



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon. Baroness Chapman of
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Minister for International Development
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Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee
House of Commons
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1 June 2026

Dear Sarah,

I am responding following commitments to provide written responses to issues raised during my evidence session on 28 April.

Firstly, the committee asked about the role of civil society and whether the UK continued to provide financial support. Civil society remains a critical part of our approach to supporting credible elections, accountability, and democratic resilience in Nigeria. Nigerian civil society organisations (CSOs) play an essential role in safeguarding rights, advocating for transparency and accountability. Whilst recent ODA reductions have constrained the UK's ability to fund large-scale nationwide civil society interventions, we continue to retain targeted support through our Partnership for Agile Governance and Climate Engagement (PACE) Programme for civil society coalitions, such as the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, to drive citizen engagement and accountability, as well as individual CSOs working on electoral reform, legislative accountability and citizen oversight. We have also mainstreamed inclusion and civic engagement within our institutional support for government actors. This is particularly important as Nigeria prepares for general elections in 2027.

Additionally, the international coordination of humanitarian aid in Nigeria response will commence this year, requiring a shift towards locally led approaches. The UK is already working with civil society to support this transition. For example, through training and coaching, local partners are now managing nearly 40% of gender-based violence cases and will progressively take over service delivery and facility management.

The British High Commission Abuja is also currently designing the next humanitarian programme with the aim to reduce future humanitarian caseloads, prevent malnutrition and strengthen Nigerian systems to sustain progress. The programme will include technical assistance to support Nigerian-led systems at federal and state levels, as well as across civil society.

You asked about quantifying the impact of illicit finance and institutional building programming, compared to humanitarian interventions. This is not an easy area to quantify,

given the illicit nature of the activities being measured. Independent estimates put the value of illicit funds leaving Nigeria at \$15 billion per annum. There are also illicit funds that remain in Nigeria which fuel further criminality and corruption. Unlike large humanitarian investments, programming to counter illicit finance tend to be low spend; usually focused on technical assistance to national authorities. Due to large scale illicit flows in Nigeria, counter Illicit Finance interventions are regarded as strong value for money, evidenced by the UK's work elsewhere. For example, the UK's support to the International Anti-Corruption Centre led to a 1:63 return on investment in terms of support to global investigations versus illicit funds frozen through those investigations. We have contributed to similar progress in Nigeria, including establishing a central database of recovered assets and supporting the implementation of landmark regulations on anti-money laundering in the legal profession.

The Committee requested further information about ISF programmes across Nigeria and the Sahel. Last financial year, the FCDO delivered country-specific programmes in Nigeria, the Sahel and in Coastal West Africa:

- The Nigeria Security & Regional Resilience Programme was a one-year programme (£9.85 million in 2025–26) delivering interventions in Nigeria, including the Lake Chad Basin. The programme contributed to policy and institutional development on protection of civilians and reintegration; strengthened community protection and trust between citizens and security actors; supported women-led peacebuilding and access to justice; and built national capability to respond to explosive threats, kidnapping, and serious security threats.
- The Sahel Sustainable Security Initiative was a one-year programme (£4 million in 2025–26) delivering interventions across Sahelian states. The programme contributed to more accountable, locally grounded security approaches; strengthened community-led early warning, mediation and peacebuilding, including through women and youth; supported more inclusive, civilian-focused security practices among security actors; and increased resilience to destabilising external interference by widening access to trusted information, promoting inclusive public debate and media literacy.
- The West Africa Stability Programme is a multi-year programme delivered in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin, with approximately £4 million allocated in 2025-26. It strengthened regional responses to violent extremism in northern border areas, improving cross-border coordination and military-civilian cooperation. The programme supported government-led resilience and security initiatives through a multilateral stability mechanism with international partners; provided training and advisory support to the Ivorian International Counter Terrorism Academy; and delivered targeted advisory and bilateral support in Ghana, including security training and dialogue with government and vulnerable communities.

As the Minister responsible for the ISF, Minister of State Dan Jarvis laid a Written Ministerial Statement on 10 February 2026 outlining the ISF's restructure to a new operating model from 1 April 2026. As the Statement outlines, this will focus the ISF on a tighter Strategic Framework delivering on nine of the UK's top National Security Strategy priorities at a time

of proliferating risks and greater budgetary constraints. In line with this approach, the ISF will continue to deliver activity to address conflict and instability overseas, but only where there is a clear link to protecting the UK and its interests. Accordingly, the ISF will continue to fund activity in West Africa linked to conflict and instability. Subject to finalisation of 2026/27 programming plans, this is expected to include:

- Counter terrorism activity to disrupt and reduce the capability of terrorist groups, weaken public support for terrorist groups, strengthen community resilience against violent extremism, and support research to build collective understanding of violent extremism and terrorism and the most effective ways to tackle it.
- Serious and organised crime programming to improve the key capabilities of key West African partners, including Nigeria, to tackle visa abuse, drug trafficking, fraud operations and illicit finance.
- Activity to counter threats in West Africa from hybrid threat actors.

You asked about the future of international humanitarian law unit and the conflict and security monitoring project. In Nigeria, our Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria (SPRING) programme works on atrocity and conflict prevention by integrating programme delivery, policy engagement and technical partnerships to strengthen early warning and response in Nigeria. In collaboration with a central programme of the FCDO's Conflict and Atrocity Prevention Department, together with the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, it has supported the development of the Nigeria Atrocity Risk Assessment and PREVENT toolkit. The toolkit provides an evidence-based framework to analyse risk drivers, resilience factors, perpetrators, victims and prevention priorities. This is reinforced through targeted training, capacity building and policy dialogue with British High Commission Abuja staff and Nigerian partners to embed prevention-focused analysis and inform operational and diplomatic responses.

I would like to add one clarification to a reference made during our discussion on 28 April. In response to question 135, we mentioned a humanitarian pool fund that the Nigerians will lead in future. To clarify, this funding is currently led by OCHA but local leadership remains a long-term objective.

I hope this letter provides useful clarification on the questions raised, and I thank the Committee for its ongoing engagement on the UK-Nigeria Development partnership.

Yours ever



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