

Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Sanctions

24 March 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 12 March (HL13797), whether the principle of ‘do no harm’ also applies to economic sanctions on Syria; and what assessment they have made of the statement by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on 7 August 2020 that sanctions “are bringing suffering and death" in countries like Syria.

Answered 9 April 2021

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK remains committed to supporting a political settlement to the conflict in Syria in line with UNSCR 2254. Sanctions remain a key lever to press the regime to engage seriously with the political process. We remain committed to the principle of 'do no harm' with sanctions in Syria and seek to minimise the impact of sanctions on ordinary Syrians. We carefully target specific individuals and entities who are part of a new wave of emerging elites that have profited from the conflict. We do not sanction medicine, medical equipment and medical assistance. Items required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic are not subject to direct restrictions on export, supply, financing or use in Syria.

The Assad regime and its backers blame 'Western' sanctions for the failing economy in Syria. In reality, the regime has devastated its own economy through cronyism, corruption and brutality and must be held to account.

The UK remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria and the region, and will continue to be so. We have now committed £3.7 billion to the Syria Crisis since 2012, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Fulani

24 March 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the types of weapons used by Fulani herdsmen involved in fighting in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, and (2) from which countries these weapons originate.

Answered 9 April 2021

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence. These have had a devastating impact on both Christian and Muslim communities across multiple states in Nigeria. The UK Government urges all communities to work together to address problems peacefully and to avoid division. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. The Minister for Africa and the Deputy National Security Adviser have raised the issue of intercommunal violence with President Buhari's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, most recently in December 2020. The Minister for Africa publicly welcomed President Buhari's commitment to protect all religious and ethnic groups in the country in February this year, and reiterated the importance of communities working together.

The FCDO monitors incidents of intercommunal violence very closely, both from the UK and through the British High Commission in Nigeria. Although we do not hold figures on the numbers killed during incidents of intercommunal violence, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project estimates there have been just over 6,000 fatalities from all conflict and political violence across Nigeria's Middle Belt, plus Kaduna and Taraba, over the last five years. These fatalities span all religious groups and ethnic backgrounds. Perpetrators of violence in the Middle Belt have used a range of weapons, including staves, knives and guns in attacks.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Fulani

24 March 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people killed by Fulani herdsmen during fighting in Nigeria’s Middle Belt in each of the previous five years.

Answered 9 April 2021

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence. These have had a devastating impact on both Christian and Muslim communities across multiple states in Nigeria. The UK Government urges all communities to work together to address problems peacefully and to avoid division. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. The Minister for Africa and the Deputy National Security Adviser have raised the issue of intercommunal violence with President Buhari's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, most recently in December 2020. The Minister for Africa publicly welcomed President Buhari's commitment to protect all religious and ethnic groups in the country in February this year, and reiterated the importance of communities working together.

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Hansard: Written Question on Armenia: Genocide

24 March 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will formally observe Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on 24 April.

Answered 9 April 2021

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The events of 1915-1916 were a tragic episode in the history of the Armenian people and they must never be forgotten. The UK Government of the day condemned the massacres and this Government fully endorses that view. The policy of the UK Government is that any judgement on whether genocide has occurred is a matter for competent courts, rather than for governments. Although we will not formally be observing the 'Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day' our thoughts will be with the Armenian people.



Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Sanctions

12 April 2021

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the US Department of State 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Azerbaijan, published on 30 March.

Answered 26 April 2021

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government has not made an assessment of the US Department of State 2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Azerbaijan. Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a priority around the world, and we continue to raise human rights issues with the Azerbaijani Government accordingly. During her recent visit to Azerbaijan, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas raised the importance of respect for human rights, including the need to support a vibrant and active civil society, the importance of ensuring women's rights and protection, and the need to encourage a free media environment. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Azerbaijan also routinely engages on these issues.