



DEBATE PACK

CDP 2017-0196 | 23 October 2017

Global LGBT rights

Main Chamber

Thursday 26 October 2017

Debate nominated by the Backbench
Business Committee

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on Parliamentlive.tv

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1. Summary

Human rights of many LGBT people across the globe are being abused, for instance in Egypt, Azerbaijan and Chechnya. Arrests, imprisonment and mistreatment are common examples, and discrimination is even more widespread.

LGBT rights are not fully protected in all the British Overseas Territories. Homosexual acts in private between consenting adults were decriminalised under the United Kingdom's *Caribbean Territories (Criminal Law) Order 2000*. This illustrates that in exceptional circumstances the UK is prepared to impose social reform on the Overseas Territories. However, this has not ended all discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the Territories, in particular Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

In 2010 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office published [guidance to UK missions on promoting the human rights of LGBT people](#) in their host country, under the FCO Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights programme. The Government also produces annually a [Human Rights Report](#) which includes as one of its themes LGBT rights. The latest report states:

The UK is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of LGB&T people and to supporting the legal, cultural and social change required to make equality a reality for LGB&T people the world over.

[...] We continue to urge all countries to decriminalise consensual same-sex relations and put in place legislation that protects LGB&T people from discrimination - including in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services.

Through our Embassies and High Commissions we monitor and raise human rights concerns around the world. LGB&T equality remains a sensitive subject for many countries and much of this diplomatic lobbying is carried out behind closed doors and is not reported on.

2. Press Articles

Egypt's latest crackdown on gays creates fear in LGBT community

USA Today
18 October 2017
Jacob Wirtschafter

Chechen 'gay purge' victim: 'No one knows who will be next'

BBC News
Sarah Rainsford
18 October 2017

Tajikistan authorities draw up list of gay and lesbian citizens

The Guardian
17 October 2017

US government defends voting against UN resolution on gay death penalty

Pink News
4 October 2017
Nick Duffy

U.N. condemns anti-gay crackdowns in Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia

Reuters
13 October 2017

Outcry as Azerbaijan police launch crackdown on LGBT community

The Guardian
28 September 2017
Shaun Walker

Tanzania: 20 arrested in Zanzibar for 'homosexuality'

Africa News
16 September 2017

Gay Marriage Around the World

Pew Research Centre
8 August 2017

Britain can't just reverse the homophobia it exported during the empire

The Guardian
28 July 2017
Edward Akintola Hubbard

Uganda's other refugee crisis

Public Radio International
July 12 2017
Tonny Onyulo

Istanbul Pride: Turkish riot police fire rubber bullets at LGBT marchers

The Independent
25 June 2017
Chloe Farrand

It may be Pride month – but the world has little to be proud of when it comes to LGBT rights

The Independent
24 June 2017
Jack May

Report reveals the full brutality of anti-gay purges in Chechnya

The Conversation
Olga Andreevskikh
30 May 2017

Advancing LGBT rights in the Commonwealth is a delicate task

The Globe and Mail
18 March 2017
John Ibbitson

Creating change in Commonwealth countries

Bay Area Reporter
27 September 2016

3. Gov.uk

Alan Duncan speech to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

[Extract]

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3 October 2017

LGBT Rights

But, promoting our values isn't just about security. It is also about enabling all people to live a life with dignity, free from discrimination and violence. This principle underpins all our human rights work, at home and abroad; and human rights are an integral part of our foreign policy.

It is now 70 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that "all are born equal in dignity and rights". It is 50 years since being gay began to be decriminalised in the UK. Yet today, more than two generations later, people all over the world continue to suffer prejudice and discrimination because of their sexual orientation

That is why the UK is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls and of LGBT people everywhere, and to building a wider international consensus around efforts to advance equality and justice.

That includes here in the US, because this is another area on which the UK government and the US Administration do not see entirely eye to eye. We have made clear that we oppose all discrimination, including within the Armed Forces.

I know that our Consul General based here in Chicago has done a great deal of work to promote our 'Love is Great' campaign both here in Illinois and across the 14 states for which he is responsible - including participating in Chicago and Denver Prides and bringing over the London Gay Men's Chorus to sing with their Chicago counterparts a few months ago.

We will continue to encourage all countries, including the US, to develop and implement policies that extend human rights and freedoms to all.

Pride 2017: Theresa May's message

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street

8 July 2017

I want to wish everyone a wonderful day at Pride in London. Pride brings people together in joyful celebration of our values of freedom, tolerance and equality. It is a vivid display of the diversity which makes London one of the greatest cities in the world.

And at its heart, it is about a simple thing: love. That's why this year's theme – 'Love happens here' couldn't be more appropriate. It captures perfectly the warmth of this wonderful city and its people.

Whenever we face challenges or difficulties – as individuals, as communities or as a country – the way to overcome them is by standing together united in mutual support and solidarity. Over many years, the LGBT Plus community has demonstrated the truth of that statement.

This year marks 50 years since Parliament repealed the laws which criminalised homosexuality in England and Wales. This and other historic changes were brought about by the courage and determination of generations of LGBT Plus people, who fought to change the prevailing views of their time and gain the rights and respect which should always have been theirs. The anniversary shows us how far we have come as a society, but it also reminds us how much still remains to be done.

Around the world, cruel and discriminatory laws still exist – some of them directly based on the very laws which were repealed in this country fifty years ago. So the UK has a responsibility to stand up for our values and to promote the rights of LGBT Plus people internationally.

That's why we will continue to stand up for human rights, directly challenging at the highest political levels governments that criminalise homosexuality or practice violence and discrimination against LGBT Plus people. And here at home too, we must continue to stand up for true equality and respect for everyone, right across our United Kingdom. We must stamp out homophobic bullying in schools, and drive down homophobic and transphobic hate crime. We need to do all we can to build a country which works for everyone, where people of all backgrounds are free to be themselves and fulfil their full potential.

So as London once again sends a proud and positive message to the world, I wish everyone a fantastic Pride.

Minister condemns persecution of LGBT community in Chechnya
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
7 April 2017

Reports from international human rights organisations suggest that over 100 gay men have recently been detained in Chechnya, with some reports suggesting that at least three have been killed and many have been tortured.

Baroness Anelay said:

The detention and ill-treatment of over 100 gay men in Chechnya is extremely concerning. Reports have also suggested that at least three of these men have been killed. The statement by the regional Government, implying that such treatment towards LGBT people is acceptable, is particularly abhorrent. We condemn any and all persecution, and call on the authorities to promptly investigate and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are brought to justice.

The human rights situation for LGBT people in Russia has deteriorated significantly in recent years and we continue to voice our serious concern with Russian authorities at all levels. Russia's international human rights obligations require them to protect citizens who may be at risk of persecution. We expect the Russian government to fulfill its obligations to this end, and to uphold the rule of law.

4. PQs

Azerbaijan: LGBT People **16 Oct 2017 | 106097**

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports of arrests of people who are (a) perceived or (b) identify as LGBT in Azerbaijan.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are deeply concerned about recent reports of some members of the LGBT community in Azerbaijan being arrested and detained by the authorities. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have raised these specific reports with the Azerbaijan Government and have received assurances that all those arrested have now been released. We monitor the human rights situation in Azerbaijan closely and we regularly press the government to meet their international human rights obligations.

Embassies: LGBT People **13 Oct 2017 | 105291**

Asked by: Crispin Blunt

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which British Embassies flew the rainbow flag to mark the (a) Pride day of the local country, (b) International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia on 17 May 2017 and (c) public demonstration of support for the rights of LGBT people between 5 August 2016 and 4 August 2017.

Answering member: Mark Field | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The promotion and protection of LGBT rights is a UK foreign policy priority and our Embassies and High Commissions overseas are encouraged to use the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and local Pride events to support efforts to promote equality and non-discrimination. The rainbow flag is flown to mark these occasions at the discretion of the Head of Mission.

UK missions also support the rights of LGBT people through other means, including through private messaging to host governments, joint statements with like minded countries, and by supporting the activity of local LGBT civil society organisations.

Missions are not required to inform London of whether or how they mark international days, and no central records are kept.

Turkey: LGBT People
21 Sep 2017 | HL1440**Asked by: Lord Scriven**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have given to LGBT groups in Turkey.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government attaches great importance to supporting and promoting LGBTI rights internationally, including through our bilateral programme funds. Last year we supported a project in Turkey to raise public awareness and support the human rights of vulnerable groups – including LGBTI groups – focused specifically on strengthening networking and communication at local, national and regional level. This year we are supporting a project to raise awareness and build up the advocacy capacity of LGBTI citizens and refugees in Turkey with the active cooperation and participation of Bar associations, lawyers, social workers and rights-based civil society organisations. More generally, we regularly raise human rights in our dialogue with the Turkish government at all levels.

USA: Gender Recognition
20 Sep 2017 | 10026**Asked by: Catherine West**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US Administration on transgendered rights.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have not held any specific discussions on transgender rights with the US Administration. The US Administration is aware of our opposition to all forms of discrimination, and our commitment to promoting LGBT+ equality around the world.

Australia: LGBT People
11 Sep 2017 | 8603**Asked by: Catherine West**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has discussed (a) LGBT rights and (b) same-sex marriage with his Australian counterpart.

Answering member: Mark Field | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FCO ministers including myself have discussed LGBT rights and same-sex marriage with Australian counterparts in general terms. With the exception of marriage, LGBT people in Australia have the same rights and protections as anyone else. The question of whether same-sex marriage should be legalised in Australia is a matter for the Australian people to decide.

Chechnya: LGBT People
07 Sep 2017 | 7516

Asked by: David Linden

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the report, published by the Russian LGBT network on 31 July 2017, on the widespread detention and torture of LGBT people in the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of conflicting reports as to whether the state-sponsored purge of the LGBT community in Chechnya has continued. We remain in close touch with the Russian LGBT Network and, together with our international partners, are monitoring any new reports of the detention and torture of LGBT people in Chechnya. We condemn all such crimes, and continue to urge the Russian authorities to fulfil their commitment to carry out a full and thorough investigation to ensure that the perpetrators of previous persecution are brought to justice.

Chechnya: LGBT People
27 Jul 2017 | HL807

Asked by: Baroness Barker

Her Majesty's Government what assistance they have offered to human rights organisations seeking to investigate cases of reported killings, detentions and torture of people who are perceived, or identify, as LGBT in Chechnya.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK is continuing to work closely with and provide support to the relevant non-governmental organisations that are supporting victims fleeing the persecution in Chechnya. This is in keeping with the Embassy's longstanding support for LGBT rights in Russia.

Chechnya: LGBT People
27 Jul 2017 | HL806

Asked by: Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Russia regarding violence against, and the detention of, people who are perceived, or identify, as LGBT in Chechnya.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Officials from our Embassy in Moscow have raised our concerns at a senior level with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 28 April, the Foreign Secretary, together with his Dutch, German, French and Swedish counterparts, co-signed a letter to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov urging the Russian Government to investigate the reports and ensure the safety of activists and journalists investigating these abuses.

The UK has also taken action in a number of multilateral fora; making our concerns clear in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Council of Europe and the UN Human Rights Council.

Chechnya: LGBT People

27 Jul 2017 | HL805

Asked by: Baroness Barker

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the living conditions for gay men in Chechnya, including whether those conditions have changed for the better or worse in 2017.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have long held concerns about the human rights situation in Chechnya, in particular the hostile environment for members of the LGBT community. We assess the situation to have deteriorated significantly in 2017, and remain deeply concerned by the continued detention, torture and murder of LGBT people. Statements attributed to the authorities in Chechnya, implying that such treatment towards LGBT people is acceptable, are particularly abhorrent and could incite further violence against LGBT persons.

Turkey: LGBT People

25 Jul 2017 | HL702

Asked by: Lord Scriven

Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 27 June (HL 186), whether they intend to discuss the reported use of plastic bullets and the breaking up of the Gay Pride march in Istanbul with the government of Turkey.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We regularly discuss freedom of expression and assembly with the Turkish Government and have made clear our support to the LGBTI community in Turkey, including through our partnering of civil society organisations representing LGBTI issues. We will continue to highlight the importance of these issues in our bilateral contacts.

Chechnya: LGBT People

17 Jul 2017 | 4572

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of protection afforded to LGBT rights in Chechnya.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government has serious concerns about the treatment of the LGBT community throughout Russia. Our assessment is that there is no protection afforded to the LGBT community in Chechnya.

Russia: LGBT People
17 Jul 2017 | 4559

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his (a) US, (b) French and (c) Chinese counterparts on the persecution of LGBT people in (i) Chechnya and (ii) the rest of Russia.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government continues to raise the persecution of the LGBT community in Russia in international fora, doing so most recently at the June United Nations Human Rights Council. With the support of allies, we have also raised the issue in the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). Our diplomats in Moscow are in close touch with other Embassies in Moscow and are monitoring the situation.

Chechnya: LGBT People
17 Jul 2017 | 4558

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on reported (a) killings, (b) detention and (c) torture of LGBT people in Chechnya.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Our Embassy in Moscow is aware of, and urgently looking into, recent reports of further persecution of the LGBT community in Chechnya. We know of the murder of at least three members of the LGBT community earlier in the year and the torture and detention of many others. In response, the Government has increased the support we provide to Non Governmental Organisations(NGOs) working in Russia on LGBT rights and continue to call on the Russian Government to hold a full investigation.

Turkey: LGBT People
12 Jul 2017 | HL269

Asked by: Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of LGBTi rights in Turkey.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We take a strong interest in the situation of minority groups in Turkey, including the LGBTI community, and encourage the Turkish authorities to safeguard their welfare and to maintain non-discrimination. We work closely with Turkish civil society organisations active in this area.

Turkey: LGBT People
12 Jul 2017 | HL268

Asked by: Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Turkey following the cancellation of the Istanbul Pride March by the Istanbul authorities.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We regularly encourage Turkey to work towards the full protection of fundamental rights, including in the areas of freedom of expression and assembly. Our Embassy in Ankara and Istanbul Consulate were proud to fly the rainbow flag during Turkish Pride Week as a symbol of our support.

Turkey: LGBT People
11 Jul 2017 | HL186

Asked by: Lord Scriven

Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Turkey regarding the reported use of plastic bullets and the breaking-up of the Gay Pride march in Istanbul for the third year in a row.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of reports that security forces allegedly used plastic bullets against protestors in Istanbul on 25 June following the banning of the Pride Istanbul march by the city authorities. We regularly raise with Turkey the need to fully protect fundamental rights, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression and assembly. We also encourage protection of the rights of LGBTI persons, and work closely with Turkish civil society organisations active in this area. Our Embassy in Ankara and Consulate in Istanbul were proud to fly the rainbow flag during Turkish Pride Week as a symbol of our support.

Chechnya: LGBT People
11 Jul 2017 | 2444

Asked by: Roger Godsiff

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Russia on recent reports of torture and murder of gay people in Chechnya.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK remains deeply concerned by the continued persecution of members of the LGBT community in Chechnya. Through a statement issued on 7 April by the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State, Baroness Anelay of St Johns, the UK was one of the first countries to express concern and call for a full and thorough investigation to be undertaken by the Russian authorities, to ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are brought to justice. I delivered a statement condemning the reports in the House of Commons following the tabling of an Urgent Question on 20 April. On 28 April, The Foreign Secretary co-signed a letter to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov urging his government to investigate the reports and ensure the safety of activists and journalists investigating these abuses. UK officials in Russia continue to raise our concerns directly with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and are working closely with the relevant NGOs who are supporting victims fleeing the persecution in Chechnya.

Equality and Women's Rights: DUP Discussions

06 July 2017 | 626 c1295

Asked By: Nick Herbert

It is good to see the Rainbow flag flying over the Foreign Office in Pride week. Will my right hon. Friend assure me that she and the Government will remain fully committed to protecting LGBT rights, both at home and abroad, where there is work still to do?

Mr Speaker

At least as importantly, the Rainbow flag will be flying over the House.

Answered by: Justine Greening

I can absolutely give my right hon. Friend that assurance. There will be no backsliding on LGBT rights from this Government. We aim to continue the progress that has been made working throughout the House and across party lines. We will seek to do that not only in the UK but around the world. I will be part of the London Pride celebrations this weekend and I am proud that since the election we now have, I think, more openly LGBT MPs in this House than in any other Parliament in the world.

Russia: LGBT People

06 Jul 2017 | 1997

Asked by: Kate Hoey

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the safety of (a) LGBT fans travelling to the World Cup and (b) other LGBT travellers to Russia; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

As part of the 'Be on the Ball' campaign, the FCO has published specific travel advice for the World Cup next year (www.gov.uk/russia2018). We

recommend all British fans travelling to the World Cup in Russia in 2018 have a close look at this advice. FCO travel advice for Russia is clear on the need to be careful as an LGBT visitor to the country, particularly following the introduction of a law banning the promotion of 'non-traditional sexual relations' in June 2013, given its potential to legitimise homophobia and encourage violence against LGBT people. The issue of LGBT rights is one that we raise regularly with the Russian authorities.

Russia: LGBT People
04 Jul 2017 | 2042

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2017 to Question 71400, whether the continued persecution of LGBT people in (a) Chechnya and (b) other parts of Russia was raised at the June 2017 session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK raised our concerns over the continued persecution of the LGBT community in Chechnya at the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council through our national statements during the 'Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and the Special Rapporteur on Summary Executions' on 6 June, and under 'Item 4' ('Human rights situations that require the Council's attention') on 15 June. We continue to raise the wider issue of LGBT rights across Russia directly with the Russian authorities through bilateral channels and in multilateral fora.

Chechnya: LGBT People
26 Apr 2017 | 71402

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with EU counterparts on reports of persecution of LGBTQ people in Chechnya.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In addition to the statement issued by my Noble Friend, the Minister of State, The Baroness Anelay of St Johns, officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have worked with EU partners to coordinate an EU statement and statements on behalf of the EU in the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The EU is as one on the serious nature of this issue. We will look to raise the continued persecution of the LGBT community in Russia at the next session of the UN Human Rights Council in June.

Afghanistan: LGBT People
24 Apr 2017 | 71295

Asked by: Liz McInnes

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the new guidance on sexual orientation and gender identity in Afghanistan which may lead to the return of failed LGBT asylum seekers to Afghanistan.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials provided evidence to the Home Office (Annex A of the Country Policy and Information Note) in advance of the publication of the updated guidance.

The FCO will continue to provide analysis to the Home Office on issues relevant to the Country Policy. The Home Office consider each claim on its individual merits. Where someone is found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm in their country of origin because of their sexuality or gender identity, refuge will be granted.

Chechnya: LGBT People
20 Apr 2017 | 70842

Asked by: Wes Streeting

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the (a) Russian Government and (b) international organisations on the treatment of LGBT people in Chechnya, Russia.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are deeply concerned by reports of the detention and ill-treatment of over 100 men in Chechnya because of their sexual orientation. The Minister of State, The Baroness Anelay of St Johns, released a statement on 7 April outlining the Government's concern at the reports and called upon the Russian authorities to promptly investigate and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are brought to justice. The Foreign Secretary also expressed his serious concerns on social media. Officials from the British Embassy in Moscow reiterated these messages directly to the Russian government on 13 April, and are working with international partners in Russia as part of wider lobbying efforts. The EU made a statement on behalf of Member States at the Permanent Council of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 6 April and the UK Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe delivered a statement in the Committee of Ministers on 19 April.

British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: LGBT People

02 Mar 2017 | 64954

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which Government Minister has responsibility for the protection of LGBT rights in the (a) overseas territories and (b) Crown Dependencies.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The protection and promotion of human rights, including LGB&T rights, are primarily the responsibility of the Overseas Territory and Crown Dependency governments. Baroness Anelay of St Johns is the Minister of State for the Overseas Territories, excluding the Falklands and Gibraltar, for which I am responsible. The Secretary of State for Defence is responsible for the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. The Attorney General is responsible for the Crown Dependencies'.

Tanzania: Homosexuality

01 Mar 2017 | 64921

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Tanzanian counterpart on that Government's proposals to publish lists of homosexuals.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are concerned by the increased anti-homosexual rhetoric and steadily deteriorating LGBT environment in Tanzania. Our High Commission in Dar es Salaam has been monitoring the situation closely and will meet with the Minister of Health in the near future to raise our concerns.

Palestinians: LGBT People

17 Jan 2017 | 59252

Asked by: Ivan Lewis

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports he has received on the Palestinian Authority's commitment to equality for LGBT people in the Palestinian territories; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are deeply concerned about the treatment of the LGBT community in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), particularly in Gaza where they are subject to widespread social discrimination for cultural and religious reasons. Homosexuality remains a taboo subject in the OPTs. In some places, such as Ramallah, these taboos are relaxed, but in more conservative areas the situation is very challenging. There are no laws

protecting LGBT people, although we are not aware of any recent legal cases targeting the LGBT community.

LGBT People: Oppression

21 Dec 2016 | 57918

Asked by: Tim Farron

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which countries he has identified as actively persecuting LGBT citizens; and what discussions he has had with his counterparts in those countries relating to such persecution.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Defending the rights of LGB&T people is an important part of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's human rights work. There are many countries in which LGB&T people are discriminated against, including by the state. For example, there are 73 countries that criminalise private, consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex. All UK Embassies and High Commissions monitor and raise human rights issues in their host countries. We will continue to encourage all governments to respect the rights of LGB&T people, especially those that criminalise homosexuality and those that fail to defend the rights of LGB&T people against social prejudice and violence.

Cayman Islands: LGBT People

17 Nov 2016 | 52682

Asked by: David Lammy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2016 to Question 42054, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the government of the Cayman Islands complies with its international obligations to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government works closely with the Overseas Territories (OTs) on LGB&T equality to ensure that the OTs meet their international human rights obligations in this area. At the annual conference of Overseas Territories Attorneys General in September, the UK Solicitor General and the Attorneys General of the OTs, including Cayman, discussed cooperation on a number of important topics, including human rights.

In October, The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited the Cayman Islands. In meetings with the Cayman Islands Premier and Members of the Legislative Assembly, Baroness Anelay reiterated the need for the Cayman Islands Government to comply with its international obligations on LGB&T equality.

Earlier this month, the Solicitor General and Baroness Anelay co-chaired a session on human rights with OT leaders at the Joint Ministerial Council in London. Baroness Anelay emphasised this Government's resolve to continue to promote respect for human rights and ensure the highest standards of governance in the Territories. Participants committed themselves to working together to further develop the capability of Territories' National Human Rights Institutions, and to promote understanding of our shared international human rights obligations. We have not received representations from the Cayman Islands Government on this issue.

Whilst we expect all OT Governments to comply with their evolving international human rights obligations, legislating in this area is for OT Governments alone.

Turks and Caicos Islands: LGBT People

17 Oct 2016 | 47213

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in the Turks and Caicos Islands on improving LGBT rights.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government works closely with the Overseas Territories (OTs) on LGBT rights to ensure that all OTs meet their international human rights obligations in this area. In September, the UK Solicitor General chaired a human rights session at the annual conference of OT Attorneys General where LGBT equality was extensively discussed. The Solicitor General will co-chair a session in November with the Minister for the Overseas Territories, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, on human rights at the Joint Ministerial Council. We expect all OT Governments to comply with their evolving international obligations in the field of human rights. Legislating in this area is for OT Governments.

Falkland Islands: LGBT People

17 Oct 2016 | 47212

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in the Falkland Islands on improving LGBT rights.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government works closely with the Overseas Territories (OTs) on LGBT rights to ensure that all OTs meet their international human rights obligations in this area.

In September, the UK Solicitor General chaired a human rights session at the annual conference of OT Attorneys General where LGBT equality was discussed extensively.

The Solicitor General will co-chair a session in November with the Minister for the Overseas Territories, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, on human rights at the Joint Ministerial Council.

We expect all Overseas Territory Governments to comply with their evolving international obligations in the field of human rights. Legislating in this area is for OT Governments.

Uganda: LGBT People
28 Sep 2016 | HL1947

Asked by: Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent representations they have made to the government of Uganda about its treatment of Uganda's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are in regular dialogue with the Ugandan Government and Parliament on this issue and will continue to raise our concerns about any legislation which could lead to further persecution and discrimination against LGBT people and which is incompatible with Uganda's international treaty obligations. After the events of Uganda Pride in August, we raised our concerns with the Ugandan Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and worked with leading figures in the local LGBT Community and Ugandan Police Force. We remain committed to working with the government of Uganda and with civil society to promote diversity and tolerance, and to prevent violence and discrimination on any grounds.

Indonesia: LGBT People
05 Sep 2016 | 43961

Asked by: Nia Griffith

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to promote LGBT rights in Indonesia.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission in Jakarta have discussed this issue with a range of civil society organisations and have raised our concerns with Indonesian Ministers, including the Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. Embassy officials will continue to meet the LGBT community and human rights activists to understand their concerns and provide support where we are able.

Cayman Islands: LGBT People**11 Jul 2016 | 42054****Asked by: David Lammy**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans his Department has to publicly support LGBT rights and progress towards the recognition of same-sex unions in the Cayman Islands.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Work to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people forms an important part of our international human rights work. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office works through our Embassies and High Commissions, and through international organisations, including the Commonwealth, the EU and the UN, to promote tolerance and non-discrimination against LGBT people and to address discriminatory laws, in particular those that criminalise homosexuality. We expect all Overseas Territory governments to comply with their evolving international obligations in the field of human rights and hosted a conference in March this year for Territory representatives to discuss these issues. While we continue to encourage all OT governments to make progress on this agenda, ultimately legislation on recognition of same sex unions is a matter for OT governments.

Turkey: LGBT People**04 Jul 2016 | HL766****Asked by: Lord Scriven**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Turkey about the reported use of tear gas and rubber bullets at a LGBT pride march in Istanbul.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have not discussed these specific cases with the Government of Turkey. We regularly underline the importance of all fundamental freedoms as part of our broader dialogue with the Turkish government, including the freedom of assembly and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex persons. We did not fly the rainbow flag over our Embassy in Ankara over the weekend commencing 24 June. British Missions overseas fly the Diplomatic, Union or Consular flag throughout the year, the flags of the constituent countries of the UK on their respective national days and in certain countries the European flag. Missions do not fly any other flags.

Nigeria: LGBT People
14 Jun 2016 | HL455

Asked by: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria regarding the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities that the UK opposes any form of discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and any form of legislation that persecutes people on the basis of their sexuality. This has included opposition to Nigeria's Same Sex Marriage Bill which we believe infringes on the fundamental rights of expression and association, guaranteed by the Nigerian Constitution and by Nigeria's international treaty obligations. Along with other EU Member States, opposition to this Bill has formed part of our dialogue with the Nigerian authorities. Where we have been made aware of specific arrests or harassment founded on the basis of the Same Sex Marriage Bill, we have made representations to the authorities on behalf of those who have been subject to discrimination.

Bangladesh
24 May 2016 | 611 c381-383

Asked by: Simon Danczuk

What recent discussions he has had with his Bangladeshi counterpart on the protection of human rights in that country. [905038]

Asked by: Alex Cunningham

What representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh on violence towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in that country. [905044]

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I would like to start by expressing my condolences to the families of those who lost loved ones and homes to Cyclone Roanu over the weekend. I welcome the strong leadership shown by the Government of Bangladesh.

I raised my concerns about human rights and violence against LGBT people again this morning with the Bangladeshi high commissioner. The Minister of State, Department for International Development, my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest West (Mr Swayne), raised this with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh during his visit there in August 2015.

Asked by: Simon Danczuk

With extra-judicial killings, disappearances of political opponents and fraudulent elections, Bangladesh is quickly becoming a failed state. Does the Minister not think that it is time to start applying some form of sanctions to try to get Sheikh Hasina to hold a proper general election as soon as possible?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Like all those in this House, I was absolutely appalled by the senseless murders of the LGBT activists Xulhaz Mannan and Mahbub Tonoy, and we call on the Bangladeshi Government to bring those responsible for the killings to justice. The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. Extremist-related murders of members of minority religious groups and those whose views and lifestyles are contrary to Islam have increased in Bangladesh since February 2015, and we are discussing this regularly with the Government of that country.

Asked by: Alex Cunningham

The Minister has said that he has talked to the Bangladeshi Government, but does he really think that that Government are taking sufficient steps to tackle the issue of violence against LGBT people?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Clearly I do not. We have a certain amount of leverage in Bangladesh—we are the largest grant aid donor, giving £162 million in 2015-16—so our voice has some influence there. In the past year our human rights and democracy programme has provided safety training for bloggers, and we have also funded a project promoting the rights of LGBT groups in Bangladesh, but there is a huge amount more to do. We are not shy of pushing the Government of Bangladesh in the right direction, but sometimes it takes a little bit of time and persuasion. *[Official Report, 26 May 2016, Vol. 611, c. 1MC.]*

Asked by: Nusrat Ghani

The human rights of secularists in Bangladesh are threatened. Last month, Nazimuddin Samad, a law student in Dhaka, was killed for blogging, “I have no religion.” Will my right hon. Friend raise this with his Bangladeshi counterparts and ensure that secularists’ rights are also protected in Bangladesh?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There was not only the Daesh-claimed killing on 9 April in Dhaka of Nazimuddin Samad, but the murder on 23 April of Rezaul Karim Siddique in Rajshahi, in the east of the country. This is becoming an all too familiar occurrence in Bangladesh. There is a disagreement: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina blames the opposition parties for trying to destabilise the country and the victims for insulting Islam; we think the problem goes beyond that.

Asked by: Richard Fuller

Do not the Government of Bangladesh’s inability to protect human rights and the absence of effective opposition to that Government require the UK Government, which continues to provide substantial aid to Bangladesh, to have a timetable for intervention to ensure that democracy and human rights continue in that country and do not fall under a single-party state?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I do not think my hon. Friend is suggesting that we should tie our aid, which helps some of the worst-off people in the world, with political progress, but I take on board his point. There is much more we can do

in Bangladesh and we are trying, not least through the role of the new Commonwealth Secretary-General. Bangladesh is of course a member of the Commonwealth and we want the Commonwealth to take more action in that country, which at the moment is not heading in the right direction.

Dr Lisa Cameron

Around 70 to 80 women and children are trafficked from Bangladesh abroad each day. Law enforcement is failing to prevent forced prostitution. What discussions is the Foreign Secretary having to press that legal systems prevail for women and girls in Bangladesh?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The hon. Lady is absolutely right, although of course it is not just Bangladesh that is affected. We have done a lot on human trafficking through legislation; we have also done a lot on the supply chain, where I know there are concerns. We continue to raise the matter, not just in Bangladesh but in countries around the world. It is something we want to erase. It is unfortunately all too common and we take it seriously.

Asked by: Fabian Hamilton

I am delighted to hear that the Minister is so concerned about the recent killings of liberal activists in Bangladesh. He mentioned the brutal murder on 25 April of Xulhaz Mannan, editor of the country's first and only LGBT magazine, and the appalling fatal machete attack on blogger Nazimuddin Samad on 6 April. Surely the Government of Bangladesh have been far too slow to act. What additional pressure are he and the Government prepared to put on the Government of Bangladesh to ensure that these murders are dealt with properly?

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government of Bangladesh would argue, as the high commissioner did to me this morning, that one of the victims of these crimes was a cousin of a former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, so this is something they are taking extremely seriously. I do believe that Bangladesh has a problem, and we will continue to talk to our Bangladeshi counterparts on a range of issues, some

5. Other Parliamentary material

5.1 Urgent Questions

Persecution and Detention of LGBT Citizens: Chechnya 20 April 2017 | 624 cc780-790

Asked By: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on allegations of persecution and detention of LGBT citizens in Chechnya, Russia, and on what discussions the Government have had with their counterparts on the issue.

Answering Member: The Minister for Europe and the Americas (Sir Alan Duncan)

The arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of over 100 men in Chechnya because of their sexual orientation is of deep concern to the UK. Credible reports suggesting that at least four people have been killed and many have been tortured are particularly shocking. Statements by the regional Government in Chechnya that appear to condone and incite violence against LGBT people are despicable.

We condemn any and all persecution, and call on the authorities promptly to investigate and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are brought to justice. That would be in accordance with international human rights commitments adopted by the Russian Government to respect the human rights of all individuals.

The Minister of State, my noble Friend Baroness Anelay of St Johns, released a statement on 7 April outlining the Government's concern at the reports and called upon the Russian authorities promptly to investigate and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are indeed brought to justice.

The Foreign Secretary has expressed his serious concerns through social media. Officials from the British embassy in Moscow reiterated those concerns directly to the Russian Government on 13 April, and we are working with international partners in Russia as part of wider lobbying efforts. The EU made a statement on behalf of member states at the Permanent Council of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 6 April, and the UK permanent representative to the Council of Europe delivered a statement on behalf of the UK in the Committee of Ministers on 19 April.

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

Thank you for granting this urgent question this morning, Mr Speaker.

I praise the Minister for his sincerity on this issue, which he takes very seriously, and for his comments. This is truly a shocking anti-gay campaign, involving over 100, and possibly several hundred, men. I praise the non-governmental organisations and journalists in Russia, the UK and elsewhere who have brought this issue to public attention. We are talking about detention, beatings, abuse and electric shock

treatments, and—I do not say this lightly—some have talked about gay concentration camps. We have also heard of at least four killings.

The LGBT community in Cardiff South and Penarth has repeatedly raised this issue with me, and PinkNews tells me that its petition on it is its most signed ever. LGBT Labour wrote to the Prime Minister on this issue last week; sadly, it did not get a reply, and the matter was just passed on to the Foreign Office. There have also been representations from MEPs from all parties.

President Putin already has a record of persecuting the LGBT community. He also takes a keen interest in Chechnya, so is he turning a blind eye, or is he complicit in the actions of President Kadyrov? Let us remember that President Kadyrov's spokesman said that you cannot detain people who simply do not exist.

Shaun Walker of *The Guardian* expressed the horrors we are seeing. He described the situation of an individual who, at least once a day, had metal clamps attached to him that

“sent powerful electric shocks through his body. If he managed not to scream, others would join in, beating him with wooden sticks or metal rods”

and demanding

“to know the names of other gay men he knew in Chechnya.”

If we had any doubts about the brutality of this regime towards the LGBT community, we need not have them any longer.

I praise the Minister's sincerity on this issue, but I have to ask why it has taken the Foreign Secretary so long to speak out—a tweet simply is not enough. We have also not heard clear condemnation from the Prime Minister. Has she or the Foreign Secretary spoken directly to the Russian or Chechen Governments? Have they called in the Russian ambassador? Does the Foreign Secretary now regret his cancelled trip to Moscow, where he could have raised these atrocities in Chechnya, not to mention those in Syria? Was the issue raised in the G7 discussion about sanctions on Russia? Will the Minister say more about what is being done to co-ordinate with EU colleagues and the United States on this issue?

The Foreign Secretary tweeted that the situation was outrageous, but the Foreign Office has referred questions on whether we will provide refuge to people fleeing this horrendous persecution in Chechnya to the Home Office. As yet, there is no clarity, and I hope the Minister can provide some.

Answering Member: Sir Alan Duncan

Let me say at the outset that I applaud the hon. Gentleman for raising this topic, and I hope it is one around which the House can unite without any party politics, because the strong, united message he is calling for is exactly the one we should be sending.

The actions in these reports are utterly barbaric. One of the most disgusting things I have seen is a Chechen security source stating that

these arrests are part of what he called a preventative clean-up. That followed a request by an LGBT group called Gay Russia simply for licences for gay pride parades in the North Caucasus—the group had not yet even applied for a permit in Chechnya.

Human rights groups report that these anti-gay campaigns and killings are orchestrated by the head of the Chechen republic, Ramzan Kadyrov. He has carried out other violent campaigns in the past, and this time he is directing his efforts at the LGBT community. Sources have said that he wants the community eliminated by the start of Ramadan. Such comments, attitudes and actions are absolutely beyond contemptible.

I assure the hon. Gentleman and the House that the Government fully condemn this action. We do use all engagement with Russia to make our voice clear, and I did so, personally, with the deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Vladimir Titov. I met him two or three weeks ago, and we spoke about general human rights matters, but also about Chechnya. I hope the House will be fully united in giving the strongest possible siren message to Russia, and to Chechnya in particular, that this kind of activity is beyond contempt and not acceptable in the world in which we live.

[...]

UN Vote on the Independent Expert for the LGBT Community 08 November 2016 | 616 cc1398-1404

Asked by: Sarah Champion

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the planned United Nations vote on the validity of a UN independent expert for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Answering Member: The Minister for Europe and the Americas (Sir Alan Duncan)

I thank the hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) for her question, and warmly welcome her reappointment to the Front Bench.

As the House may know, the issue before us concerns the United Nations Human Rights Council and its recent very welcome decision to create the post of independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, or, in House parlance, what we could call LGBT. The person chosen for that role was Mr Vitit Muntarbhorn, from Thailand. The United Kingdom was successfully re-elected to the Human Rights Council only last month, but we are now having to campaign in New York, where a group of African delegations have challenged the mandate of the independent expert and are trying to reverse the decision and the appointment. I am most grateful to the hon. Lady for giving me an opportunity to explain the steps we are taking, which I am certain will enjoy the support of the whole House. We are obviously strongly opposed to this attempt to reverse the mandate and to block the final approval of the process—something that should be seen as straightforward and procedural.

Opponents of this important mandate misunderstand its nature, which is proportionate and was properly established by the Human Rights Council. Since Friday night, when we discovered that this was happening, the UK's entire diplomatic network has been making that point in every capital across the globe. Only this morning, for instance, my noble Friend Baroness Anelay, who is visiting Sri Lanka, secured the agreement of her hosts in Colombo to join us by supporting an amendment tabled by a group of Latin American countries, which were the main proponents of the appointment in the first place.

The Government, and all in the House, believe that the chance to live with dignity, free from violence or discrimination, should never be undermined by a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. All people are born with equal rights, and should enjoy the protection of the United Nations. Acts of violence against LGBT people take place in all regions of the world, including our own. We condemn such violence and discrimination, and we strongly support the new independent expert in his work. We will resist any and all attempts to block his appointment and his mandate.

Asked by: Sarah Champion

I thank the Minister for his upfront declaration of the Government's intent on this matter. It is however frustrating that it took an urgent question to find out the Government's position.

As the Minister said, in June of this year the UN Human Rights Council adopted an historic resolution mandating the appointment of an independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It effectively created the first ever UN LGBT human rights watchdog. The motion put before the UN General Assembly by the African nations today could reverse that decision, aiming to defer consideration of, and action on, this Human Rights Council resolution. The motion seeks to suspend, and potentially get rid of, the UN independent expert on LGBT violence and discrimination.

This motion has a realistic chance of passing, securing votes from the African Group and many of the nations within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. It is crucial that this matter should be raised in the Chamber because it is concrete evidence of the systematic attempt to frustrate the protection and advancement of LGBT human rights internationally.

In many countries persecution based on who people love or are sexually attracted to, or on their gender identity, is extreme. Often, this discrimination and violence is state-sanctioned. According to a UN human rights report last year, at least 76 countries retain laws that criminalise and harass people on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. This includes fines, torture, hard labour, forced "conversion" therapy, lifelong prison sentences, and the death penalty.

The UK is a tolerant country, yet according to Galop, a UK-based anti-violence LGBT charity, we have seen a 147% increase in hate crimes against LGBT people in July, August and September of this year, with one in four gay young people having experienced homophobic bullying. I know the Minister is as appalled as I am at these statistics and agrees

with me that it is crucial symbolically, politically and practically that the actions of the UK put a stop to this persecution once and for all and that we are strong in our condemnation of this motion. So I ask the Government to take this opportunity to show zero tolerance to violence and discrimination against LGBT people in all its forms and offer a firm commitment to working with our international allies to eradicate violence, hatred and intolerance towards people based on their gender or sexuality.

I specifically ask the Secretary of State to clarify a couple of points. Has the UK's position been made clear to other member states ahead of the potential vote, specifically the African nations? What work are the Government undertaking to promote LGBT rights abroad both through the UN and in regular interactions with individual nation states? Finally, does the Minister intend to make his view on the Africa Group motion public and will he make a statement following the General Assembly meeting today, to update the House on this matter?

Answering Member: Sir Alan Duncan

I do not think I dissent from a word the hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) has said; we are as one, and obviously I have a deep personal interest in this issue. I commend her on raising this matter for the very point Mr Speaker has just made: we are making this public through the House and this is a very useful opportunity for the House to do so. May I also say that the hon. Lady is well-named for the purpose she has adopted today?

This issue has not been publicly aired in great detail already because it has sprung up rather suddenly; it is an emerging issue that requires fast-moving diplomatic effort. It is unusual for something to be decided in the Human Rights Council and then go to the General Assembly with that assembly used as a forum to try to block something. This does not normally happen, and indeed it should not happen in this way.

The hon. Lady asked whether the UK's view is clear. I think it now is, and the view of a united House of Commons will redouble the view of the Government. We make our view on LGBT issues very clear in all our diplomatic representations overseas. For example, advancing the interests and rights of LGBT people is very much a part of many of our Department for International Development programmes. She asked whether we will make public what happens. I think that this will be followed, although whether it justifies a statement will depend on Mr Speaker. Our views will be very clear, however, and I can assure the House that we will be fighting in every capital in the world to ensure that this decision goes the right way.

Asked by: Crispin Blunt

A depressing number of the countries that are likely to vote for this resolution are members of the Commonwealth. Can my right hon. Friend update the house on the work that is going on to persuade countries other than Sri Lanka not to vote for the resolution? What further work is the Foreign Office doing to take the Commonwealth countries on the same journey that the rest of the world is on in relation to rights for LGBT people?

Answering Member: Sir Alan Duncan

This is a long and continuing journey of persuasion for many Commonwealth countries, and it is always very disappointing that some of them do rather lag behind on this issue. I can assure my hon. Friend that every single post in our diplomatic network has been issued with clear instructions to make representations to get their country to vote in the right way in the General Assembly, where we expect the decision to take place either today or on Thursday.

[...]

5.2 Early Day Motions

LGBT people in Chechnya

EDM 1142 (session 2016-17)

Clive Lewis

18 April 2017

That this House notes with grave concern the Human Rights Watch report of a brutal campaign against LGBT people in the semi-autonomous Russian region of Chechnya, with more than 100 men reportedly detained over several weeks in connection with their non-traditional sexual orientation, or suspicion of such as part of a state-backed crackdown; is horrified by reports from LGBT groups in Russia that those who have escaped were imprisoned in groups of 30 to 40 and tortured with electric currents or beatings, some of them fatal; is dismayed that the human rights situation for LGBT people in Russia generally has deteriorated significantly in recent years; welcomes the Government's initial condemnation of these incidents but urges to raise this matter at the highest diplomatic levels; and expects the Russian Government to fulfil its international duties to protect its citizens at risk of persecution and uphold the rule of law.

Rapid response funding for LGBT groups and World Aids Day

EDM 727 (session 2016-17)

Stephen Doughty

28 November 2016

That this House welcomes the report of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance on World AIDS Day 2016 on the new Rapid Response Fund for LGBT groups in 29 countries whose HIV services are threatened by stigma, discrimination and violence; is concerned that men who have sex with men are 19 times more likely, and trans women 49 times more likely, to be living with HIV than the general population, and that in over 78 countries homosexuality is criminalised; emphasises that AIDS will not be ended by 2030 without ending the human rights abuses that affect people most at risk of HIV; further welcomes the recent generous Government contribution to the Global Fund, but is concerned about reports that UK bilateral funding for HIV/AIDS may be reduced and that the impact of this on all people living with HIV/AIDS, including LGBT communities; is alarmed that overall funding for the global HIV response is in decline; is further concerned that the space for civil society is being

squeezed in a growing number of countries; and calls on the Government to ensure that bilateral funding is available to support community organisations which advocate for the human rights of populations most affected by HIV and provide services that ensure no-one is left behind.

Terrorist attacks in Orlando (no. 3)

EDM 196 (session 2016-17)

13 June 2016

Jim Shannon

That this House condemns the atrocious attacks on the LGBT community in Orlando on 12 June 2016 which resulted in 50 dead and 55 wounded; conveys its deepest sympathies to the families and to the American people at this time; notes that all those impacted by this act of terror and hate will be in our thoughts and prayers; and wishes all those injured speedy recoveries.

Criminalization of people on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity across the Commonwealth

EDM 715 (session 2015-16)

17 November 2015

Caroline Lucas

That this House is very concerned that 41 out of 53 Commonwealth nations still criminalise people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity; understands that this is over half the total number of countries that criminalise LGBT people; is further concerned that criminalisation severely impacts people's ability to access and receive safe, non-discriminatory health services, which increases vulnerability to HIV; further understands that this highlights the need for the Government to continue its work in a coordinated way across departments and with civil society to promote the rights of LGBT people and to call for decriminalisation across the Commonwealth; notes that hon. Members have a role to play in promoting non-discrimination and ensuring no-one is left behind; and commends the International HIV/AIDS Alliance's efforts and its current campaign, Paradise or Persecution, in raising awareness of the scale of criminalisation across the Commonwealth and pushing for change.

6. Further reading

State-Sponsored Homophobia report 2017, International lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), May 2017

Sexual orientation laws in the world – overview (map), ILGA, May 2017

Discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 4 May 2015

Human Rights Watch Country Profiles: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Human Rights Watch, 23 June 2017

LGBT Rights, Human Rights Watch (website)

LGBTI rights, Amnesty international (website)

The Kaleidoscope Trust (website)

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

APPG on Global LGBT Rights (website)

Representations: Backbench Debates, Tuesday 17 October 2017
HC 9999 | Published 19 Oct 2017

Transcript of representation from Nick Herbert and Crispin Blunt
(See Part VII Questions 21-23)

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