



DEBATE PACK

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International development and gender-based violence

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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.

1. Background

Target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals is to “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls (VAWG) in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.”

1.1 UK Government initiatives

In 2018 DFID published its [Strategic vision for gender equality](#).

This included a commitment to:

Challenge and change unequal power relations between men and women, and negative attitudes and discriminatory practices that hold women and girls back.

Build the inter-linked foundations which will have a transformational impact for girls and women: **elimination of violence against women and girls**; access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; girls’ education; and women’s economic and political empowerment, including an increase in women’s participation and leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes, at community and national levels.

Protect and empower girls and women in conflict, protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies, to rebuild their lives and societies, by listening to their needs and by increasing the meaningful and representative participation and leadership of women.

DFID points out that the sexual exploitation and abuse experienced by women and girls can have lifelong and inter-generational effects. It estimates the global prevalence of child sexual abuse at 18% for girls and 7.6% for boys, and that approximately 20% of refugee and displaced women experience sexual violence.

In humanitarian crises and conflict inequalities escalate. DFID reports that gender-based violence can increase to affect over 70% of girls and women.

The Government has a specific [Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018 – 2022](#) in which it commits to increase its work to reduce all forms of violence against girls and women, to reduce the number of girls and women affected by trafficking and modern slavery and to empower women to play a role in rebuilding their lives, and in building peace, reconciliation and their societies.

In 2019 the Government announced a new programme: [What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale](#), to help stop violence against one million of the world’s poorest women and girls.

The seven-year project is designed to challenge violent behaviour against women and girls across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. That programme totalling £67.5 million programme builds on a pilot programme—What works to prevent violence.

1.2 How effective are Government programmes on VAWG

In 2016, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) reported that the Government had made a strong commitment to leading efforts to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) around the world. It gave DFID's programmes a Green rating in its traffic light system. ICAI explained the reasons for this assessment:

In light of its active learning stance, a strong research portfolio and some good-quality programming, combined with a strong leadership role at the international level.

However, it noted that the programmes remained small relative to the problem they sought to address, and that the key challenge for the future would be taking successful initiatives to scale.

In a [follow up report in 2017](#) however, ICAI found that progress was slow and it was "concerned that the scale and intensity of VAWG programming does not appear to have increased."

1.3 Impact of Covid-19

This [UN Inter-agency statement on VAWG](#) in the context of Covid-19 highlights six critical areas for action if governments are to live up to the UN Secretary General's call for all governments to make the prevention and redress of VAWG a key part of their national Covid-19 response plans. The statement emphasises the importance of funding for women's rights organisations, access to services for VAWG survivors, police and justice response, and prevention.

The statement says:

Violence against women and girls is pervasive during normal times. It is a product of unequal gender power relations and discrimination against women and girls, which is exacerbated by conflict and humanitarian crises, poverty, economic stress, and, at times, the harmful use of alcohol or other drugs. Some of the measures to contain COVID-19, such as restrictions in movement and staying at home have increased exposure for those already in abusive relationships. This has been compounded by increased burdens and stress from domestic and care responsibilities and from loss of livelihoods, combined with fewer opportunities for social contact with informal and formal networks and limited access to services and community support.

The Centre for Global Development (a US-based think tank) cautions on making hasty conclusions about [the incidence of VAWG](#) as a result of Covid-19:

In some countries, reported rates of violence against women have both increased and decreased during COVID-19, depending on the type of violence and source of reporting. For example, in April in South Africa, calls to gender-based violence centers were reportedly increasing, while a group working closely with the National Prosecuting authority, police, and the Department of Social Development reported in May that rape and sexual assault cases were down by 50 percent. These conflicting reports are not

unique, but they raise many questions around how to interpret and draw conclusions from different sources of data.

In particular, it points out that VAWG data specifically suffers from widespread underreporting due to stigma, shame, and fear of retaliation, which may further compound biases in reported data.

2. Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[**An important milestone for women, peace and security**](#)

United Nations Development Programme

Asako Okai

10 November 2020

[**Why Covid school closures are making girls marry early**](#)

The Guardian

Harriet Grant

7 September 2020

[**Gender-based violence is a global pandemic**](#)

The Times

Anthony Mangnall

19 June 2020

[**Covid-19 has gifted us a chance to end gender-based violence. We must take it**](#)

The Guardian

Graça Machel

30 May 2020

[**Climate breakdown 'is increasing violence against women'**](#)

The Guardian

Fiona Harvey

29 January 2020

[**Hague and Jolie's sexual violence scheme 'letting survivors down'**](#)

The Guardian

Kate Hodal and Liz Ford

9 January 2020

*[Related report: [**The UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative**](#), Independent Commission for Aid Impact, 9 January 2020]*

[**British government takes global lead on violence against women and girls**](#)

The Guardian

Liz Ford

2 November 2019

3. Press releases

[Gender equality: Foreign Secretary's speech to United Nations General Assembly 2020](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
5 October 2020

Dominic Raab outlined the UK's ambition for gender equality at UNGA 2020, on the 25th anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Declaration.

Mr. President, Excellencies, the Beijing Declaration was a watershed moment, uniting countries to advance gender equality and further the empowerment of women and girls.

25 years on, we have made great strides. So at the start of 2020, more girls were in school than ever before. Fewer were dying during pregnancy and childbirth.

But COVID-19 has halted that progress. We've seen a global surge in gender-based violence. On top of that, an estimated 20 million adolescent girls who may not return to school, which in turn increases the risk of harm, including from things like female genital mutilation and child marriage.

We can't build back better without focusing on gender equality and without the empowerment of women and girls.

So the UK is working with our international partners to ensure gender equality is a central element of the COVID-19 recovery.

We will continue to champion 12 years of quality education for every girl in the world.

And as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence, we will tackle the root causes of violence, including using education to stop violence before it starts.

We will continue our work on [Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict](#), supporting survivors and holding the perpetrators accountable.

Next we will champion women's rights, so at the most basic level, women can decide for themselves when to have children, and how many to have.

Next year, through our Presidency of COP26, we will be promoting a clean, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19. And we want to give a voice to the most affected by climate change, including women and girls.

Global Britain is proud to be a force for good in the world, holding up democracy and human rights as our guiding lights.

We must use this moment as a catalyst for change, so that all women and girls have equal rights, so that they can fulfil their potential.

[International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Lord Ahmad's statement](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
19 June 2020**

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon urges global law makers to strengthen justice processes to hold perpetrators to account and respond effectively to the needs of survivors.

Minister of State for Human Rights and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Today, is the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict and we are reminded that rape and other forms of sexual violence are still used as weapons of war. These atrocious acts are never acceptable in any circumstance and must be prevented. The UK remains committed to end sexual violence in conflict, hold perpetrators to account and respond effectively to the needs of survivors.

As the Prime Minister's Special Representative for preventing sexual violence, I am proud of our achievements since launching the [Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative \(PSVI\)](#) in 2012. The UK has trained over 17,000 military and police personnel on sexual violence issues, deployed UK experts over 90 times to affected countries, and committed over £46 million in funding to support projects around the world. Unfortunately, much more still needs to be done.

Five years ago at our [Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict](#), we told the world it was Time to Act. This year, we are once again bringing together the international community at our conference Time For Justice: Putting Survivors First.

We will agree concrete actions with our international partners that will make a real difference to the lives of survivors. These will include international standards for gathering and preserving evidence, accountability and justice mechanisms, and an international declaration of humanity.

[UK launches landmark draft 'Murad Code' to support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence as COVID-19 pandemic increases suffering](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
19 June 2020**

- HRH The Countess of Wessex, alongside Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the UK Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, joined member states at a virtual UN event for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict on Friday
- during the event the UK launched the draft Murad Code, created alongside Nobel Laureate Nadia Murad and the Institute for

International Criminal Investigations (IICI), to strengthen justice for survivors around the world

- it upholds international standards for recording crimes with sensitivity to survivors. It prevents the further traumatising of survivors by governments, international organisations, or civil society actors. It reinforces evidence collection, strengthening justice and accountability
- the Code comes as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic amplifies suffering for survivors, with restrictions on movement in some countries limiting routes for survivors to report crimes or move to safety, and stay-at-home measures mean those in abusive situations are even more vulnerable

Speaking at the event, the UK's Minister of State for Human Rights Lord Ahmad, said:

We are determined to tackle these most abhorrent of crimes. The UK remains committed to take action – action to prevent violence, action to support survivors and tackle the stigma they face – the appalling sense of stigma – and action to hold perpetrators to account.

Yet, as we mark this important day, we know that conflict-related sexual violence is a pandemic we have yet to cure.

COVID-19 is an unprecedented threat to how we respond to these crimes. The impacts of this pandemic are stark.

Crucial medical and psychological services are directly at risk, as governments divert resources towards their response. Restrictions on movement limit physical routes for survivors to report crimes, or indeed to move to safety. Stay-at-home measures mean those in abusive situations are even more vulnerable to violence.

These are exceptional times. We must provide an exceptional response.

That is why I am delighted, on behalf of the UK today, to announce that we are launching the draft Murad Code for global consultation. Developed with Nobel Peace Laureate, the courageous and incredible Nadia Murad, this code of conduct puts survivors rightly at the heart of our collective response.

It seeks to uphold international standards for recording the sensitive nature of sexual violence crimes. It prevents the further traumatising of survivors by ensuring that governments, international organisations, and indeed civil society actors adhere to the principles of the Code. It reinforces evidence collection, strengthening justice and accountability.

In light of this pandemic, the Murad Code is all the more urgent and important. Limited legal services are under increasing strain, and diverted government facilities and personnel have narrowed the bandwidth for safe, survivor-centred reporting and collection of evidence.

To succeed in eliminating the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence, more than ever today, now, in these most unusual and unprecedented of times, we must continue to work together to put survivors at the heart of all our work.

Lord Ahmad also urged UN members to consult and collaborate on the Murad Code, building international consensus to eradicate rape and

other forms of sexual violence as weapons of war, and to give support in ways led by survivors themselves.

UN Action Joins The Call of The Secretary-General for a Global Ceasefire

**United Nations Development Programme
12 June 2020**

On the occasion of this year's International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the member entities of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict¹ express their grave concern at the continued use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, terrorism and political repression, and call on all parties to conflicts to commit to ceasing such acts as part of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire made in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by conflict-related sexual violence. Its perpetration severely affects survivors, their families and their communities causing lasting harm, and undermining efforts to achieve peace as well as just and inclusive societies. We stress the importance of addressing conflict-related sexual violence throughout all conflict prevention, humanitarian response, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Ensuring a survivor-centered approach is crucial to these efforts. Recognizing that durable peace is not possible without women's expertise and contributions, we urge all parties and stakeholders to ensure the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision making whilst immediately putting an end to violence.

UN Action entities stand ready to support comprehensive peace initiatives that ensure women's equal and meaningful participation, and that fully address the needs and experiences of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UN Action reiterates its commitment to finally putting an end to the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence and to achieving sustainable peace.

Gender impacts of the COVID-19 crisis

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
9 June 2020**

Statement by Tom Woodroffe, UK Development Counsellor at the UN, at the high-level event on sexual and gender-based violence.

We've learned many awful things over the last few months as a result of the COVID crisis, but perhaps one of the most awful is the realisation

¹ UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict unites the efforts of DPO, DPPA, OCHA, OHCHR, OSRSG-CAAC, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODA, UNODC, UN Women and WHO in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence. The network is chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

that it has taken a global health pandemic to drive home – and for many of us to really understand - what civil society and UN colleagues have been warning us all for years. And that is just how unsafe many homes are for women and girls worldwide.

The UK is of course deeply concerned about the significant gender impacts of this crisis and the surge in violence against women and girls. Galvanising action and ensuring accountability across the international community to prevent and respond to this violence has never mattered more. As Natalia described it earlier - it's a "global emergency".

So I can assure you that the UK's commitment to this agenda is unwavering. We recently provided £10m in funding to support UNFPA to address the needs of women and girls impacted by COVID-19 - including maintaining access to gender-based violence support services and sexual and reproductive health services.

And we will continue to push for these issues to be central to the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, including encouraging the addition of a specific objective on GBV – the importance of which this discussion has highlighted. And we join with those calling for women, including survivors, to be front and centre of COVID response efforts.

Finally, in the face of significant upheaval, the UN must continue to ensure that its programs, actions and behaviours remain grounded in respect for human rights, gender equality and the responsibility to do no harm.

This includes upholding commitments and international standards to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse in the delivery of international assistance, and ensuring staff are protected from abuse of authority and harassment in the internal handling of the response. We urge timely communication during the pandemic on emerging SEAH risks, hot spots and action taken to address issues of concern, including support to survivors.

[COVID-19: UNDP urges swift action to address violence against women and girls during pandemic](#)

United Nations Development Programme

22 May 2020

Governments across the world must act urgently to prevent and tackle the rising rates of violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis by putting stronger measures in place such as designating shelters and hotlines as emergency services and supporting police and the justice sector during lockdowns, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Guidance from UNDP, [Gender-based violence and COVID-19](#), also recommends developing new protocols to provide support via phone or online platforms rather than in person, expanding immediate response services in order to save lives, and most ensuring that steps to prevent

gender-based violence are in every COVID-19 response plan and budget.

“Now more than ever there is a need to send a strong message that violence will not be tolerated, those who carry it out will be brought to justice, and survivors will be heard and supported,” said Raquel Lagunas, UNDP Gender Team Acting Director.

The impacts of the COVID-19 on women and girls include rising rates of domestic or intimate partner violence, while lockdowns and social distancing may be particularly hard on survivors of gender-based violence, who may already be economically dependent on their abusers.

Together with other UN agencies, UNDP is working with more than 40 governments around the world to prevent and address gender-based violence during the crisis.

Examples:

In **Somalia**, UNDP is supporting communities to develop neighborhood watch systems, where men and women receive training to regularly patrol their neighborhood to prevent or mitigate incidents of violence. In **Mexico** UNDP, in collaboration with UN Women, is helping establish phone and online platforms to support vulnerable women via the [LUNA centers](#), which are safe spaces for women and girls.

In **Botswana**, community members, including school principals, tribal chiefs, farmers and nurses, are raising awareness of the rise in violence and advising the government on village challenges and needs.

In **Uganda**, [UNDP in partnership with Jumia Food Uganda](#), the leading e-commerce company in the country, is exploring how to incorporate messaging to prevent violence against women and girls in an e-commerce platform which connects small and medium-sized enterprises and informal market vendors to customers.

In the **Dominican Republic**, UNDP and [BHD Bank](#) are putting in place a partnership to facilitate referral services of domestic violence cases that are reported by the bank’s customers.

UNDP is coordinating with UN sister agencies and development partners, for example, through the [Spotlight Initiative, a joint EU-UN partnership](#) to end violence against women and girls. The global, multi-year initiative is targeting 50 million direct beneficiaries across five regions and more than 25 countries.

4. Parliamentary material

4.1 Debates

[Overseas Development Assistance: Gender-based Violence](#)

29 Apr 2020 | House of Lords | 803 cc181-4

4.2 PQs

[Gender: Equality](#)

12 Oct 2020 | 99648

Asked by: Chris Law

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to adopt and implement the Department for International Development's Strategic Vision on Gender Equality as the gender strategy for his Department.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

As the Foreign Secretary said in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on the 1 October, we must use this moment as a catalyst for change, so that all women and girls have equal rights, so that they can fulfil their potential. Global Britain is proud to be a force for good in the world, holding up democracy and human rights as our guiding lights.

As part of the launch of the new FCDO, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches, but we do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment advancing the Women Peace and Security agenda, tackling and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) including conflict related sexual violence, are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

[Gender: Equality](#)

07 Oct 2020 | 97016

Asked by: Layla Moran

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Department for International Development's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality: Her Potential, Our Future published in March 2018.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Strategic Vision for Gender Equality was DFID's guiding document on gender equality but it also reflects and responds to the UK Government's ambitions on this agenda.

We are incredibly proud of what has been achieved under the Strategic Vision. Since its launch in 2018, for example, the UK has supported 2.5 million girls to access education, we have announced £67.5 million to prevent violence against women and girls, the biggest ever investment by a single government, and in 2019-20 alone, we supported 25.4 million women to access modern methods of family planning, helping to save thousands of lives.

The UK Government remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing gender equality and women and girls' rights. The FCDO will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches. We are also responding to the NAO's review of our work on gender published in April. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights, women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls, are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy.

**[Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Females](#)
21 Sep 2020 | 86008**

Asked by: Virendra Sharma

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ensure continued UK leadership, investment, and evidence-based programming across the former Department for International Development's Strategic Vision's five foundation areas of (a) violence against women and girls, (b) sexual and reproductive health and rights, (c) girls' education, (d) women's economic empowerment and (e) women's political empowerment.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is widely known as a world leader on gender equality. We fought successfully for a dedicated gender equality goal in the SDGs and targets on gender equality across the other goals. We continue to deliver results at scale. For example, between 2015 and 2020, we enabled 8.1 million girls gain access to a decent education, and in 2019-20 alone we supported 25.4 million women to access modern methods of family planning, helping to save thousands of lives.

The FCDO will build on this strong track record, bringing together our diplomacy and development expertise to be a progressive force for women and girls.

As part of the launch of the new Department, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches, but we do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

Overseas Aid: Gender

22 Jul 2020 | 75998

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of his Department's aid was targeted to projects with gender equality as a (a) principal objective, (b) significant objective and (c) not-gender related in each of the last 5 years.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act, IDA) requires all overseas development funding to consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality. The UK Aid Strategy prioritises the rights of women and girls under its fourth strategic goal of tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable. The FCO support a number of Official Development Assistance programmes targeted at promoting girls' education, empowering women peacebuilders and supporting female survivors of sexual violence in conflict. The programmes include lobbying efforts encouraging foreign governments to prioritise girls' education reforms, financial support for women mediator organisations, capacity building programmes for female judges and women peacebuilders and consultations with survivors of sexual violence.

Additional information on the FCO's ODA programmes can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-fco-programme-spend>.

Bangladesh: Migrant Camps

14 Jul 2020 | 71777

Asked by: Stephen Kinnock

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent steps she has taken to ensure the resumption and continuation of critical (a) routine-vaccination, (b) sexual and reproductive health and (c) gender-based violence services in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh following the covid-19 outbreak.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Department for International Development

We are pressing the UN and NGOs to resume vaccinations in the camps in Cox's Bazar. WHO is supporting health authorities at national and local levels and the Government of Bangladesh recently introduced a new strategy and workplan to resume vaccination outreach in all camps. Routine vaccination sessions were reduced during the initial stages of the pandemic but are now gradually improving at the national level.

The Government of Bangladesh decided early in the crisis to deliver the national 'Essential Service Package' to the refugees, which includes contraceptive options, ante and post-natal care, midwifery services, and menstruation products. These are currently designated as critical services, alongside distribution of hygiene kits.

UK aid-supported gender-based violence (GBV) activities are being implemented across 34 camps, in 35 women friendly spaces/integrated women centres. The UK has provided an additional £400,000 to UNFPA for GBV services. Part of this funding is focused on ensuring critical GBV and child protection services keep operating for all those who need them, and includes disseminating anti-GBV messaging and activities with adolescent boys and girls.

Gender Based Violence

30 Jun 2020 | 63501

Asked by: Marsha De Cordova

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she has had discussions with UN agencies on increasing funding for gender-based violence services as part of the Global Humanitarian Response plan.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The UK is deeply concerned about the surge in gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have consistently encouraged the UN agencies, including United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to prioritise GBV within the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) through bilateral channels and joint advocacy with other donors.

Whilst we are pleased to see improvements in how GBV is being addressed overall in the GHRP, the UK is continuing to discuss with UN agencies what more can be done to ensure sufficient focus, finance and accountability for GBV in the humanitarian response. All UN agencies and international actors must demonstrate that the shadow pandemic of GBV is taken seriously in the global response to COVID-19 and be held accountable for addressing it.

We have committed £20 million to UNICEF and £10 million to UNFPA through the GHRP, which includes funding to scale up reporting, protection and support services for women and girls affected by violence in the world's poorest countries. £20 million of UK Aid funding to UNHCR's work with refugees and internally displaced people also includes support for adapting and scaling-up essential services for gender-based violence and child protection.

Gender Based Violence

30 Jun 2020 | 63502

Asked by: Marsha De Cordova

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding her Department has allocated to gender-based violence services during the covid-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The UK is working to leverage a strong and co-ordinated response globally to address the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have committed £20 million to UNICEF and £10 million to UNFPA, which includes funding to scale up reporting, protection and support services for women and girls affected by violence in the world’s poorest countries. £20 million of UK Aid funding to UNHCR’s work with refugees and internally displaced people also includes support for adapting and scaling-up essential services for gender-based violence and child protection.

We are urgently reorienting existing bilateral programmes to ensure women and girls can continue to access support during the lockdown. For example, in Nepal, the UK is financing 14 Women’s and Children Service Centres across the country and 62 One Stop Crisis Centres.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Overseas Aid
30 Jun 2020 | 63286

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which Official Development Assistance programmes that his Department funds are targeted at supporting women and girls.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act, IDA), legally requires all overseas development funding to meaningfully consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality. The UK Aid Strategy prioritises the rights of women and girls under its fourth strategic goal of tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable.

The FCO supports a number of Official Development Assistance programmes targeted at promoting girls' education, empowering women peacebuilders and supporting female survivors of sexual violence in conflict. The programmes include lobbying efforts encouraging foreign governments to prioritise girls' education reforms, financial support for women mediator organisations, capacity building programmes for female judges and women peacebuilders and consultations with survivors of sexual violence. Additional information on the FCO's ODA programmes can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-fco-programme-spend>

Gender: Equality**29 Jun 2020 | 63280****Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government remains committed to her Department's strategic vision for gender equality policy; and whether that policy will inform the wider aims of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development department.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The Strategic Vision for Gender Equality is DFID's guiding document on gender equality, but it reflects and responds to the UK Government ambitions on gender equality. DFID, FCO and other HMG teams already work closely together to realise the ambitions of the Strategic Vision. The Prime Minister has been clear that girls' education is a key priority for this Government.

As part of the merger discussions, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches. We do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's political empowerment and women's economic empowerment are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

Gender Based Violence**29 Jun 2020 | 62624****Asked by: Anthony Mangnall**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has to raise the matter of gender-based violence at the next meeting of the G7.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

COVID-19 has reinforced the urgency of the need to tackle the pervasive and endemic "shadow pandemic" of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence. We have been working closely with our G7 partners on this important agenda and will continue to do so.

Bangladesh: Migrant Camps**22 Jun 2020 | 59723****Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the International Rescue Committee's report entitled The Shadow Pandemic: Gender-Based Violence amongst Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar; and what steps she is taking to ensure funding for gender-based violence services is (a) maintained and (b) increased in Cox's Bazar.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Department for International Development

Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be a constant threat in refugee camps, especially to women and girls. The scale of GBV in the Rohingya camps is too high, though still not fully known. As GBV is generally underreported due to stigma and fear, the recorded cases are likely to represent only a small fraction of the overall number. However, an information management system is ensuring vital data is collected and analysed from recorded cases.

We agree with the International Rescue Committee that the international community need to expand GBV programming to address unmet needs, including prevention activities; and that these needs are likely to be exacerbated by COVID-19. The UK is the second largest donor to the Rohingya response, contributing £256 million to-date, and we play a leadership role in ensuring anti-GBV efforts are prioritised. DFID has continuously supported efforts to reduce GBV in Rohingya and also in host communities. UK aid-supported GBV activities are being implemented across 34 camps, in 35 women friendly spaces/integrated women centres, and have helped more than 12,000 individuals receive GBV case management support since 2017.

The UK has provided £11 million to support COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts in the Rohingya camps and surrounding host communities. Part of this funding is focused on ensuring critical gender-based violence and child protection services keep operating for all those who need them. For example, the UK has provided an additional £400,000 to UNFPA for GBV services, including disseminating anti-GBV messaging and anti-GBV activities with adolescent boys and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Females: Coronavirus
08 Jun 2020 | 52008

Asked by: Seema Malhotra

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she plans to take to tackle the rise in (a) gender-based violence, (b) child, early and forced marriages, (c) FGM and (d) other harmful practices faced by adolescent girls globally as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

I am deeply concerned about the surge in gender-based violence (GBV), FGM and other harmful practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are urgently adapting existing programmes to ensure women and girls continue to access support during the lockdown. For example, in Nepal, DFID is financing safe spaces for women in nine shelters and 42 COVID-19 quarantine sites. In Uganda, DFID is supporting the Government's response to the spikes in GBV by funding 13 shelters across the country and working to ensure safety of frontline staff and survivors.

The UK leads the world in our support to the Africa-led movement to end FGM. In 2018 we announced a £50 million UK aid package – the biggest single donor investment worldwide to date – to tackle this issue across the most-affected countries in Africa. In February up to £3.5 million of this was allocated to the WHO and UN for vital work with governments and health systems to tackle the harmful practice.

Significant gains have been made in the last 10 years to reduce child marriage, but COVID-19 is putting this progress at risk. DFID's flagship global programme to end child marriage supported just under 3 million adolescent girls to attend school and skills training in 2018 alone. The UN Global Programme is developing innovative ways to continue to reach and support vulnerable girls during the COVID-19 crisis, including moving services online.

Gender Based Violence

20 May 2020 | 46795

Asked by: Anthony Mangnall

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much and what proportion of the UK's Official Development Assistance was spent on projects tackling gender-based violence in each financial year since 2009-10.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) data is collected and reported in line with internationally agreed OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) definitions and standards. These standards include sector codes that are allocated to programmes.

In 2015, following lobbying by the UK and others, the DAC introduced a new sector code to improve the tracking of ODA that contributes to ending of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The UK started reporting on the new code for 2016 ODA spend. Before changes were made to our aid management platform in 2018, however, there were several technological barriers which meant that it was very difficult to track spend accurately.

Our Statistics on International Development: Final Aid Spend 2018 publication shows that we tracked £32.6 million bilateral aid on ending VAWG for 2018. We also estimated a further £12.4 million UK ODA was spent on ending VAWG through our partnerships with multilaterals. This amounts to 0.31% of UK ODA for that year.

We are doing more to improve the quality and transparency of our data on VAWG spend. For example, we are working to improve the way we track the impact of other sectoral programming, such as humanitarian, health, economic or education programmes that also contribute to ending VAWG, and which may not yet be fully captured as part of our published data.

We are also continuing to scale up our investment in tackling VAWG, for example our new £67.5 million programme What Works to Prevent

Violence: Impact at Scale, is the largest investment by any donor government in programming and research to prevent VAWG globally.

Note: Imputed Multilateral Shares are estimates of how multilaterals spent the UK's core contributions to multilaterals. For more detail on these estimates please see the 'Statistics at DFID' gov.uk page

Crimes of Violence: Females

18 May 2020 | 46811

Asked by: Fleur Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that data collated by international development agencies is disaggregated by (a) age, (b) gender and (c) ethnicity to inform responses to support women and girls in vulnerable communities facing a heightened risk of gender-based violence.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

DFID's Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan sets out our ambitions to increase the collection and use of disaggregated data, and to work with the United Nations and others to improve disaggregation at a global level. This is critical to understand who is being left behind, why, and how to reach them. Our focus is on disaggregation by sex, age, disability status and geography in the first instance, whilst we work with others in the international system to develop tools to disaggregate by other variables. In the longer term, we will move towards additional disaggregation variables; we expect this to include income, race and ethnicity.

DFID is investing £6 million to support the UN Women-led flagship programme initiative on gender data – Making Every Woman and Girl Count – and the joint UN Programme on Violence Against Women and Girls data. These programmes are working with developing country governments to improve the production, availability, accessibility and use of quality data and statistics on gender equality and gender-based violence. This includes developing new global standards for measuring violence against older women. The programme is currently supporting rapid assessment surveys focused on understanding gendered impacts of COVID-19 across a number of countries.

Crimes of Violence: Females

29 Apr 2020 | 38887

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports that the covid-19 pandemic is causing a rise in gender-based violence throughout the world; and what steps her Department is taking to support women and girls in vulnerable communities facing a heightened risk of gender-based violence.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

There is compelling evidence of a surge in violence against women and girls (VAWG) during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is deeply concerning. We know from our humanitarian work the importance of taking a 'no regrets' approach: we should assume VAWG is occurring and take action to prevent and respond to it as a lifesaving measure from the earliest stages of the response.

DFID is working across the UK government and with global partners to prevent violence and ensure women and girls have access to vital services. We have provided £10 million of UK aid to UNFPA and £20 million to UNICEF to scale up protection and support services for women and girls. We have contributed £20 million of UK aid to UNHCR's COVID-19 response for refugees and internally displaced people. This response includes support for essential VAWG and child protection services. We launched a call for proposals under our Rapid Response Facility, which required all projects to mainstream gender, protection and safeguarding. We are also urgently reorienting existing bilateral programmes to ensure women and girls can continue to access support during the lockdown. In Nepal, for example, the UK has financed 14 Women's and Children Service Centres and 62 One Stop Crisis Centres.

Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences**04 Feb 2020 | 9785****Asked by: Nickie Aiken**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what his Department's policy objectives are on preventing sexual violence in conflict.

Answering member: Andrew Stephenson | Department for International Development

Preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including conflict-related sexual violence, is a priority for DFID. The FCO leads HMG's work on this important agenda through the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI). DFID contributes towards PSVI's objectives through investing in evidence revealing both the scale of the problem and effective interventions to prevent it. This has shown that violence is preventable.

In communities in the DRC, a project with faith leaders and community action groups resulted in domestic violence halving from 70% to 30% in less than three years, while conflict-related sexual violence reduced from 21% to just 4%. We are sharing this evidence across Government and with international partners to encourage increased investment globally in effective approaches to tackle sexual violence.

In November 2019, the Secretary of State announced a new £67.5 million programme to scale up interventions to prevent VAWG across development and humanitarian contexts, and to continue expanding the evidence base as a global public good.

The UK is also a leading member of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies – a global initiative working to drive system change to protect women and girls in emergency situations.

5. Further reading

UK Government

[Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative](#)

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) aims to raise awareness of the extent of sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys in situations of armed conflict and rally global action to end it.

This landing page includes guidance, policy papers, press releases and other information on the Government's PSVI.

[Women and girls in developing countries](#)

This landing page includes guidance, policy papers, press releases and other information on the Government's strategy on women and girls in developing countries.

[DFID Strategic Vision for Gender Equality: Her Potential, Our](#)

[Future](#) (March 2018)

DFID sets out its Call to Action to step up and deliver results for girls and women, pressing DFID and its partners to take action across the board to make gender equality a reality.

Other

[Murad Code](#) (Global Code of Conduct for Documenting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence)

The Murad Code is a global consultative initiative aimed at building and supporting a community of better practice for, with and concerning survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Its key objective is to respect and support survivors' rights and to ensure work with survivors to investigate, document and record their experiences is safer, more ethical and more effective in upholding their human rights.

[Gender-based violence and COVID-19](#) (May 2020)

United Nations Development Programme

This briefing note provides concrete actions and strategies that UNDP, UN agencies and other development partners can take to prevent and address GBV in the context of COVID-19. It includes recommendations for adapting dedicated GBV services and support to the crisis context, and for mainstreaming GBV prevention and response in 'non-GBV specific' interventions.

[Gender-based violence](#)

United Nations Population Fund

[Gender-Based Violence \(Violence Against Women and Girls\)](#) (25

September 2019)

World Bank briefing

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