what actions should be taken.

The UK has made clear its condemnation of the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia and that all those responsible must be held to account. A public inquiry in Malta is ongoing, and the three suspects accused of carrying out the murder are on trial. Judicial proceedings are underway regarding those alleged to have masterminded the assassination, and it is important that we allow that judicial process to play out. The UK has continued to raise this case with the Maltese Government, including at Ministerial level. Our High Commission in Valletta has discussed the issues with the Maltese authorities, provided advice in support of the criminal investigation and maintains close ongoing contact. We also raised freedom of expression during the third cycle of Malta's UN Universal Periodic Review in November 2018.

The UK Government condemns the killing of Jamal Khashoggi in the strongest possible terms. In March and September 2019, the UK, alongside key partners, was signatory to joint statements at the UN Human Rights Council which set out our ongoing concerns. We have worked with international partners including the UN, E3 and G7, to express our deep concern and to urge Saudi Arabia to pursue a thorough, credible and transparent trial at which those responsible are held to account. After the verdicts in the trial were issued on 23 December, the Foreign Secretary issued a statement reiterating that Jamal Khashoggi's killing was a terrible crime, and that his family deserve to see justice done. Saudi Arabia must hold all those responsible to account and ensure that such an atrocity can never happen again. We will continue to set out our grave concerns - both publicly and privately.

Both these cases—alongside others—were discussed by Coalition members at their meeting in January 2020.

Human Rights Priority Countries generally remain in place for a duration of a Parliament. However, this is under review. We regularly encourage Turkey to address human rights concerns including at the most senior Ministerial levels. The degree to which it is helpful to take a public stance on sensitive issues like the treatment of journalists and freedom of expression in Turkey is a matter for careful judgement. We also provide direct support to Civil Society Organisations to promote a free media through our programme funds and we monitor trials where we have concerns about individual cases, including on cases relating to media freedom.

The FCO should use sanctions to punish those who persecute the media. (Summary 5)

In general, the FCO should use sanctions to punish abusers of the media through a material cost, such as economic sanctions or travel bans. It should likewise coordinate such action with other countries, to amplify its impact. (Paragraph 22)

We agree with the Committee. We announced our intention to establish a UK autonomous global human rights sanctions regime for after we left the European Union. While the

Sanctions Act 2018 gives the UK powers to impose autonomous sanctions, secondary legislation is required to establish the structures and processes by which the Act will operate. Officials are in the process of developing the necessary legislation to introduce a Global Human Rights Sanctions regime.

The UK is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and a global sanctions regime will allow us to respond to serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world. It will impose asset freeze and travel ban measures, and will be used to sanction perpetrators of serious human rights abuses or violations globally. This could include, for example, unlawful killings perpetrated against journalists and media workers. We will announce our first designations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions regime once the Global Human Rights secondary legislation is made.

Sanctions will provide an additional tool that the UK can use against the worst cases of human rights violations or abuses. We continue to believe that sanctions are most effective when implemented collectively. Now that we have left the EU, we will continue to work with our existing European partners and cooperate with others, including the US and Canada, who use sanctions to address human rights violations or abuses. EU sanctions will apply in the UK during the Implementation Period.

The FCO should coordinate more closely with the Home Office over visas for persecuted journalists, and their families and associates. (Summary 6)

Beyond the physical threats to journalists are issues of harassment and intimidation that also play a crucial role in silencing the media. Journalists who seek escape abroad might face their families or associates being thus targeted in their countries of origin. And the evolving cross-border nature of this threat means that distance is no longer a deterrent: digital technology and the online space give new opportunities for journalists to work, but also new avenues through which they can be targeted wherever they are in the world. (Paragraph 27)

The FCO should:

- *coordinate more closely with the Home Office to ensure that visas or asylum are not unduly denied to those journalists, and their associates or families, who are abused in their own countries.*
- *urge the Government to consider a particular class of visa for journalists, and their associates or families, threatened with violence to ensure journalists have the confidence to keep reporting, knowing they can make the judgement to leave when they need, not simply when they have the most chance of securing asylum.* (Paragraph 28)

We will continue to work closely with Whitehall partners to coordinate on issues such as visas and asylum. The Foreign Secretary and UK Special Envoy Amal Clooney discussed this issue in January 2020. The Home Office sit on the Media Freedom Campaign's director-level steering board, where these issues have been discussed, as well as in relevant meetings of other senior officials. We are supportive of civil society organisations and NGOs that provide assistance on visas and asylum for journalists. The independent High

Level Legal Panel will be preparing a report on visas and asylum, amongst other issues. We have discussed these issues with the Panel and will consider the recommendations carefully.

In addition, the Global Media Defence Fund will be used to defend journalists against these threats of harassment or intimidation, for example by supporting access to legal services, providing training in personal safety and establishing peer support networks.

The FCO should put the online and digital threats to journalists at the heart of their strategy. (Summary 7)

The FCO should provide training and/or technical assistance to journalists to counter harassment and intimidation, including online, designed in consultation with them. (Summary 8)

- *put the online and digital threats to journalists at the heart of their strategy, including the FCO's work to achieve legal reform. Such threats are increasing, and they mean that those who deny media freedom can project their impact—and their violations of our values—across borders and around the world. The future threat will often come through our cables and airwaves. Being an island will not protect the UK's media freedom. Journalists must be able to work online and offline, free from surveillance and intimidation, and confident in the security of their sources and data.*
- *deliver specific training or technical assistance for journalists to counter the threats of harassment, intimidation, or the impeding of their work, especially as these threats often manifest themselves through digital means.* (Paragraph 28)

The Global Campaign for Media Freedom is focused primarily on the acute physical threats journalists face. But we are mindful that these cannot be separated from online and digital threats. The Global Conference in July explored the theme of digital threats in some detail, with sessions covering freedom of expression online, digital and media literacy, online threats and emerging challenges posed by technology. The Media Freedom Coalition is committed to considering all types of threats, whether online or offline. Canada is considering options for themes for the next Global Conference in September 2020, including digital security.

We are supportive of other initiatives which are active in this space and do not wish to duplicate efforts. These include the Freedom Online Coalition and the International Partnership for Information and Democracy led by France and Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which promotes the democratisation of the internet. We will also work to counter the instances of internet shutdowns which have an impact on freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly at democratically important times, like elections and protests, and encourage all states to respect all freedoms online as well as offline.

As noted above, we already fund programme activity including training and technical assistance for journalists in some countries where they face these threats. The FCO and HMG fund programme activity around the world which addresses the wider themes of digital threats and media development. For example, the £12.1 million cross-government Conflict, Security and Stability Fund Counter-Disinformation and Media Development

Programme offers support to public service and independent media across Eastern Europe and Central Asia to help enable a free and open media to function, often in extremely challenging media environments.

Domestically, the Government is committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to be online. The Online Harms White Paper, published in April 2019, sets out our plans for world-leading legislation which will make companies more responsible for their users' safety online. In February 2020, the government published a response to the consultation on the White paper.

The FCO should consider further measures to address the financial weakness and vulnerability of media organisations around the world. (Summary 9)

Journalists need to fund their operations. And they need to do so without vulnerability to corruption or editorial interference derived from financial dependence on governments, wealthy individuals, or other vested interests. Yet the disruption of the conventional funding models for independent journalism is making that harder and harder, especially given the emergence of rival online platforms and the decline of advertising revenue. These financial challenges might not be physical, like the risks of death or injury or imprisonment. Nevertheless, like the risks of harassment and intimidation, they are having a debilitating real-world effect of silencing the free media. (Paragraph 32)

We praise the FCO for its work to establish the Global Media Defence Fund. The FCO should consider widening the remit of this Fund, further to support journalists trying to preserve their work and independence despite their financial vulnerability and malicious efforts to silence them by exploiting it. The FCO's proposed training and legal assistance will be of real benefit, but limited use to journalists financially. Further to this point, the Government should also consider measures such as expanding its advertising with suitable media organisations abroad, to give journalists a legitimate source of revenue, or taking steps such as donating equipment to lower the costs associated with their job. (Paragraph 33)

Media sustainability was a core theme at the July Conference, where we convened a diverse range of media development experts, NGOs and donors. This included Luminate and BBC Media Action, who are progressing work on the study of future financing models that we flagged in our previous correspondence. They are finalising their feasibility study after a round of consultations was held with donors and other interested parties in mid-November 2019. The study's recommendations on international support to media sustainability will be examined by donors in 2020.

The remit of the Global Media Defence Fund is to foster media protection and support the provision of legal advice to journalists. As part of its work, the Fund will welcome bids for projects which seek to support investigative journalism that contributes to reduced impunity for crimes against journalists by holding the justice system accountable. These projects may include the provision of support to investigative journalists whose independence would otherwise be at risk due to financial or other factors.

Wider HMG efforts to improve sustainability of the media include two DFID-funded programmes promoting independent media and civil society. The Protecting Independent Media for Effective Development (PRIMED) programme is implemented by a consortium

led by BBC Media Action, and will strengthen the ability of independent media in developing countries to produce free, independent public interest journalism and provide fora for constructive public debate, both offline and online. The programme will work in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. The Protecting Rights, Openness and Transparency—Enhancing Civic Transformation (PROTECT) programme, part of UK Aid Connect, tackles the challenges of shrinking civic space, pressure on independent media and infomediaries, and data, transparency and accountability failures. It is implemented by a consortium led by Article 19, working in Kenya, Malawi and Burma/Myanmar.

The Government should give a further extension to its funding of the BBC World Service, to give the World Service greater financial certainty. (Paragraph 10)

The BBC World Service is a vital force for projecting and encouraging the free media globally. The £291 million of additional Government funding announced in 2015 has expanded the World Service's reach. That funding was nevertheless due to expire in March 2020. The Government has already given the World Service a six-month funding extension. The Government should extend that funding for at least an additional six months, to give the World Service greater financial certainty. (Paragraph 35)

The FCO provided £291 million funding under the World2020 Programme between 2016–2020 to deliver enhancements to some existing services and set up 12 new language services for India (Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Telugu), Nigeria (Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo), Eritrea (Tigrinya), Ethiopia (Amharic, Oromo), Korea and Serbia. All 12 services have been successfully launched, as well as enhancements to BBC World Service English, Arabic and Russian. As part of the one-year Spending Round, the FCO have rolled over World2020 funding for a further 12 months until 2021. Any funding beyond 2021 will be agreed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.