

Hansard: Written Question on Syria: Sanctions

2 September 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 16 July (HL6213), (1) when, and (2) how, they intend to transfer existing EU sanctions relating to Syria into UK law; and whether Parliament will be given time to discuss that transfer.

Answered 11 September 2020

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Her Majesty's Government is transferring existing EU sanctions into UK law through regulations made under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, including the Syria (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. These regulations will come into force on 1 January 2021, at which point existing EU sanctions will become autonomous UK sanctions. The Syria (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 were debated and approved in both Houses in April and May 2019.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Violence

2 September 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Igbo Councillors and MPs in the UK group Report on Fulani Herdsmen killing Igbos and Christians in South East Nigeria, published in July, which cites evidence of attacks against Christians and Igbo people in Nigeria’s south-eastern states and claims that 350 Igbo villages are occupied by Fulani herders and Shuwa Arab mercenaries.

Answered 11 September 2020

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria. While diverse communities live together peacefully across much of Nigeria, the country has experienced episodes of serious intercommunal violence, including in south-eastern states. 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 UK Government's assessment remains that religion is not the principal driver of most incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria. The underlying drivers of conflict are complex, and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality. In February, we hosted a conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria'. Attendees included representatives from civil society, faith and political leaders from across Nigeria, representatives from the Nigerian Government and UK parliamentarians. The discussion focused on the complex causes of conflict and explored solutions: a full report from the conference has been published and can be viewed on the Wilton Park website.

The UK Government is working with Nigeria to respond to the drivers of conflict. We are providing technical support to the Nigerian Government for the development of the National Livestock Transformation Plan. The plan aims to promote cattle-rearing in one place, rather than the traditional nomadic practice, to limit competition over land and resources leading to violence. The plan is currently being implemented in eight middle belt states and we are encouraging its adoption in other states, including south-eastern states.

We will continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to take urgent action to protect those at risk of intercommunal violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes and meet the needs of all communities.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Terrorism

2 September 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to assist law-enforcement mechanisms and courts in Nigeria with capacity-building to ensure that they investigate and prosecute perpetrators of Islamist attacks effectively.

Answered 15 September 2020

**Baroness Sugg:** In North East Nigeria, terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, have caused immense suffering to local communities. These groups seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion or belief, by indiscriminately attacking those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views.

The UK Government has supported Nigerian efforts to improve security, for example through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to the Adamawa, Yobe and Borno State Police Forces, which emphasised the importance of fair, transparent, and respectful treatment of civilians. Local police forces play an important role in responding to the terror threat.

We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities the importance of ensuring those responsible for terrorist incidents are held to account. It is important for the stabilisation of the North East that victims and those affected by the conflict see that justice has been done. We have also made clear the importance of ensuring suspects have access to justice, and that cases are carried out in accordance with Nigerian law and international human rights standards.



Hansard: Written Question on Nigeria: Terrorism

2 September 2020

**Baroness Cox**: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that militants from the Islamic State's West Africa Province abducted residents from Kukawa, Borno State, who had only recently returned home from refugee camps after local government officials claimed their town was safe; and what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria about the recent escalation of Islamist attacks in Nigeria’s northern and central-belt states.

Answered 15 September 2020

**Baroness Sugg:** We are concerned by reports that civilians from the town of Kukawa, Borno State, North East Nigeria were abducted by Islamic State West Africa after recently returning to the town from internally displaced persons' camps. The High Commission in Abuja has raised our concerns with the Governor of Borno State. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities the importance of ensuring that returns take place in accordance with international guidelines, and have urged the UN and Borno State Government to re-convene the returns task force so the taskforce can advise on whether locations are safe for returns.

The UK Government condemns all abductions by terrorist groups in Nigeria, including Islamic State West Africa. We are providing a comprehensive package of security, recovery and stabilisation assistance to help Nigeria tackle the terrorist threat and provide humanitarian assistance to meet the lifesaving needs of vulnerable communities.

The UK Government also condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence that occur across many states in Nigeria, including some Northern and Middle Belt states. A wide range of perpetrators are responsible for these incidents, including individuals and groups from various backgrounds and a range of faiths. Intercommunal violence affects both Christian and Muslim communities; we do not assess religion to be the principal driver of most incidents. The underlying drivers of conflict are more complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality. The Minister for Africa discussed intercommunal violence with the President's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari on 29 June.

We will continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all Nigerians.