

## DEBATE PACK

CDP 052 (2021) | 8 April 2021

# Global human security

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 13 April 2021

11.25am to 12.55pm

Backbench Business Committee debate  
initiated by Wera Hobhouse MP

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://parliamentlive.tv)

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.

Compiled by:  
Tim Robinson  
Julie Gill

Subject specialist:  
Dr Anna Dickson

### Contents

<b>1. Background</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 What is human security?	2
1.2 The Sustainable Development Goals	2
1.3 The Integrated Review	3
1.4 Response to the Integrated Review	4
<b>2. Press Articles</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Press releases</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Parliamentary material</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Statements	9
4.2 PQs	9
4.3 Early Day Motions	10
<b>5. Further reading</b>	<b>12</b>

# 1. Background

## 1.1 What is human security?

According to [UN Human Development Report 1994](#)<sup>1</sup>, there are seven dimensions of human security:

These are economic security, food security, health security environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.

As such it is a departure from the traditional concept of security which has been driven by the assumption that security was about the territorial integrity of the nation-state, and that its protection was best served by immense investment in militaries and armaments.

In September 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted [a resolution](#) on human security. Resolution 66/290 noted that human security was:

an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people.

The resolution goes on to explain that the concept of human security includes the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and fear with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential; it is defined as people-centred and bottom up, but ownership of the responsibilities lies within each state. It is an approach which stresses the links between development and peace and respect for human, social, economic and political rights.

## 1.2 The Sustainable Development Goals

There are many associated agendas which link to the concept of human security. For example [Agenda 2030](#) on Sustainable Development calls for a “world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want ... free of fear and violence ... with equitable and universal access to quality education, health care and social protection ... to safe drinking water and sanitation ... where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious ... where habits are safe, resilient and sustainable ... and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.”

In 2015 the UK Government committed to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals aim to improve peace, prosperity, access to healthcare and education and tackle climate change worldwide. They apply to all countries, not just the developing world.

In June 2019, the UK Government published its [report on the implementation](#) of the SDGs so far.

Some MPs argued that the [UK’s performance has been inadequate](#) in important policy areas, including tackling hunger and food security at

---

<sup>1</sup> [Human Development Report 1994. "New Dimensions of Human Security"](#).

home. They also state the Government has not established effective structures and processes for implementing the goals. There has also been [dissatisfaction over how the Government conducted its review](#) of progress—the voluntary national review (VNR) process.

In terms of its performance across the rest of the world, the UK Government stressed in the VNR it had met the UN's target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on aid since 2015. The Government will not meet this target for 2020/21.

### 1.3 The Integrated Review

In the 2019 Queen's Speech the Government announced it will conduct an integrated security, defence and foreign policy review (hereafter the integrated review or review) that will cover "[all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy to development](#)"

The integrated review is the first time the Government has combined development objectives into a security and defence review. During the course of the review the Government announced [the merger of DFID and the FCO](#) into the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The decision to merge the two departments was widely criticised, including by three former Prime Ministers.<sup>2</sup> David Cameron said more could be done to coordinate aid and foreign policy, including through the National Security Council, but that closing DFID would mean "less expertise, less voice for development at the top table and ultimately less respect for the UK overseas."<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister said [the distinctions between diplomacy and development objectives were artificial](#) and outdated and that the FCDO will allow development decisions to be better aligned with foreign policy objectives. He said the "long overdue reform" would ensure "maximum value" for taxpayers.

The Government published the [Integrated Review](#) on 16 March 2021. The review itself said that the UK will continue to take a leading role in security, diplomacy and development, conflict resolution and poverty reduction. And that the UK aims to be a model for an integrated approach to tackling global challenges. Whilst not explicitly using the term "human security", these ideas might reasonably be said to reflect a human security agenda.

The main development objectives of that review are that the UK will remain "a world leading international development donor", committed to the global fight against poverty and meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The UK will return to its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of gross national income on development "when the fiscal situation allows".

<sup>2</sup> "[Leadership of merged DFID evidence of 'hostile takeover' by FCO, say critics](#)", The Guardian, 25 August 2020

<sup>3</sup> "[UK will lose respect overseas](#)", The Independent, 16 June 2020

An international development strategy is expected to be published by 2022. This “will ensure close alignment of UK aid from 2022 onwards with the objectives in this Strategic Framework.”

It goes on to say that there will be a trend away from grants, and towards providing UK expertise:

Reflecting the creation of the FCDO, the new strategy will combine our diplomacy and aid with trade, working with our partners to adapt our offer. As governments become able to finance their own development priorities, we will gradually move towards providing UK expertise in place of grants and using a variety of financing models to tackle regional challenges in our mutual interests

The UK will also work with allies, like-minded partners and civil society worldwide to protect democratic values, as part of our force for good agenda. In many instances, this will involve working bilaterally with countries to strengthen their domestic governance and to build their resilience to threats and hazards. In doing so, we will focus our efforts primarily in the wider European neighbourhood, East Africa and the Indo-Pacific, tailoring our approach to meet local needs and combining our diplomacy, development, trade, security and other tools accordingly

## 1.4 Response to the Integrated Review

Development commentators have so far been critical of the IR saying that it had effectively de-prioritised development and that, coupled with the decrease in ODA, the UK’s previously strong reputation as a development actor is under threat. The review does not mention human security.

The Institute of Development Studies said the Review had [missed an opportunity](#):

The Integrated Review published today has absconded from the vital opportunity to set out a new strategic vision for the three key pillars of development, diplomacy, and defense,” said Melissa Leach, director at the [Institute of Development Studies](#). “Instead, it reiterates a narrow focus on defense spending and fails to deliver the rounded vision needed to tackle the most pressing challenges that affect us all: climate change, poverty and inequality, conflict, and disease.”

The Defence Studies Department at Kings College London explored the implications of the stance of the review for [tackling the challenge of climate change](#):

In the first instance, the content of the Integrated Review highlights a continued preference for framing climate and biodiversity issues in relation to more traditional security challenges, in comparison to human security challenges.

In relation to governance issues, Bond, the network of development NGOs, [commented](#):

The attention given by the Integrated Review to open societies and human rights is good, particularly the acknowledgement that they are central to a sustainable international order and the fact that they are under threat.

At the same time, there are reports that the open societies and human rights work of FCDO is facing funding cuts of up to 80%.

Speaking about the implications of the review for the UK's status as a "development superpower", Sarah Champion, [chair of the International Development Committee](#), said:

With little more than a passing mention of development, the Integrated Review has done little to alleviate fears that this is the beginning of the end for the U.K.'s development superpower status. The Integrated Review appears to be more centered towards rubbing shoulders with trading partners than creating a level playing field for the global community to prosper.

## 2. Press 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.

### [Covid-19 has shown humanity how close we are to the edge](#)

The Guardian  
Toby Ord  
23 March 2021

### [Approaching Human Security](#)

Pressenza  
Jonathan Granoff  
4 March 2021

### [Human Security: Future Generations and the Good Society](#)

Compass  
Richard Reeve  
25 February 2021

### [NATO and Human Security: Obfuscation and Opportunity](#)

Rethinking Security  
Richard Reeve  
16 February 2021

### [In times of coronavirus and climate change, we must rethink national security](#)

The Guardian  
Allan Behm  
20 April 2020

### [There can be no national security without human security](#)

Shape History  
Jack Maycock  
16 April 2020

### [Why is human security important?](#)

Trilateral Research  
7 April 2020

### [The world after coronavirus](#)

Financial Times  
Yuval Noah Harari  
20 March 2020

### [UK first country to put 'human security' at core of defence policy](#)

The Independent  
Kim Sengupta  
4 April 2019

### 3. Press releases

#### **MOD to establish Centre of Excellence for Human Security**

**Ministry of Defence**

**4 April 2019**

In front of a backdrop of 100 personnel, armoured vehicles and AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopters from the Army Air Corps conducting exercises to protect non-combatants in a conflict zone, Mr Williamson announced a new UK Centre of Excellence for Human Security.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“In modern warfare there is no ‘front line’ and the sad reality is that innocent bystanders are in harm’s way in conflicts around the world. Protecting civilians from human rights violations is as much a military task as defeating the enemy.

This new Centre of Excellence will build on the amazing work already being done by the UK, from our Human Security courses launched last year to the training we provide peacekeepers on preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict.”

The Centre of Excellence will build on the success of the Human Security Advisers course and deliver expanded training on Women, Peace and Security, Children and Armed Conflict, Human Trafficking, Protection of Civilians, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Cultural Property Protection.

As we see actors in conflicts around the world using women and children as merely an extension of the battlefield, it is essential that the world’s militaries know how to combat this to protect vulnerable bystanders.

The UK is the first military in the world to have a dedicated national defence policy on Human Security. The Armed Forces have done vital work to protect non-combatants, deploying Military Human Security Advisers to UN peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2014 and providing training for peacekeepers in Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria on preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict.

This new centre is the next step to ensuring militaries from around the world better integrate UN Security Council Resolutions linked to human security into military planning and conduct of operations.

The Centre of Excellence will be funded from a new Human Security budget. Running costs will be around £2m a year.

**Human security in military operations (JSP 1325)**

**Ministry of Defence**

**15 January 2019 (updated 29 October 2019)**

JSP 1325 provides direction for how the military can support individuals facing vulnerable situations as well as providing traditional collective security.

It acknowledges that civilians, especially the bodies of women and girls, have become an extension of the battlefield. In such a climate UK military personnel are morally and ethically bound to understanding the role they can play in preventing and responding to such human rights violations.

Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 the JSP explains how an understanding of the human terrain can be enhanced by engaging more with Civil Society. This interaction will then contribute to enhanced situational awareness leading to more successful protection of civilian's strategies.

The JSP offers guidance on how military planners can integrate the following cross-cutting conflict dynamics in to operational staff work: Women, peace and security, children affected by armed conflict, human trafficking and protection of civilians.

## 4. Parliamentary material

### 4.1 Statements

#### [Integrated Review: Defence Command Paper](#)

22 Mar 2021 | 691 cc636-662

#### [Integrated Review](#)

16 Mar 2021 | 691 cc161-179

#### [Global Britain](#)

16 Jun 2020 | 677 cc665-388

### 4.2 PQs

#### [Military Exercises](#)

13 Jan 2021 | 133982

##### **Asked by: Owen Thompson**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to end UK engagement in training programmes with the militaries of countries under internally oppressive and undemocratic regimes.

##### **Answering Member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence**

The Defence Training we provide to foreign nations will always stress the need to respect International Law and the importance of adhering to international standards, for example with regard to human rights, human security, transparency and corruption, and civilian oversight and control of the Armed Forces.

All of our international Defence Engagement is informed by an assessment of the potential impact of providing assistance on risks relating to human rights and International Humanitarian Law and consideration of what measures might be necessary to mitigate such risks.

#### [Centre of Excellence for Human Security](#)

01 Oct 2020 | 95703

##### **Asked by: Tulip Siddiq**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on establishing the Centre of Excellence for Human Security.

##### **Answering Member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence**

We are continuing to work across Government and with international partners to increase our commitment to this important agenda. In addition to the bi-annual International Human Security course delivered at the Defence Academy, we will continue to deliver international Human Security training programmes and participate in Human Security focused events despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**Conflict Resolution: Females**

**20 Jul 2020 | HL6646**

**Asked by: Lord Tunncliffe**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much the Ministry of Defence has spent on training related to (1) the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and (2) preventing sexual violence initiatives, in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018, (d) 2019, and (e) 2020 to date.

**Answering Member: Baroness Goldie**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) are unable to answer the noble Lord's question due to the way funding is tracked and division of policy areas. Defence have approached the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in military operations through a combination of dedicated training courses and specific modules added to existing training.

In support of the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018 – 2022, the MOD have issued a Joint Service Publication 1325; 'Human Security in Military Operations' supported by a two-week Human security Advisers Course. This provides an advanced understanding of Defence's role in the prevention of sexual violence in conflict through; gendered approaches to planning and operations, appropriate response to survivors, and reporting mechanisms.

Tailored modules have also been embedded to routine training for; deploying peacekeepers, overseas capacity building for troop contributing countries, military planners, policy advisers, Defence Attachés and headquarters and units across the Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF at home and overseas.

**Centre of Excellence for Human Security**

**17 Mar 2020 | 28743**

**Asked by: Anneliese Dodds**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the feasibility study of the Centre of Excellence for Human Security.

**Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence**

I can confirm that the internal feasibility assessment has concluded and the next steps will be published shortly.

## 4.3 Early Day Motions

**Human security and the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy**

**EDM 1384 (session 2019-21)**

**Wera Hobhouse**

**20 Jan 2021**

That this House welcomes the upcoming Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; notes with concern the changing nature of global threats to the UK, including irreversible

climate change, emerging artificial intelligence and the risk of increased frequency and size of global pandemics; highlights that many of these threats could cause far greater disruption to the lives of UK citizens than traditional military threats; emphasises that unforeseen developments of this nature can occur at pace and must be pre-emptively addressed; believes that the Integrated Review is an opportunity to reframe the UK's approach to defence and security to ensure future generations are protected; and calls on the Government to champion an inclusive, positive vision of global and local security.

**United Nations Day on 24 October 2020**

**EDM 1058 (session 2019-21)**

**Stephen Farry**

**22 Oct 2020**

That this House joins in celebrating United Nations Day on 24 October 2020, marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations Charter coming into effect; acknowledges the significant contributions made by the United Nations Organisation and the other agencies of the United Nations System to international peace and security, humanitarian protection and assistance, the promotion of human rights, economic, social and cultural co-operation, the global environment and climate change, sustainable development and tackling poverty along with many other interventions; stresses the importance of a rules based international order and international co-operation around shared global challenges; and calls on the Government to ensure that the UK plays a proactive, leadership role in pursuing reform to ensure that the United Nations can have a more enhanced and effective role over the years ahead.

## 5. Further reading

[Integrated Review 2021](#), 24 March 2021

(This landing page features a new series of House of Commons Library briefings on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, and the subsequent Defence Command Paper, which were both published in March 2021.)

Charlotte Watson, [A people-centred approach to security and justice: Recommendations for policy and programming](#), Saferworld, February 2021

[Human Security](#), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 24 Feb 2021

Harry Pitts and Paul Thompson, [A Progressive Foreign Policy for New Times](#), Open Labour, December 2020

[The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene](#): Human Development Report 2020, United Nations Development Programme, December 2020

Abigail Watson, [Questions for the Integrated Review: #1 how do we define security](#), Oxford Research Group, 25 June 2020

[The Modernising Defence Programme](#), Human Security Centre, July 2018

[What is human security](#), United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security webpage

[Human security](#), Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. webpage

### About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk).

### Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).