



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0112, 3 May 2019

Women human rights defenders

Summary

This House of Commons Library debate pack has been prepared in advance of a general debate on celebrating the work of women Human Rights Defenders globally. The debate will be led by Catherine West MP, and will take place on Tuesday 7 May 2019 in Westminster Hall, starting at 11.30 am.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Press Articles

1.1 Press releases

Amnesty International

[Brazil: Arrests are first sign of progress in investigation into killing of Marielle Franco](#)

12 March 2019

Centre for Strategic and International Studies

[#NotHer? International Women's Day and the Attack on Female Human Rights Defenders](#)

8 March 2019

Leigh Day

[Celebrating the courage of women human rights defenders](#)

8 March 2019

Amnesty International

[UN member states must demand release of women human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia](#)

6 March 2019

AWID

[Activists call for a UN-wide policy to support and protect women human rights defenders](#)

1 March 2019

AWID

[States must respect, protect and fulfil the rights of WHRDs](#)

1 March 2019

UK Mission to the United Nations Geneva

[Human Rights Council 40: UK statement on human rights defenders and torture](#)

28 February 2019

International Service for Human Rights

[WHRDs | Women leaders of change gather to demand respect and recognition for their work](#)

26 February 2019

United Nations Human Rights

[Women human rights defenders must be protected, say UN experts](#)

29 November 2018

United Nations Human Rights

[Iran must protect women's rights advocates – UN experts](#)

29 March 2018

Amnesty International

[Meet Vitalina, a woman human rights defender and an LGBTI activist](#)

1.2 Articles and blogs

International Observatory Human Rights

[Justice for Murdered Brazilian Human rights Defender Marielle Franco](#)

14 March 2019

BBC

[Saudi Arabia puts women's rights activists on trial](#)

13 March 2019

Human Rights Watch

[Iran: Decades-Long Sentence for Women's Rights Defender](#)

12 March 2019

Guardian

[Women worldwide must be heard and respected](#)

8 March 2019

Reuters

[No turning back for Iran's hijab protesters despite crackdown: activists](#)

24 January 2019

Human Rights Defenders

[Russian human rights defender Ludmila Mikhailovna Alexeeva is no longer](#)

10 December 2019

Guardian

[Women's rights take centre stage as murdered activists are remembered](#)

29 November 2018

2. Parliamentary Business

2.1 Ministerial Statements

[Progress since the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict](#)

12 Mar 2015 | Written statements | HCWS 396

2.2 Debates

[Sexual Violence](#)

HL Deb 2 April 2019 c46-62GC

[International Women's Day](#)

HL Deb 7 March 2019 c770-822

2.3 Parliamentary Questions

[Saudi Arabia: Females](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions the Foreign Secretary has had with (1) United States, and (2) European counterparts about making joint diplomatic representations to the government of Saudi Arabia to demand the release of imprisoned women human rights defenders in that country.

28 March 2019 | Written questions | HL14561

Asked by: Baroness Helic | **Answered by:** Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon |
Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Nasrin Sotoudeh](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Iran on the sentencing of Nasrin Sotoudeh.

15 Mar 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 231542

Asked by: Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh | **Answered by:** Alistair Burt |
Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights: Females](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department has taken to help protect women human rights defenders around the world from (a) death threats, (b) attacks, (c) defamation campaigns, (d) judicial harassment and (e) criminalisation of their work.

14 March 2019 | Written questions | 229707

Asked by: Clwyd, Ann | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Middle East: Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the challenges facing human rights defenders and rights-focused organisations operating in (a) Israel and (b) the occupied Palestinian territories.

13 Feb 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 217453

Asked by: Burden, Richard | **Answered by:** Alistair Burt | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

Asked by: Nick Herbert (Arundel and South Downs) (Con)

Brave *human rights defenders* are alerting us to a terrible new wave of persecution of lesbian

Answered by: Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. We are and remain deeply concerned by the recent reports of the renewed wave of persecution of LGBT folk in Chechnya. Both the Foreign Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Minister for Europe and the Americas have in the past week made it clear to their Russian counterparts that we must stop such persecution and hold those responsible to account.

22 Jan 2019 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 653 c110

[Human Rights](#)

Asked by: Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con)

Human rights defenders face particular challenges in the Gaza strip, which is controlled What are we doing to support *human rights defenders* in the Gaza strip?

Answered by: Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I reassure my hon. Friend that Ministers, particularly my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Middle East, do make clear our concerns about the rights of human rights defenders and the importance of their work in every part of the world.

22 Jan 2019 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 653 c110

[Human Rights](#)

Asked by: Stephen Timms

and repression of *human rights defenders* around the world. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women's rights activists ... for embassies about support for *human rights defenders*, to aid clarity and consistency. When does the Minister

Answered by: Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I do not want to put my ministerial colleague under undue pressure, but this is clearly something that we consider a major priority. Obviously, as Ministers we raise human rights issues with all our overseas counterparts, in both public and private forums. In December, as part of the UK's commitment to freedom of religious belief, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, who is sitting to my right, announced an

independent global review of the persecution of Christians, which will contain recommendations on practical steps in respect of that persecution. Of course, that applies to religious beliefs of all sorts.

22 Jan 2019 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 653 c109

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans the Government has to respond to the reported surge in the repression of human rights defenders worldwide; and whether the Government plans to commit to a renewed strategy of support and protection.

06 Jun 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 149037

Asked by: Sweeney, Mr Paul | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the safety and security of human rights defenders throughout the world.

16 Jan 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 206358

Asked by: Shannon, Jim | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights: Legal Profession](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the rule of law and protect lawyers in (a) Iran and (b) other countries where those working on human rights are at risk.

12 Dec 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 198873

Asked by: Gethins, Stephen | **Answered by:** Alistair Burt | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect people who defend human rights across the world.

27 Nov 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 194666

Asked by: McKinnell, Catherine | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK embassies have reported progress on the implementation of the Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

06 Nov 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 185635

Asked by: Double, Steve | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) support and (b) protect human rights defenders in the UK's human rights priority countries.

22 Oct 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 179149

Asked by: Moon, Mrs Madeleine | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to maintain the level of funding that is given to the EU to support human rights defenders after the UK leaves the EU.

06 Jun 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 149038

Asked by: Sweeney, Mr Paul | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Human Rights](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much money was spent by the Government on (a) protecting and (b) supporting human rights defenders globally in each year since 2009-10.

29 Mar 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 134292

Asked by: Johnson, Diana | **Answered by:** Mark Field | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Natalia Estemirova](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Russia about the need to ensure that those responsible for the death of human rights defender, Natalia Estemirova, are held to account.

19 Mar 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL6031

Asked by: Lord Judd | **Answered by:** Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3. Organisations and further reading

Amnesty International, [Celebrate Human Rights Defenders and every day bravery](#), 29 April 2019

Civicus, [In Defence of Humanity: Women Human Rights Defenders and the struggle against silencing](#), 15 March 2019

UN, [Can there be peace and security without women human rights defenders? CSW63 Side Event](#), 12 March 2019, webcast

European Parliament, [European Parliament resolution of 14 February 2019 on women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia](#), 14 February 2019

United Nations, [Situation of women human rights defenders: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#), January 2019

Human Rights Defender Hub, University of York, [Countering the Stigmatization of Human Rights Defenders](#), Policy Brief 5, October 2018

Protection International, [Protection International pays tribute to all women human rights defenders](#), 8 March 2018

Amnesty International, [Human rights defenders – some of the bravest people in the world](#), 12 January 2018

AWID, [Women Human Rights Defenders confronting extractive industries](#), 21 April 2017

European Union, [EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders](#), 21 June 2016

Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition, [Gendering Documentation: A Manual For and About Women Human Rights Defenders](#), 2015

AWID, [Our Right to Safety: Women Human Rights Defenders' Holistic Approach to Protection](#), 11 March 2014

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Human Rights Defenders: Protecting the Right to Defend Human Rights](#), Factsheet 29, 2004

[Women human rights defenders](#) [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website]

[Front Line Defenders](#)

[Women Human Rights Defenders](#), AWID

[Women human rights defenders](#), Human Rights House Foundation

[Women Human Rights Defenders](#), PBI

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