

International Development Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From Sarah Champion MP, Chair

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
By email

07 July 2021

UK Aid spending to protect and promote LGBT rights

Dear Dominic,

I am writing to inquire about the FCDO's actions to protect and promote the rights of LGBT+ people globally through UK aid programmes.

The UK has positioned itself as a leader in international development and on global LGBT rights. As co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition, the UK Government is hosting a virtual conference on 6 and 7 July to set the 5-year strategy to protect and advocate for LGBT people. The FCDO will also host the first global LGBT conference in June 2022, chaired by Lord Herbert of South Downs as the UK's new Special Envoy on LGBT rights. I would therefore like to understand how the Government is translating its global objectives for LGBT rights into tangible action.

Aid programmes

In November 2020, the Prime Minister stated that the Government would commit to increase the ODA spending allocated to LGBTI+ issues to £55 million per annum. In light of the aid cuts, and with the LGBT people of many recipient countries of UK aid continuing to face social, economic, political and legal barriers, including criminalisation, I would be appreciative if you could provide me information regarding the ODA spending allocated to helping LGBT people.

- How much of the aid budget was spent on protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT+ people in the 2020/21 financial year? How much will be spent on this in the current financial year?
- What is the planned spend on LGBT rights in the next 5-year period?
- How are UK aid programmes aligned with the Government's stated aims to protect and promote the rights of LGBT people globally?
- What LGBT specific aid programmes will the Government implement to fulfil its goals for global LGBT equality?

Covid-19

I also note with concern a report published by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 July 2020, which stated that covid-19 has disproportionately affected LGBT people in social, economic, political, legal and health terms.

- Considering this, how are UK aid programmes working to mitigate the disproportionate impact of covid-19 on LGBT people?

Conversion therapy

A recent report by OpenDemocracy found that the UK Government has funded clinics offering conversion therapy in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania through NGOs such as MSI Reproductive Choices and the Global Fund.

In the Queen's Speech, the Government committed to banning conversion therapy in the UK, and Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, stated that legislation would be introduced after a consultation on the ban. I believe it is contradictory to be funding such practices abroad considering the UK Government's opposition to conversion therapy domestically and its position as a leader on securing global LGBT rights.

- In light of this, what mechanisms does the Government have in place to prevent directly and indirectly funding anti-LGBT programmes?
- What changes will the FCDO make to ensure that it does not fund anti-LGBT programmes in future either directly or indirectly?

I would be grateful for a response to this letter by 28 July 2021. The Committee intends to publish your response to this letter.

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