

Hansard: Written Question on Armenia:

18 May 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Azerbaijani troops used large-calibre weapons to fire at Berkaber village in Armenia’s [Tavush Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tavush_Province) on 13 May.

Answered 01 June 2020

**Baroness Sugg:** The Government is aware of reports of military exercises being conducted in Azerbaijan by the country's military. As with the exercises of other countries in the region, we will continue to monitor this closely.

We are also aware of ongoing reports of ceasefire violations along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At this time of global crisis, the United Kingdom fully supports the UN Secretary General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in armed conflicts around the world. The United Kingdom would like to see a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and fully supports the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in achieving that. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly raises the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and will continue to do so.



Hansard: Written Question on Azerbaijan: Military Exercises

18 May 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Azerbaijan has been conducting large-scale military exercises along the borders with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh; and what representations, if any, they intend to make to that government about such exercises.

Answered 01 June 2020

**Baroness Sugg:** The Government is aware of reports of military exercises being conducted in Azerbaijan by the country's military. As with the exercises of other countries in the region, we will continue to monitor this closely.

We are also aware of ongoing reports of ceasefire violations along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At this time of global crisis, the United Kingdom fully supports the UN Secretary General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in armed conflicts around the world. The United Kingdom would like to see a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and fully supports the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in achieving that. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly raises the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and will continue to do so.



Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Coronavirus

18 May 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relative burden falling on (1) NGOs, and (2) the Syrian government and its agencies, in managing the COVID-19 crisis in Syria, including in respect of the size of the (a) populations, and (b) geographic areas, they are supporting.

Answered 01 June 2020

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In May 2020, the UN launched an appeal of $384 million to provide a multi sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic (health and non-health sectors) across the whole of Syria. There are currently 58 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Syrian Government-controlled areas, with three deaths. There have also been unconfirmed reports of infections in North West Syria, whilst the Self Administration governing North East Syria have confirmed six cases.

The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, said on 19 May that despite these numbers, a risk of a wider spread is ever present and called for essential, sustained and impeded humanitarian access. The WHO has warned of an impending ‘explosion’ of cases and a possibly significant outbreak that will be difficult for the already weakened health system to manage after years of conflict.

We are particularly concerned for the welfare of Syrians in IDP camps, who due to poor, crowded living conditions, would be unable to maintain social distance. In areas not currently under Syrian Government control, it is essential that humanitarian access to life-saving services and humanitarian support is unhindered. This must be done in a way that does not increase the spread of the virus, including through support for renewal of the UN Security Council resolution on cross-border humanitarian assistance.

In Syria the UK is one of the leading donors supporting international efforts to deliver vital healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene activities; all of which help to mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19. The UK is monitoring the situation closely and working with humanitarian partners inside Syria to respond to the outbreak and to sustain life-saving services.



Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Sanctions

18 May 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 13 May (HL Deb, col 681), what assessment they have made of the compatibility of the continuing prohibition on sales of dual use goods such as disinfectants and nitrous oxide for anaesthetics to the Syrian Ministry of Health with the exemption of medical supplies used for humanitarian purposes from sanctions on that country.

Answered 02 June 2020

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** EU Syria sanctions do not prohibit the sale, supply, transfer, export or finance of disinfectants, nitrous oxide and other goods required to combat Covid-19. Certain goods and their components can be used for internal repression, including through chemical attacks, and are therefore subject to prohibitions but even in those cases, humanitarian exemptions enable them to be sold or exported where the end user has demonstrated that the goods will be used to deliver humanitarian relief and will not be transferred to a designated person or entity. The Syrian Ministry of Health is not designated in the EU Syria sanctions. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with UK legislation and the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. On 12 May, the European Commission issued guidance on the humanitarian exemptions to the Syria sanctions regulations to support humanitarian organisations.