

Hansard: Written Question on Azerbaijan: Gender Based Violence

26 May 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan about (1) fulfilling its obligations under international law to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women, (2) providing adequate protection and effective legal measures and redress for survivors, and (3) ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Answered 10 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** During her recent visit to Azerbaijan the Minister for the European Neighbourhood met with representatives of Civil Society, including survivors of domestic violence. During her meeting with President Aliyev she urged ratification of the Istanbul Convention alongside implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The UK Government will continue to urge Azerbaijan to sign and ratify the appropriate conventions to provide safeguards for women.



Hansard: Written Question on Azerbaijan: Gender Based Violence

26 May 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International Azerbaijan: Gender-Based Reprisals Against Women Must Stop, published on 12 May.

Answered 10 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government has made no assessment of this report. However, during her recent visit to Azerbaijan the Minister for the European Neighbourhood met with representatives of Civil Society, including survivors of domestic violence, and during her meeting with President Aliyev she urged signature of the Istanbul Convention. We continue to urge the Government of Azerbaijan to sign the convention and encourage thorough investigations into allegations of violence against women.



Hansard: Written Question on Myanmar: Armed Conflict

7 June 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in response to the recent attacks on civilians in Chin and Kayah states by the military regime in Myanmar.

Answered 21 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned about the impact of renewed fighting in Chin and Kayah States on civilian populations, and the increased vulnerability of internally displaced people as a result of COVID. We are closely monitoring the impact of the recent military attacks, including on supply routes, to ensure that support reaches those in most need. We are in close contact with the UN, NGOs and other local civil society organisations in the affected areas, and we are ensuring as much flexibility as we can in their use of UK aid to enable them to operate safely and continue providing support.

The UK continues to take strong action against the Tatmadaw for human rights violations. The violent crackdown on Civilians and Human rights is completely unacceptable and requires a strong message from the international community. Since the coup we have announced targeted sanctions against 9 high-ranking military officials and imposed sanctions on Myanmar Gems Enterprise, Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (MEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC). We have today announced that we have sanctioned Myanmar Timber Enterprise (MTE) and Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (MPE) and have designated the State Administration Council (SAC), the juntas governing body. We continue to work in concert with our partners and allies to determine a range of additional measures.



Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Sanctions

7 June 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessments they have made of the impact of international sanctions on the people of Syria.

Answered 21 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Her Majesty's Government assesses that the UK's targeted Syria sanctions, alongside those of other countries, increase pressure on the Assad regime to engage with the UN-facilitated political process as the only way to resolve the conflict for all Syrians. We also understand that many Syrians welcome efforts to increase accountability for those responsible for suffering in Syria, including the regime's repression of civilians and the use of chemical weapons.

We continue seeking to minimise any negative impact of sanctions on ordinary Syrians, in line with our position as a leading humanitarian donor to the crisis, having committed over £3.7 billion in response. The UK does not sanction medicine, medical equipment or medical assistance, and items required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic are not subject to direct restrictions on export, supply, financing or use in Syria.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Fulani

7 June 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that Islamist Fulani militia continue to perpetrate massacres and kidnapping in Nigeria, and (2) the designation of Nigeria as a country of particular concern by the US International Religious Freedom Act; and what steps they have taken in response.

Answered 21 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria, which have had devastating effects on communities of different faiths and ethnicities. It is inaccurate to attribute sole responsibility to one ethnic group, the Fulani, and terms like militia risk fuelling tensions between communities. During the Minister for Africa's visit to Nigeria in April, he raised the importance of protecting all communities. We are working with our partners in Nigeria to promote intercommunal and interfaith dialogue, and continue to call for solutions that address the underlying causes of conflict.

We also condemn kidnaps in Nigeria, including the recent kidnaps and killings of students in Northern Nigeria. Those responsible must be held to account. We have provided mentoring and capacity building support to Nigerian Police Force units to improve their anti-kidnap capacity, to help reduce harm to victims and hold those responsible to account.

The decision by the United States to designate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern for Religious Freedom is a matter for the United States government. The UK is committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. We are a strong voice internationally in defense of this fundamental right and promoting respect between communities of different religions and those of no religion.



Hansard: Written Question on Tigray: Genocide

7 June 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ethiopia about (1) the alleged genocide in Tigray, and (2) reports that priests and nuns in that region have been attacked and killed.

Answered 21 June 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As the Minister of State responsible for human rights issues for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, I tweeted on 11 May to express my deep sadness at the reported murder of priests in Tigray. This is one of an increasing number of horrifying reports of atrocities coming out of Tigray. Civilians must be protected and the violence must stop. We have also stressed the need for Ethiopia to safeguard its incredible diversity of faith and identity in order to uphold freedom of religion and belief.

The UK's longstanding position is that determining whether a situation amounts to genocide is an issue for competent national and international courts, not governments: our focus is on seeing an end to violence and protecting civilians. The UK will support the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigations with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into atrocities in Tigray are independent, transparent and impartial and that those responsible for these human rights abuses are held to account. The Foreign Secretary, Minister for Africa and our Ambassador in Addis continue to raise human rights issues in their discussions with the Ethiopian government.