



House of Commons  
Foreign Affairs Committee

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# **“Media freedom is under attack”: The FCO’s defence of an endangered liberty**

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**Twenty-First Report of Session  
2017–19**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
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## The Foreign Affairs Committee

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## Summary

Media freedom is under attack, as journalists and their supporters from around the world described to us a wide and worsening array of abuses. Death is the ultimate threat that they face. Journalists are also silenced by broad or over-bearing laws, and harassment or intimidation both in person and over the internet. They also struggle to achieve financial and therefore editorial independence as their traditional funding models are challenged and financial power over the media is used as leverage to achieve its obedience or silence.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has made defending media freedom its priority campaign for 2019 but it remained unclear how this policy would be fulfilled (with the lack of detail being noted and criticised by our witnesses) until July 2019, when a series of initiatives was announced. The FCO has prioritised working to ensure that laws in countries around the world are used to protect rather than persecute journalists. In working to achieve improvements in global media freedom, the FCO intends to coordinate its actions as much as possible with other partners in order to maximise its impact.

These and other initiatives announced by the FCO are a good start. The Committee wants to see the UK go further: to shame and punish in a consistent manner those who violate media freedom—including those who do not enforce protective legal frameworks, to protect journalists from online threats and harassment, and to ensure that journalists can fund their operations and make a living. This report makes ten recommendations to the FCO:

- (1) The FCO must now demonstrate the impact, and sustainability, of its policies and initiatives.
- (2) The Government should support training for law-enforcement organisations around the world to help them protect journalists.
- (3) The FCO should consider supporting an international mechanism to investigate and punish the abuse of journalists if governments will not.
- (4) The FCO should do more in public to shame those who persecute the media. We refer to examples in Malta, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.
- (5) The FCO should use sanctions to punish those who persecute the media.
- (6) The FCO should coordinate more closely with the Home Office over visas for persecuted journalists, and their families and associates.
- (7) The FCO should put the online and digital threats to journalists at the heart of their strategy.
- (8) The FCO should provide training and/or technical assistance to journalists to counter harassment and intimidation, including online, designed in consultation with them.

- (9) The FCO should consider further measures to address the financial weakness and vulnerability of media organisations around the world.
- (10) The Government should give a further extension to its funding of the BBC World Service, to give the World Service greater financial certainty.

The Committee intends to return to this topic to review the Department's progress in defending this endangered liberty, including through the initiatives announced at its Global Conference for Media Freedom.

# 1 “Media freedom is under attack”

1. Those are the words of Joan Chirwa,<sup>1</sup> a journalist from Zambia who was the editor of a newspaper called *The Post* until it was forcibly closed in 2016.<sup>2</sup> Quite strikingly, journalists from across the world gave us the same warning throughout our inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Among them were:<sup>4</sup>

- Khadija Patel, Editor-in-Chief of *The Mail and Guardian* newspaper in South Africa, who said “there is no doubt that news media around the world is navigating a moment of crisis.”<sup>5</sup>
- John Daniszewski, from the Associated Press organisation in the United States, who said that “journalism is under threat around the world.”<sup>6</sup>
- From Pakistan, Jahanzaib Haque, an editor at the *Dawn* newspaper, who told us that “the future looks bleak as far as press freedom goes.”<sup>7</sup>
- The BBC World Service, who stated that “global media freedoms and trust in the news media are under almost constant attack.”<sup>8</sup>
- The Hong Kong Journalists Association, who preferred to summarise the array of violations its evidence documented as “increasing pressure”.<sup>9</sup>
- Journalists from Turkey, who sent submissions to the inquiry. But they were so fearful of reprisals that they didn’t feel able to have their names or their evidence published.
- Gerall Chávez who, speaking about his country, said simply that “in Nicaragua, there are no longer any institutions that can guarantee and support press freedom.”<sup>10</sup> A journalist who formerly worked for a national television broadcaster, Chávez went into exile after receiving death threats and a warrant was issued for his arrest.<sup>11</sup>

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1 Joan Chirwa ([GMF0013](#)) para 3. She is the founder of the Free Press Initiative in Zambia.

2 Joan Chirwa ([GMF0013](#)) para 1

3 A full list of the written and oral evidence published by the Committee is available at the back of this report, and also on Committee’s webpage for the inquiry into [the FCO and global media freedom](#). We are grateful to all who gave us evidence, whether journalists or their supporters, some of whom were willing to put themselves at potential risk by speaking or writing to us.

4 See also references to “the global epidemic of targeted killings, attacks and unfounded or politically-motivated prosecutions of journalists” by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 1.1; or an “ever-increasing range of challenges” by the Association of International Broadcasting ([GMF0027](#)) para 3.3. “Media freedom is under severe threat around the world” according to Dr Martin Scott and Dr Mary Myers ([GMF0033](#)) para 2.1; “media freedom is under greater attack than ever before” according to Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 3; and “the state of press freedom across the globe has been steadily deteriorating, with a number of complex and evolving threats” according to Scottish PEN and PEN International ([GMF0030](#)) p1

5 Khadija Patel, ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

6 John Daniszewski, Vice President for Standards, Associated Press ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

7 Jahanzaib Haque, ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

8 BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#)) p4

9 Hong Kong Journalists Association ([GMF0026](#)) p1

10 Gerall Chávez ([GMF0029](#)) para 7

11 Gerall Chávez ([GMF0029](#)) para 1

2. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been clear that a free media is vital for good governance and the prevention of corruption; for innovation and prosperity; and for national stability, the world over.<sup>12</sup> A free media can also be an 'antidote' to the growing threat of 'disinformation'—the deliberate presentation of falsehoods as factual news, for personal, political, or commercial gain<sup>13</sup>—while an unfree media risks being disinformation's mouthpiece.<sup>14</sup> Yet our witnesses were clear that the assault on media freedom is a truly global problem, not only affecting countries 'far away' from the United Kingdom (UK), or those that might be considered 'usual suspects.'<sup>15</sup> The BBC World Service told us that "media freedoms are also now being eroded in states which have, until recently, operated a democratic and free system."<sup>16</sup> Scott Griffen, a Deputy Director at the International Press Institute, warned: "many of the gains of the past few decades are in danger of being reversed."<sup>17</sup>

3. Almost one thousand journalists have been killed in the past decade. UNESCO, the UN agency that leads on promoting media freedom, records the names of journalists who are killed due to their work. Their database shows that, in the ten years between 2008 and 2018, nine hundred and fifty-nine journalists were killed: an average of one every four days.<sup>18</sup> In 2019 so far, up to the date of this Report, thirty-nine journalists have been killed.<sup>19</sup> Most of the journalists killed are deliberately targeted,<sup>20</sup> most are *not* killed doing 'war reporting',<sup>21</sup> and their deaths overwhelmingly go unpunished: the rate of impunity is almost 90 per cent.<sup>22</sup>

12 See for example Gov.uk, [Britain champions free speech, so we're leading the war on fake news: article by Jeremy Hunt](#), 01 November 2018; or Gov.uk, [Foreign Secretary sets out his vision to improve media freedom around the world](#), 02 May 2019.

13 See definitions given, for example, by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 3.1, or Olga Robinson a Russia and Disinformation Specialist with BBC Monitoring, [Q31](#)

14 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 3.1; National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) ([GMF0010](#)) para 58; BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#)) p5; International Media Support ([GMF0007](#)) para 10; and Julie Posetti a Senior Research Fellow, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, [Q39](#)

15 International Press Institute ([GMF0019](#)) para 3; Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) paras 8, and 9; Julie Posetti, [Q9](#); Professor Jackie Harrison, a UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety, and the Issue of Impunity, University of Sheffield, [Q9](#); and Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers ; [Q17](#)

16 BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#)) p4

17 Scott Griffen, [Q42](#)

18 UNESCO, [Observatory of killed journalists](#)

19 UNESCO, [Observatory of killed journalists](#)

20 Reporters Without Borders found that 61% of media workers killed in 2018 were 'murdered or deliberately targeted' and 60% in 2017: [Worldwide round-up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018 and 2017](#). The International News Safety Institute (INSI), commenting on the 1,000 media workers that its study found were killed between 1996 and 2006, wrote that "at least 657 men and women were murdered—eliminated as they tried to shine light into the dark recesses of their societies", [Killing the messenger: Report of the Global Inquiry of the International News Safety Institute into the Protection of Journalists](#), p7.

21 A study of the killing of journalists around the world between 1996 and 2006 by INSI concluded that "only one in four news media staff died covering war and other armed conflicts. The great majority died in peacetime", [Killing the messenger: Report of the Global Inquiry of the International News Safety Institute into the Protection of Journalists](#), p7. Follow-up annual surveys by INSI have shown that—with the recent exception of their 2017 report—more journalists continue to be killed in 'non-conflict' situations than conflict. See INSI [Killing the Messenger 2016](#) p5; [2017](#) p5; and [2018](#) p7. UNESCO reported that 55% of those killed in 2017 died in 'countries not experiencing armed conflict', while in 2016 half were killed in conflict zones and half were not ([Highlights from the 2018 UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity](#), p8

22 See UNESCO ([GMF0005](#)) p2; and Michelle Stanistreet, General Secretary, National Union of Journalists (NUJ), [Q43](#)

4. But these killings mark what UNESCO calls only “the tip of an iceberg of attacks against journalists.”<sup>23</sup> Imprisonment is another threat, and Reporters Without Borders told us that as of August 2019 “a total of 399 journalists, citizen journalists and media workers are currently jailed around the world. Around half of those are concentrated in just five countries: China, Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia.”<sup>24</sup> Even if they are not imprisoned, journalists around the world face harassment or intimidation because of their work.<sup>25</sup> Further to this point, harassment can lead to brutal attacks that, in turn, can lead to loss of life.<sup>26</sup> The collapse of the traditional financial models of the independent media, particularly the growing difficulty of sourcing revenue from advertising, is making journalists vulnerable to corruption or to financial dependence on—and therefore editorial obedience to—vested interests.<sup>27</sup> All of these threats cause ‘self-censorship’.<sup>28</sup>

5. Many different perpetrators abuse the media. But it was striking how so many witnesses described governments and politicians as frequently being persecutors rather than protectors of journalists. They gave examples of political leaders around the world who have denigrated journalists (seeking to insult them, intimidate them, undermine their credibility, and disrupt their work),<sup>29</sup> or sustained a hostile legal, regulatory, or financial environment for the work of the press.<sup>30</sup>

**6. When journalists lose their rights, we all do. Yet the threats to media freedom are severe and universal, growing and evolving. An unfree media is spreading—including through broadcast and imitation—from countries that are leading by bad example. Regression is taking place in countries where progress had been achieved or**

23 UNESCO (GMF0005) p2

24 Reporters Without Borders (GMF0039) para 6

25 See for example Internews (GMF0011) para 6; Association for International Broadcasting (GMF0027) para 5.3; Gulf Centre for Human Rights and ALQST (GMF0040) para 6; the account of the Nicaraguan journalist Gerall Chávez (GMF0029) para 3; or of Joe Maalouf, an executive producer and television host from Lebanon, who described how “Lebanese journalists and media figures suffer from insults, slander, and threats” ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#)). The issue of harassment and intimidation is covered in more detail in Chapter 2, Part 3, of this Report.

26 See for example the account of Matthew, Andrew, and Paul Caruana Galizia, of the harassment and intimidation of their mother, the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, prior to her assassination in 2017 (GMF0025). The Slovak journalist Beata Balogová, Editor-in-Chief of the *SME* newspaper, described how her colleague Ján Kuciak reported threats before he was murdered, [Q101](#). Professor Jackie Harrison told us that “when a journalist is killed, it is very unusual for the killing to just be out of the blue. There has usually been a range of attacks or threats in the meantime” [Q2](#).

27 See for example BBC Media Action (GMF0024) paras 5 and 14; the NUJ and IFJ (GMF0010) para 53 and 55; International Media Support (GMF0007) para 7; Internews (GMF0011) para 28a; and Daniela Pastrana, from the media platform Pie De Página (GMF0018) para 3. The issue of vested interests exploiting the financial weakness of journalists is covered in more detail in Chapter 2, Part 4, of this Report.

28 The link between self-censorship and the intimidation of the media, or the media’s financial weakness, was discussed by many of our witnesses. See, for example, Rosie Parkyn, Director of Programmes at Internews [Q43](#); NUJ and IFJ (GMF0010) para 23; Hong Kong Journalists Association (GMF0026) p1; Daoud Kuttab (GMF0012) para 4; Gerall Chávez (GMF0029) para 8; or Jahanzaib Haque, ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#));

29 See for example International Press Institute (GMF0019) para 13; the reference to an “emerging global pattern of open governmental hostility to the work of journalists” by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in (GMF0003) para 1.4; NUJ and IFJ (GMF0010) para 47; International Press Institute (GMF0019) para 14; Index on Censorship (GMF0017) para 3; Association for International Broadcasting (GMF0027) para 5.14; Reporters Without Borders (GMF0039) para 8; Scott Griffen [Q42](#); Michelle Stanistreet, [Q66](#); and Julie Posetti [Q1](#); or examples given in Mexico by Daniela Pastrana (GMF0028) para 8 or Slovakia and the Visegrád region by Beata Balogová, [Q95](#), [Q102](#), and (GMF0018) para 2.

30 See for example Scott Griffen [Q87](#); or suggestions that media regulators reflect and enforce government preferences: Daoud Kuttab (GMF0012) para 8; Joan Chirwa (GMF0013) para 4. The hostile legal environment for journalists is covered in more detail in Chapter 2, Part 2, of this Report. The hostile financial environment is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, Part 4.

**hoped for, and even in those with erstwhile good records. This problem does not only affect countries 'far away' from the UK. Moreover, negative developments abroad risk undermining the UK's media freedom.**

## 2 The FCO’s defence of an endangered liberty

### 1) Initial assessments of the FCO’s strategy

Will this be a short campaign driven by one person’s interest or a long-term push by the UK Government to stand up for press freedom around the globe? We hope for the latter, but the fear is that this could disappear as quickly as it came.

Scott Griffen, Deputy Director, International Press Institute<sup>31</sup>

7. On 31 October 2018 the then Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, announced “I am placing the resources of the Foreign Office behind the cause of media freedom”.<sup>32</sup> But, for more than nine months after that, the FCO announced relatively few details about how it would implement this policy.<sup>33</sup> The first written submission by the FCO to this inquiry, in March 2019, described defending global media freedom as the Department’s “priority campaign for 2019”.<sup>34</sup> The FCO’s submission specified the challenges that the media faces. But its final-section ‘look ahead’ to the work of the campaign in response was less substantial.<sup>35</sup> The campaign would, it said, “press for legislation to protect, not constrain, media freedom”. In April 2019 it was announced that this goal would be supported by a legal panel chaired by Amal Clooney, who was appointed as the Foreign Secretary’s Special Envoy on Media Freedom at that time.<sup>36</sup> Few details were, however, given about the Panel. In May 2019, Mr Hunt’s speech at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day event in Addis Ababa announced a Chevening Africa Media Freedom Fellowship for sixty African journalists.<sup>37</sup> Again, no further details were provided about how the FCO would implement its campaign.

8. The lack of clarity was noted by our witnesses, some of whom also expressed disappointment with the FCO’s past work to defend media freedom. Internews, which was involved with the FCO’s consultations for the campaign,<sup>38</sup> commented on the “relatively scant detail on the anticipated next steps.”<sup>39</sup> Dr Sejal Parmar, who had been seconded from the FCO to serve as a Senior Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,<sup>40</sup> wrote that “at the beginning of May 2019, one third of the way into the campaign, it is striking that its scope, aims, activities and budget remain uncertain.”<sup>41</sup> She warned that the FCO’s campaign risked being perceived as “little more than a public relations

31 Scott Griffen, [Q46](#)

32 Gov.uk, [An Invisible Chain: speech by the Foreign Secretary](#), 31 October 2018

33 A full list of the FCO’s announcements relating to its media-freedom campaign are available on the Gov.uk website under [Global Conference for Media Freedom: London 2019](#)

34 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 1.1

35 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) Section 5 (paras 5.1 to 5.11)

36 Gov.uk, [Jeremy Hunt and Amal Clooney agree joint legal plan to defend media freedom](#), 5 April 2019. Amal Clooney was in fact subsequently designated Deputy Chair of the High-Level Panel of Legal Experts, with Rt. Hon. Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, former President of the UK Supreme Court, designated Chair.

37 Gov.uk, [Foreign Secretary sets out his vision to improve media freedom around the world](#), 2 May 2019

38 Internews, a charity working to develop local media worldwide, ([GMF0011](#)) paras 3 and 21

39 Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 21

40 Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) para 2

41 Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) para 19

exercise.”<sup>42</sup> We were told that the FCO had in the past allocated too few resources towards defending media freedom.<sup>43</sup> In particular, there was uncertainty over the outcome of £1 million announced for this area in 2017—by the current Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, when he was Foreign Secretary—in terms of whether or how it was spent.<sup>44</sup> We were also told that UK Government Departments might have inadequately coordinated with one another,<sup>45</sup> or that their strategies had been “inconsistent or short-termist”.<sup>46</sup> The NUJ and IFJ worried that the campaign could be “doomed to failure from the start.”<sup>47</sup>

9. It was in July and August 2019—through announcements around the Global Conference on Media Freedom<sup>48</sup> and in further written submissions to our inquiry<sup>49</sup>—that the FCO gave more substantial details of how it intended to fulfil its campaign. Beyond the UK’s own one-year ‘priority campaign’,<sup>50</sup> the FCO said that “we are working to ensure the sustainability of the campaign by designing it as a five-year programme, led each year by a different country.”<sup>51</sup> Canada would lead in 2020 and other countries were—we were told— “already lining up for future years.”<sup>52</sup> The UK would “[stay] involved through a small steering committee with past and future hosts.”<sup>53</sup> Among the FCO’s announcements in July and August were:

- A Global Media Defence Fund, administered by UNESCO, to which the UK would commit £3 million over the next five years.<sup>54</sup>

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42 Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) para 24

43 See for example Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) paras 5.1 and 5.5; Professor Ivor Gaber, the UK’s representative on the main UN body charged with monitoring and defending press freedom ([GMF0001](#)) paras 3.12 and 3.7; and Internews ([GMF0011](#)) paras 9 and 21. An exception was the group International Media Support, which argued that “although the US provides a plurality of the global media development budget, the UK punches far above its weight in comparison to all other big donors, especially the EC, France, Germany, and Japan” ([GMF0007](#)) para 9

44 See Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 11; and NUJ/IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 73

45 Internews focused on the roles of the FCO and Department for International Development (DFID) arguing that they “do not appear to be collaborating as much as we would like” [Q54](#) and ([GMF0011](#)) para 14. BBC Media Action said it would like to see “more joined up approaches across the two departments” ([GMF0024](#)) para 5. The Home Office was described as denying visas to at-risk journalists or their families and associates by Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC ([Q10](#) and [Q22](#)); Rana Rahimpour, a Senior Presenter for the BBC Persian Service ([Q115](#)); and English PEN ([GMF0008](#)) p1.

46 BBC Media Action ([GMF0024](#)) para 27. Reporters Without Borders wrote that “it remains unclear whether the new Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, will fulfil his predecessor’s commitment to champion global media freedom beyond the July conference, and beyond the initial one-year campaign period, as Jeremy Hunt intended” ([GMF0039](#)) para 21

47 Michelle Stanistreet, [Q46](#)

48 The FCO co-convened the Conference with the Canadian Government on 10 and 11 July in London. The Department told us that the Conference brought together “delegates from over 100 countries with 60 ministers and over 1500 participants from civil society, academia and the media” ([GMF0034](#)) para 1. A full list of the FCO’s announcements made around the Conference are available on the Gov.uk website under [Global Conference for Media Freedom: London 2019](#)

49 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)), provided to the Committee on 18 July 2019; and ([GMF0042](#)) provided to the Committee on 9 August 2019

50 The FCO wrote in its first submission to our inquiry that “the campaign is scheduled to run throughout 2019” and “we will be measuring the impact our support for this issue has had *in the course of this year* [emphasise added]”, ([GMF0004](#)) para 5.10

51 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) para 7

52 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p1

53 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p1

54 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p5; and Gov.uk, [Media freedom and journalists under threat: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 10 July 2019

- An international task force “to help governments to deliver their commitments on media freedom, including by developing national action plans.”<sup>55</sup>
- The membership, and more information about the workings, of the High-Level Panel of Legal Experts that had been announced in April 2019.<sup>56</sup>
- A media-freedom coalition to “lobby in unison when media freedoms come under attack.”<sup>57</sup>
- A Global Pledge on media freedom.<sup>58</sup>

10. There was also an update on funding. The FCO wrote in its July 2019 submission that the funding allocated by the Department for the Media Freedom Campaign for the Financial Year 2019/20 was “£4,573,073” allocated mainly from the “International Fund”.<sup>59</sup> It said that the cost to the FCO of hosting the Global Conference on Media Freedom was estimated as £2.4 million.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the FCO said, once that sum had been subtracted from the budget, the remaining funds of around £2 million would be used “primarily to fund campaign initiatives” including the Global Media Defence Fund (to which the UK has committed £600,000 each year for five years)<sup>61</sup> as well as “activity on media freedom via the FCO network in countries where we assess it can have most impact.”<sup>62</sup>

11. Asked by us how the success of this campaign should be measured, the FCO responded that:

We will measure success of the campaign through three principal means:

- i) Impact of the Media Freedom Coalition in raising the profile of media freedom issues within multilateral fora and through lobbying on specific cases;
- ii) Development of national action plans on the safety of journalists, leading to a change in policies, legislation or actions that improve media freedom in individual countries;

55 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p3; and Gov.uk, [Media freedom and journalists under threat: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 10 July 2019

56 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p3–5; and Gov.uk, [Global Media Freedom Initiative: High-Level Panel of Legal Experts 2019–2020](#), 09 July 2019

57 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p2; Gov.uk, [Media freedom and journalists under threat: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 10 July 2019; and Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p3

58 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p2; Gov.uk, [Media freedom and journalists under threat: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 10 July 2019; and Gov.uk, [Global pledge on media freedom](#), 11 July 2019

59 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p5. In its March 2019 submission, the FCO had said that “£294,000” had been allocated for work on media freedom, from the “Global Britain Fund” ([GMF0004](#)) para 4.5. In August 2019, explaining the difference between the amounts and the names of the funds, the FCO explained that 1) the £294,000 allocated in March 2019 had been supplemented by an additional £4.1 million in April 2019 and 2) that a different name had begun to be used for the same fund/budget: formerly the “FCO departmental programme budget” or “Global Britain Fund”, and subsequently the “International Programme” fund ([GMF0042](#)) p3.

60 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p6

61 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) para 7

62 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p6

iii) Implementation of programmes in individual countries to improve media freedom and the support available to journalists at risk, including through the Global Media Defence Fund and bilateral funding.<sup>63</sup>

12. **However well intentioned, the credibility of the FCO’s proposals to defend media freedom will face significant doubt. This is not the fault of the UK alone. Around the world and across the years, empty words have bred cynicism among journalists and their supporters. But there has been criticism of the FCO’s past performance in this field. Currently, there are concerns that the FCO has allocated too few resources, given too little detail about how it will fulfil its campaign, and taken too passing an interest in how to make it sustainable. There is anxiety that this vital initiative by the FCO risks becoming a disappointment. *The FCO must now move beyond the rhetoric to demonstrate impact in defending media freedom. It must move beyond assurances to demonstrate working structures that will sustain that impact beyond the current year, the current campaign, and the past tenure of Jeremy Hunt as Foreign Secretary. We ask the FCO to provide updates every six months on its work in this area. We will return to this topic to assess the FCO’s progress.***

## 2) A focus on the law; a need for enforcement

Despite many protocols, guidelines and proposals, journalists still face a daily threat—and impunity continues to make the situation worse.

National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)<sup>64</sup>

13. A focus on the law—and on seeking to ensure that domestic laws in countries around the world would “protect, not constrain, media freedom”—was one of the first strategic announcements that the FCO made about its campaign.<sup>65</sup> And witnesses overwhelmingly agreed that this was an important priority for the FCO. Numerous submissions told how broad or overbearing laws were one of the most potent means of silencing journalists, with laws relating to defamation, national security or, increasingly, the illegalisation of spreading ‘fake news’, disinformation, or rumours, being particularly open to abuse.<sup>66</sup> Some such laws on occasion originated from the UK, during the colonial era.<sup>67</sup> Several witnesses nevertheless said that the UK had much to offer in terms of demonstrating

63 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p2

64 NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 13

65 In March 2019, Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 5.2. It was later explained that the High-Level Panel of Legal Experts would be a key mechanism for achieving this.

66 The FCO identified this issue in its March 2019 written submission ([GMF0004](#)) paras 2.6 and 2.7. See also UNESCO ([GMF0005](#)) p1; Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 6; the International Press Institute (Scott Griffen) [Q42](#) and [GMF0019](#) paras 11 and 20; Scottish PEN and PEN International ([GMF0030](#)) pages 2 and 3; Index on Censorship ([GMF0017](#)) para 5; NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) paras 27, 46, 47; and 49; Albany Associates ([GMF0006](#)) p4; and Olga Robinson, [Q36](#); or examples give by journalists about particular countries or regions such as Daoud Kuttub ([GMF0012](#)) para 2 for the Middle East; Joan Chirwa ([GMF0013](#)) para 6 for Zambia; and Paula Caruana Galizia ([GMF0025](#)) para 19.6.2 for Malta.

67 See for example Burma Campaign UK ([GMF0002](#)) paras 2 and 15; Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 4.3; and Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC. [Q6](#)

current legal best-practice.<sup>68</sup> Others argued that, before it could lead by example, there was certainly room for improvement in the UK’s own legal environment, especially in laws relating to national security.<sup>69</sup>

14. Beyond the domestic, the FCO was more equivocal about the role that reform of international law could play in defending global media freedom. The FCO wrote that “existing human rights frameworks and instruments such as the *UN Convention on Journalist Protection* provide, in theory, for sufficient protection for all”<sup>70</sup> [Emphasis added]. But no such Convention yet exists in law. There is a *draft* UN Convention for this subject,<sup>71</sup> written by Dr Carmen Draghici for the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).<sup>72</sup> But, despite the IFJ arguing that the text enjoyed widespread backing among stakeholders,<sup>73</sup> the IFJ’s representatives told us that the FCO had not yet supported the Draft Convention’s passage into law.<sup>74</sup> Some witnesses did agree with the FCO’s conclusion that a new piece of international legislation such as this was not necessary.<sup>75</sup> And the FCO repeated this point, even when it acknowledged its factual error about the Convention.<sup>76</sup> But the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killings<sup>77</sup>—and a group of thirty-three media-freedom NGOs writing jointly in July 2019—have called more generally for a new “standing instrument” at the international level “for the investigation of violent crimes against journalists and media workers targeted for their work.”<sup>78</sup>

15. Regardless of the level at which legal reform takes place, witnesses repeatedly emphasised that the most important priority was for laws to be implemented and enforced.<sup>79</sup> In some instances this might be a case of insufficient capabilities, and we heard suggestions that the UK could offer training to the law-enforcement branches of countries around the world in order to ensure that they were able to enforce laws protecting

68 See for example Scottish PEN and PEN International ([GMF0030](#)) p3; Albany Associates ([GMF0006](#)) p2; the Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 3.1; NewsGuard Technologies ([GMF0023](#)) para 9; and Joan Chirwa ([GMF0013](#)) para 7.

69 See for example Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) paras 9 and 10; NUJ and IFJ paras 28–45; International Media Support ([GMF0007](#)) para 13; Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 16; Index on Censorship ([GMF0017](#)) Introduction; and Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) paras 10, 15, and 25.

70 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 4.22

71 The full draft text is available on the [website of the International Federation of Journalists](#)

72 See accounts of the draft convention given by Michelle Stanistreet in [Q57](#) and [Q62](#), and Dr Carmen Draghici in [GMF0031](#). They told us that the Draft Convention aimed to put multiple existing elements into once place, raising their profile and making them more easily enforceable.

73 NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) paras 21 and 22; and Michelle Stanistreet [Q58](#) where she said that “there is an international desire to see a convention put in place.”

74 See NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 22; and Michelle Stanistreet (General Secretary of the NUJ, which is part of the IFJ) [Q53](#) and [Q57](#) where she said “we have been frustrated that there has not been immediate full support for the IFJ’s work on a convention of safety” from the FCO, and [Q58](#)

75 See, for example, Dr Sejal Parmar who argued that the Draft Convention by the IFJ had “not gathered broad support from human rights organisations” and that “the actual existing body of international human rights law provides a more than adequate normative framework for the promotion of the safety of journalists internationally [...] the dedication of energy and resources towards a new treaty is unnecessary” ([GMF0022](#)) para 29; and Reporters Without Borders who wrote that they “questioned the need for the creation of an additional international structure and newly defined commitments to media freedom, as numerous structures and commitments already exist” ([GMF0039](#)) para 14

76 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p4

77 Agnes Callamard was writing in her Report for the [Investigation into the unlawful death of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi](#), 19 June 2019, Part VII, Recommendations, C, para 476.

78 See [Recommended Commitments for States attending the Media Freedom Conference](#), Recommendation 5, Article 19, 9 July 2019. Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC made a similar call for such an instrument in [Q6](#)

79 See for example Julie Posetti, [Q6](#); Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, [Q6](#); NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 13; and Dr Sejal Parmar who said that “legal initiatives by themselves, including the proposal of legal reforms by the Legal Panel, will not be sufficient to address deep-rooted challenges to media freedom”

journalists.<sup>80</sup> But the problem, witnesses said, is more often one of governments or state bodies not being willing to enforce such laws rather than not being able.<sup>81</sup> Witnesses often paired this unwillingness to enforce at the national level with a reluctance to hold states to account for such lack of enforcement at the international level. Scott Griffen from the International Press Institute concluded that “there is clearly something missing in terms of pressure being placed on Governments.”<sup>82</sup> Scottish PEN and PEN International called for “a willingness of the UK to hold partners to account.”<sup>83</sup>

16. The FCO has repeatedly said that it aims to “shine a spotlight” on abuses of the media around the world.<sup>84</sup> It told us that “we and likeminded partners will increasingly be speaking up when journalists are intimidated or attacked.”<sup>85</sup> When journalists are targeted, the FCO says that it lobbies and raises their cases with the countries involved.<sup>86</sup> It also attends trials of journalists, and the FCO gave us examples of countries in which it had done so.<sup>87</sup> The FCO has worked to amplify this impact by using its “convening power”<sup>88</sup> to assemble a media-freedom coalition to “lobby in unison when media freedoms come under attack”.<sup>89</sup> Witnesses emphasised the positive outcome that such efforts could achieve,<sup>90</sup> especially when they were coordinated with others.<sup>91</sup>

17. There was also an acknowledgement that sensitive cases could sometimes be adversely affected if foreign countries intervened too forcefully.<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, while taking that into account, numerous witnesses did argue that the FCO could and should do more to raise cases in public. Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, a barrister with Doughty Street Chambers and a leading human-rights lawyer, argued that “often, silence about those cases or speaking about them only behind closed doors will benefit only the regime and not the journalist.”<sup>93</sup> John Daniszewski, from the Associated Press, called on the UK Government to “speak out loudly” in defence of media freedom, including by “naming and shaming governments”

80 See for example Scott Griffen, [Q53](#); Julie Posetti, [Q14](#); Beata Balogová, Editor-in-Chief of the *SME* newspaper in Slovakia, in [Q115](#) and [\(GMF0018\)](#) para 8; and NUJ/IJF [\(GMF0010\)](#) para 26. Journalists who highlighted the importance of enhancing the capabilities of the police included Joan Chirwa [\(GMF0013\)](#) Recommendations; and Jessikka Aro, [Q119](#).

81 See for example Reporters Without Borders [\(GMF0039\)](#) para 14.

82 Scott Griffen, [Q59](#)

83 Scottish PEN and PEN International [\(GMF0030\)](#) p2

84 The FCO repeats this phrase in different statements. See for example Foreign and Commonwealth Office [\(GMF0004\)](#) para 1.1; Gov.uk, [Britain champions free speech, so we’re leading the war on fake news: article by Jeremy Hunt](#), 01 November 2018; Gov.uk, [Jeremy Hunt and Amal Clooney agree joint legal plan to defend media freedom](#), 5 April 2019

85 Foreign and Commonwealth Office [\(GMF0034\)](#) para 1

86 Foreign and Commonwealth Office [\(GMF0004\)](#) paras 4.10 and 5.5. See, for example, the FCO’s account of raising the case of the murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi with Saudi Arabia in [\(GMF0004\)](#) para 4.4 or raising with Iran the harassment of BBC Persian Service staff [\(GMF0004\)](#) para 4.11.

87 See for example the FCO’s account of it attending the trials of persecuted journalists in the Philippines [\(GMF0004\)](#) para 4.10; China [\(GMF0004\)](#) para 4.9; and Myanmar (Gov.uk, [Britain champions free speech, so we’re leading the war on fake news: article by Jeremy Hunt](#), 01 November 2018).

88 Foreign and Commonwealth [\(GMF0034\)](#) para 1

89 See Foreign and Commonwealth Office [\(GMF0034\)](#) p3; and Gov.uk, [Media freedom and journalists under threat: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 10 July 2019

90 See International Media Support [\(GMF0007\)](#) para 13. Dr Carmen Draghici wrote that “the efficacy of international law relies on peer pressure” [\(GMF0031\)](#) Executive Summary. The International Press Institute said that it was beneficial for officials to attend trials [\(GMF0019\)](#) para 27. See examples of the FCO raising cases given by Rana Rahimpour, [Q115](#); Caoilfhionn Gallagher, [Q29](#); English PEN [\(GMF0008\)](#) p1

91 See for example Rana Rahimpour, [Q115](#); Index on Censorship [\(GMF0017\)](#) para 15; and Institute of Commonwealth Studies [\(GMF0003\)](#) para 4.10

92 See for example Rana Rahimpour, [Q121](#); Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC in [Q3](#) and [Q4](#); and International Press Institute [\(GMF0019\)](#) para 26

93 Caoilfhionn Gallagher, [Q4](#)

who abuse journalists.<sup>94</sup> But Scott Griffen reported that “there is still some scepticism about how public the FCO will be about standing up for media freedom.”<sup>95</sup> Among the examples<sup>96</sup> given were three that recurred:

- Malta, and particularly that the FCO had not done enough to publicly press the Maltese authorities to hold an independent public judicial inquiry into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017.<sup>97</sup>
- Saudi Arabia, and particularly that the FCO had not done enough to publicly criticise the Saudi authorities over the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018.<sup>98</sup>
- Turkey, where the FCO was accused of not being willing to publicly criticise the government of a country from where numerous and severe violations of media freedom were reported to us.<sup>99</sup>

18. And, beyond words of condemnation, pressure to protect the media will sometimes need to be applied by the UK through sanctions against those who persecute journalists. The FCO said that it wanted to “change political calculations” and “increase the costs” for those who abuse the media.<sup>100</sup> This would include “if possible, sanctions where relevant.”<sup>101</sup> In July 2019 the UK Government announced that it had “decided to establish an autonomous UK human rights sanctions regime once it leaves the European Union. The sanctions could be used against individuals and governments that abuse human rights, including acts against the media.”<sup>102</sup>

19. But witnesses were clear in their view that, up to now, the UK had done little materially to punish the violators of media freedom.<sup>103</sup> Many argued that the UK seemed to instead prioritise its trade interests, something that the former Foreign Secretary the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP raised when asked whether the UK would take action against Saudi Arabia for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.<sup>104</sup> The UK has not imposed sanctions in response to this murder while Canada—the FCO’s partner in hosting the 2019 Global

94 John Daniszewski, Vice President for Standards, Associated Press ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

95 Scott Griffen, [Q46](#)

96 Others who called for the FCO to be more public in its criticism of those who persecute journalists were Beata Balogová [Q115](#); Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 22; and Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 3.1

97 See for example Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 18; Caoilfhionn Gallagher, a lawyer for the family of Daphne Caruana Galizia, in [Q5](#) and [Q7](#); and Beata Balogová, [Q106](#). Such an inquiry was a key demand for the sons of Daphne Caruana Galizia, writing in their submission ([GMF0025](#)).

98 See for example Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 17; Scott Griffen, [Q45](#); and Albany Associates ([GMF0006](#)) p4

99 The Committee received written submissions from journalists in Turkey too fearful of reprisals to have their names or their views made public. Among those witnesses to accuse the FCO of not doing enough to speak out in public regarding Turkey were Professor Jackie Harrison, [Q19](#) and [Q20](#); Scott Griffen, [Q46](#); Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, [Q24](#); Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) para 26; and PEN International and Scottish PEN ([GMF0030](#)) p3

100 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) para 2

101 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 5.5

102 Gov.uk, [Media Freedom Coalition launched to address attacks on journalists](#), 13 July 2019

103 See for example Michelle Stanistreet, [Q45](#); Scott Griffen [Q45](#) and [Q47](#); Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#)) para 16 and 20; and Dr Sejal Parmar ([GMF0022](#)) para 26

104 See for example Mr Hunt’s answer before the Committee in October 2018 when he said “we have a commercial relationship, and there are jobs in the UK at stake” (Oral evidence taken on 31 October 2018, HC538, [Q386](#)); or at the July 2019 Global Conference on Media Freedom when he referred to the need to “create prosperity, to create jobs for people” YouTube, [Defend Media Freedom Conference: Day 1 Main Plenary and Press Conference](#), 1:36:00, 10 July 2019

Conference on Media Freedom—responded by placing sanctions on seventeen Saudis in November 2018.<sup>105</sup> In its July 2019 submission to this inquiry the FCO did, however, refer—for the first time that we know of—to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi “by Saudi Arabia”.<sup>106</sup>

20. We welcome the FCO’s aim of assisting countries to ensure that their laws protect media freedom (even though witnesses asserted that the UK itself could improve in this respect). We worry nonetheless that those most likely to abuse the media are those least likely to comply with ‘Pledges’, ‘Action Plans’, or a ‘High-Level Panel of Legal Experts’, for as long as these remain voluntary and non-binding. Laws must be enforced and, when protections for journalists are flouted or absent, those who violate media freedom must be punished.

- *The UK should support training to the law-enforcement branches of countries so that they are willing and able to protect journalists.*
- *The FCO should give more consideration to supporting an international mechanism for investigating and punishing the abuse of journalists when governments cannot or will not do so.*

21. *We praise the work of the FCO to raise the cases or attend the trials of persecuted journalists. We also welcome the FCO’s convening of a coalition to lobby in unison and amplify its impact through coordination with other countries. However, the FCO must do more in public to shame perpetrators; including when those perpetrators are governments. There is concern that the FCO’s preferred method is a firm word behind closed doors, especially when other UK interests are involved. The UK is seen, quite literally in some cases, as trading away its values. Three cases were repeated among those raised by our witnesses:*

- *As part of its campaign to defend global media freedom, the FCO should publicly press for an independent judicial public inquiry in Malta into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Her death should set a precedent for accountability and not, as it does currently, for impunity.*
- *Likewise, in one of its submissions, the FCO referred for the first time to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi “by Saudi Arabia”. It should build on that acknowledgement, and work with international partners, to achieve accountability through public criticism and sanctions against Saudi perpetrators.*
- *Severe reductions in media freedom have taken place in Turkey. The journalists who wrote to us from there were too fearful of reprisals to have their names or views published. The FCO should designate Turkey a Human Rights Priority Country. It should criticise the violations taking place there publicly and forcefully.*

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105 Government of Canada, [Canada imposes sanctions on individuals linked to murder of Jamal Khashoggi](#), 29 November 2018.

106 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) para 3

22. *In general, the FCO should use sanctions to punish abusers of the media through a material cost, such as economic sanctions or travel bans. It should likewise coordinate such action with other countries, to amplify its impact.*

### 3) The evolving threat online

Even my own former friends have read this stuff and believed it and sent me death threats. Even people who know me personally are apt to change their opinion after reading only one fake news story about me. This is really influencing and brainwashing people.

Jessikka Aro, Reporter, Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle)<sup>107</sup>

23. The problem of harassment and intimidation being used to silence journalists was described in Chapter 1. One aspect that witnesses repeatedly raised, and that received little coverage in the FCO’s account of its policies, is how digital ways of working are causing this problem to evolve. The online space is giving new opportunities to journalists, but also to those who want to silence the media. Those wanting to censor the press can now sometimes do so with blanket internet shut-downs, for example.<sup>108</sup> Numerous witnesses emphasised how those wanting to conduct surveillance against journalists, or to intercept their sources, can now do so online.<sup>109</sup>

24. There is also a further aspect to this, and one with severe implications for the UK. Digital methods are allowing persecutors of the media to project their abuses across borders, through the online space, to harass, intimidate, and impede journalists even if they work within a ‘free’ jurisdiction. This problem is worsening,<sup>110</sup> and female journalists can be particularly at risk.<sup>111</sup> We were told how ‘deep-fake’ disinformation has been used in a bid to slander and silence women by, for example, falsely depicting them in pornographic images or having other fake stories about them spread online.<sup>112</sup> Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC described the “weaponisation of social media” in this regard.<sup>113</sup> A survey by

107 Jessikka Aro, [Q96](#)

108 See Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 25iv; NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 47; Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) paras 2.3 and 2.4

109 See for example Scottish PEN and PEN International ([GMF0030](#)) p5; Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 28b; NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 52; Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 4.6; Blueprint for Free Speech ([GMF0041](#)) p3; Gulf Centre for Human Rights and ALQST ([GMF0040](#)) para 6; Julie Posetti, [Q6](#); Jessikka Aro, [Q113](#); and the journalist Khadija Patel (Editor-in-Chief, Mail & Guardian newspaper, South Africa) in ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

110 See for example the International Press Institute ([GMF0019](#)) para 15; Julie Posetti, [Q1](#), [Q9](#) and [Q11](#); and Jahanzaib Haque from the Dawn newspaper in Pakistan who says “greater pressure is also now being brought on journalists through the online space either through harassment or through the cyber crime laws” ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#))

111 See for example analysis by the Index on Censorship ([GMF0017](#)) para 3; the NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) paras 24 and 66 “(online harassment of women has reached epidemic proportions”); Julie Posetti, [Q11](#); and the journalist Khadija Patel ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#)) who, speaking about South Africa, said “recently we’re seeing a spike of harassment particularly aimed at female journalists online.”

112 See for example Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, [Q3](#) and [Q11](#); Julie Posetti [Q1](#) and [Q14](#); and Rana Rahimpour who said about online harassment by the Iranian authorities “there are attacks online, especially on female journalists working for the Persian Service, with the hope that they will discredit female journalists, especially because the majority of our audience are very religious. They try to say, “These women are indecent and you should not listen to what they are reporting”” [Q96](#)

113 See for example Julie Posetti, [Q1](#); and Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, [Q3](#)

the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) of four hundred female journalists from around the world found that, among other violations, 44 per cent had suffered online abuse.<sup>114</sup>

25. The threat extends across borders, and online abuses have a real-world impact. One case we heard about was the harassment and intimidation of BBC Persian staff working in London: abuse originating in Iran, and that also targets members of the journalists' families who remain there.<sup>115 116</sup> Rana Rahimpour, a Senior Presenter at BBC Persian, described the online aspect of the threats: "Only yesterday, in a public post on Instagram, somebody said, "When we get our hands on you, we will make sure you are raped before we cut your head off." That is almost daily, and we have kind of got used to it."<sup>117</sup> We also heard from Jessikka Aro, a journalist who was based in Finland and reporting for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle). She exposed the work of pro-Kremlin online 'trolls' working from Russia, and told us how she became a target for their abuse:

I became the target of literally hundreds of different fake news stories that smeared me, describing me as a NATO agent, mentally ill, a drug-user and a drug-dealer. They spread memes, they claimed that I had written my [award-winning] troll articles under the influence of drugs and that I had brain damage, and they stalk almost every public event that I attend and make demeaning comments. This is the fifth year of the hate agitation. They mobilise real Finnish readers of their stories to hate me and send me death threats. Even my own former friends have read this stuff and believed it and sent me death threats. Even people who know me personally are apt to change their opinion after reading only one fake news story about me. This is really influencing and brainwashing people. The Finnish police tell me that I face the threat of impulsive violence in Finland if I am in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have been living abroad to get away from all this.

26. Another example of an organisation being targeted from Russia was Bellingcat, an online open-source investigation collective with its headquarters in The Hague. Its investigations had contradicted official Russian narratives on subjects including the country's involvement in the Salisbury poisonings, the shooting down of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, and the war in Syria.<sup>118</sup> Bellingcat told us that "as a result of our investigations related to Russia we have been targeted with misinformation, smear campaigns, and cyber-attacks over a period of nearly five years by agents and representatives of the Russian Federation."<sup>119</sup> The organisation described cyberattacks targeting its email and

114 NUJ and IFJ ([GMF0010](#)) para 65

115 Rana Rahimpour, [Q108](#) and BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#)) p2 and pp7–8. For another example, see Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, [Q22](#), who said "one of the particularly pernicious aspects of what is happening in Turkey is the targeting of journalists' families". Another exiled journalist who referred to the targeting of family was Gerall Chávez, in exile from Nicaragua, who said "I have received several messages on Facebook saying that even though I am now based in Costa Rica, one day I will return to Nicaragua and pay for everything that I have done (which is working as a journalist). In addition, family members of journalists who are still in Nicaragua remain in danger and are the target of threats. A month ago, police patrolled in front of my home to threaten my family. An artisanal bomb was thrown at the home of family members of another exiled Nicaraguan journalist. As long as exiled journalists keep publishing news online, their families are under threat" ([GMF0029](#)) para 6.

116 Some witnesses described the Home Office as denying visas to at-risk journalists or their families and associates. See for example Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC ([Q10](#) and [Q22](#)); Rana Rahimpour, a Senior Present for the BBC Persian Service ([Q115](#)); and English PEN ([GMF0008](#)) p1

117 Rana Rahimpour, [Q108](#)

118 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p1

119 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p6

communication systems,<sup>120</sup> the defacement of its website,<sup>121</sup> and “relentlessly negative”<sup>122</sup> coverage of its work by “Russian government funded news agencies Sputnik and Russia Today.”<sup>123</sup>

27. **Beyond the physical threats to journalists are issues of harassment and intimidation that also play a crucial role in silencing the media. Journalists who seek escape abroad might face their families or associates being thus targeted in their countries of origin. And the evolving cross-border nature of this threat means that distance is no longer a deterrent: digital technology and the online space give new opportunities for journalists to work, but also new avenues through which they can be targeted wherever they are in the world.**

28. *The FCO should:*

- *coordinate more closely with the Home Office to ensure that visas or asylum are not unduly denied to those journalists, and their associates or families, who are abused in their own countries.*
- *urge the Government to consider a particular class of visa for journalists, and their associates or families, threatened with violence to ensure journalists have the confidence to keep reporting, knowing they can make the judgement to leave when they need, not simply when they have the most chance of securing asylum.*
- *put the online and digital threats to journalists at the heart of their strategy, including the FCO’s work to achieve legal reform. Such threats are increasing, and they mean that those who deny media freedom can project their impact—and their violations of our values—across borders and around the world. The future threat will often come through our cables and airwaves. Being an island will not protect the UK’s media freedom. Journalists must be able to work online and offline, free from surveillance and intimidation, and confident in the security of their sources and data.*
- *deliver specific training or technical assistance for journalists to counter the threats of harassment, intimidation, or the impeding of their work, especially as these threats often manifest themselves through digital means.*

#### 4) The financial threat to journalists

In light of the financial difficulties, the truth suffers and exposing it needs courage. For political money is destroying the media structure through the acquisition of media platforms.

Joe Maalouf, executive producer and television host, Lebanon<sup>124</sup>

29. Threats to media financing constitute a further danger to a free and independent press. The traditional funding models of new organisations are being disrupted by the

120 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p5

121 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p5

122 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p2

123 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#)) p1

124 Joe Maalouf, ([video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#)).

emergence of new, online rivals. Advertising revenue is declining.<sup>125</sup> Some journalists are struggling to adapt and operate profitably in this new environment.<sup>126</sup> BBC Media Action, which supports the development of the media around the world, warned of a "growing crisis of market failure affecting the financial viability of independent media",<sup>127</sup> and argued that "there are increasingly clear signs that the crisis in many countries is existential."<sup>128</sup> This financial weakness affects journalists beyond those who lose their jobs: making them, for example, more vulnerable to corruption,<sup>129</sup> or less able to invest in protecting themselves from dangers.<sup>130</sup>

30. The financial threat to the media affects news organisations as well as individual journalists. Around the world, vested interests are exploiting the financial weakness of journalists to achieve financial dependence on—and therefore editorial obedience to—themselves. Governments are among the perpetrators, with Scott Griffen from the International Press Institute discussing examples of "withholding state advertising from critical media" or imposing "arbitrary tax penalties."<sup>131</sup> The media can also be pressured by state regulators if these are loyal to—rather than independent of—the government.<sup>132</sup> But we were also repeatedly told about the problem of vested interests working to own the media in order to control it, whether politicians or wealthy individuals often linked with politics.<sup>133</sup> The NUJ and IFJ were blunt in their warning that

Unless new ways are found to use tax breaks, public subsidy, and global funds to support independent media and independent journalism then the concentration of media ownership will increase and independent media will be starved in to submission.<sup>134</sup>

125 International Media Support told us that "because major online services can profile users and thus deliver more-targeted advertising, a quarter to a half of the ad revenue which used to sustain conventional journalism has "disappeared" from media's coffers" (GMF0007) para 7. The NUJ and IFJ argued that "for every pound spent on online advertising 49 per cent goes to Google, 40 per cent to Facebook and just 11 per cent to the rest of the media" (GMF0010) para 55

126 See, for example, the journalist Daniela Pastrana describing the situation in Mexico: "The Internet has triggered an economic crisis in media houses around the world. In Mexico, media owners do not understand the new media landscape and have left the responsibility of navigating this transition to journalists. Around 1,500 journalists have been fired over the last two years. Fewer journalists have fewer resources to cover important topics" (GMF0028) para 3

127 BBC Media Action (GMF0024) para 7

128 BBC Media Action (GMF0024) para 14

129 See for example references to "brown envelopes" by BBC Media Action (GMF0024) para 12, and the NUJ/IFJ (GMF0010) para 60 and 61. Joe Maalouf, a journalist from Lebanon, told us that "low salaries between \$800 and \$1,500 a month lead to weakness in the performance of the journalist to reveal the truth and fight corruption" (video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee).

130 See for example the Mexican journalist Daniela Pastrana: "journalists are not able to invest in their safety when a daily living is not guaranteed" (GMF0028) paras 5 and 13

131 Scott Griffen, Q87

132 See for example accounts by the journalists Daoud Kuttab, discussing the Middle East and North Africa in (GMF0012) para 8, and Joan Chirwa discussing Zambia (GMF0013) para 4.

133 See for example descriptions of the problem by UNESCO (GMF0005) p1; the Institute for Commonwealth Studies (GMF0003) para 4.4; Index on Censorship (GMF0017) para 3; BBC Media Action (GMF0024) para 13; and the NUJ/IFJ (GMF0010) para 54; Beata Balogová discussing the Visegrád region (GMF0018) para 3 and Q95, Q110, Q111; Daniela Pastrana discussing Mexico (GMF0028) para 4; Gerall Chávez discussing Nicaragua (GMF0029) para 8; Joan Chirwa discussing Zambia (video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee); and Jahanzaib Haque discussing Pakistan who said "if you add on problems related to the structure of media, and particularly media ownership, the situation is very, very bleak" (video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee); and Daoud Kuttab discussing the MENA region (GMF0012) para 4, and (video for the Twitter account of the Foreign Affairs Committee) in which he said that "media in the MENA region is mostly owned by governments, or semi-governmental organisations or, in many cases, business people who are in bed with the government."

134 NUJ and IFJ (GMF0010) para 56

31. One of the solutions suggested was helping news organisations to devise new business models.<sup>135</sup> The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) is doing so and, in July 2019, it announced £12 million of new funding for this area with a focus on Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, and Bangladesh.<sup>136</sup> But witnesses also suggested that media organisations themselves would benefit from financial assistance, as long as this was provided to them indirectly via an intermediary to avoid accusations of their impartiality being undermined by obligation to the donor.<sup>137</sup> Also in July, the FCO announced the creation of the Global Media Defence Fund referred to above. The FCO has pledged £3 million over the next five years. However, in its explanation of what this money would fund, the FCO referred to the provision of assistance such as legal support, training for journalists, support networks, and the spread of best-practice.<sup>138</sup> The Fund did not appear to be envisioned to support core operating costs, as some journalists called for.<sup>139</sup> Daniela Pastrana, a journalist from the Pie De Página media platform in Mexico, told us that

It is good to have workshops and capacity-building, but in the end, how can one produce quality journalism if one cannot make basic ends meet?<sup>140</sup>

**32. Journalists need to fund their operations. And they need to do so without vulnerability to corruption or editorial interference derived from financial dependence on governments, wealthy individuals, or other vested interests. Yet the disruption of the conventional funding models for independent journalism is making that harder and harder, especially given the emergence of rival online platforms and the decline of advertising revenue. These financial challenges might not be physical, like the risks of death or injury or imprisonment. Nevertheless, like the risks of harassment and intimidation, they are having a debilitating real-world effect of silencing the free media.**

***33. We praise the FCO for its work to establish the Global Media Defence Fund. The FCO should consider widening the remit of this Fund, further to support journalists trying to preserve their work and independence despite their financial vulnerability and malicious efforts to silence them by exploiting it. The FCO’s proposed training and legal assistance will be of real benefit, but limited use to journalists financially. Further to this point, the Government should also consider measures such as expanding its advertising with suitable media organisations abroad, to give journalists a legitimate source of revenue, or taking steps such as donating equipment to lower the costs associated with their job.***

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135 See for example Internews ([GMF0011](#)) para 28a; Beata Balogová [Q117](#); and Rosie Parkyn from Internews, [Q52](#)

136 Gov.uk, [UK aid “bold new support” to promote media freedom around the world](#), 10 July 2019

137 See the emphasis on indirect financial assistance by International Media Support ([GMF0007](#)) para 13 (final paragraph) ii; Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#)) para 5.3; Scott Griffen, [Q53](#) and [Q86](#); Beata Balogová [Q117](#); and Julie Posetti, [Q25](#). The journalist Daoud Kuttab warned how “too much interference from the international community can easily backfire and play into the hands of nationalists who will call this unacceptable interference. So one has to tread carefully when international players enter the field of local media” ([GMF0012](#)) para 14

138 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0034](#)) p5. The FCO said its August 2019 submission that “the Global Media Defence Fund does not focus on wider sustainability of free, independent media” which it said was “being considered through other mechanisms” including DFID’s support for the enabling “sustainable financing models for the core operations of independent media organisations” ([GMF0042](#)) p4

139 See for example calls by Najib Sharifi from Afghanistan ([GMF0020](#)) Executive Summary and para 6; and Gerall Chávez from Nicaragua ([GMF0029](#)) para 9. This was also a central argument to the submission of Daniela Pastrana from Mexico ([GMF0028](#)).

140 Daniela Pastrana ([GMF0028](#)) para 13

34. The BBC World Service was also cited by witnesses as being one of the ways in which the UK could provide people around the world with access to independent journalism. Journalists, or those working to support them, said that the World Service served to encourage or enhance local media abroad in a variety of ways.<sup>141</sup> In 2015, the UK Government announced an additional £291million of funding for the World Service. This money, known as the “World 2020” funding, was used to open or expand a number of World-Service language services as described by the FCO.<sup>142</sup> The funding was due to expire in March 2020.<sup>143</sup> But the FCO told us in August 2019 that a six-month extension had been granted until September 2020.<sup>144</sup> The BBC had expressed concern about ongoing financial uncertainty for it and other public-service broadcasters, saying in its submission that:

Strong public service broadcasting and publishing organisations, working alongside reputable commercial companies, could become part of the solution [to disinformation and limits on media freedom]. But public service media themselves are increasingly under-funded. A decline in their budgets naturally leads to a decline in ambition and, therefore, relevance to the audience.<sup>145</sup>

**35. The BBC World Service is a vital force for projecting and encouraging the free media globally. The £291 million of additional Government funding announced in 2015 has expanded the World Service’s reach. That funding was nevertheless due to expire in March 2020. The Government has already given the World Service a six-month funding extension. *The Government should extend that funding for at least an additional six months, to give the World Service greater financial certainty.***

## Conclusion

36. Media freedom is an endangered liberty, suffering a wide array of worsening attacks. As an institution that is meant to scrutinise and speak truth to power, and an essential pillar of a democratic state, the decline of the free press—and the willingness of political leaders to attack journalists and media organisations—is a development that should worry us all. Media freedom underpins stability, prosperity, and good governance. Unfettered access to factual reporting should inform the decisions that we all make: as individuals, nations, or a global community. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has said that the UK will defend media freedom. We, and everyone else committed to that goal, welcome the FCO’s announcement and its initiatives so far. Nevertheless, it is time to seek real impact and the FCO can, and must, go further. The current initiatives from the FCO are too reliant on the word and goodwill of those with a record of abusing the media, especially of the governments who have been among the worst perpetrators. There must be more public and more palpable ways to hold violators to account, using international coordination where possible and international mechanisms if necessary. Furthermore, the FCO has not done enough to address how threats can reach through digital platforms

141 See, for example, the explanations given by Olga Robinson (from BBC Monitoring), Julie Posetti (from Oxford University), and Professor Jackie Harrison (from Sheffield University) in [Q26](#); or from Michelle Stanistreet (from the NUJ) and Rosie Parkyn (from Internews) in [Q87](#).

142 Foreign & Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 4.18 and ([GMF0042](#)) p5

143 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#)) para 4.18

144 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#)) p5

145 BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#)) p5

to harm any journalist wherever they are in the world. Nor has the FCO addressed how good laws, good training, and good protection will still be wasted if journalists cannot finance their operations and make a living. The UK can expect the world's attention for its campaign to defend media freedom but confidence is earned, not announced.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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### “Media freedom is under attack”

1. When journalists lose their rights, we all do. Yet the threats to media freedom are severe and universal, growing and evolving. An unfree media is spreading—including through broadcast and imitation—from countries that are leading by bad example. Regression is taking place in countries where progress had been achieved or hoped for, and even in those with erstwhile good records. This problem does not only affect countries ‘far away’ from the UK. Moreover, negative developments abroad risk undermining the UK’s media freedom. (Paragraph 6)

### The FCO’s defence of an endangered liberty

2. However well intentioned, the credibility of the FCO’s proposals to defend media freedom will face significant doubt. This is not the fault of the UK alone. Around the world and across the years, empty words have bred cynicism among journalists and their supporters. But there has been criticism of the FCO’s past performance in this field. Currently, there are concerns that the FCO has allocated too few resources, given too little detail about how it will fulfil its campaign, and taken too passing an interest in how to make it sustainable. There is anxiety that this vital initiative by the FCO risks becoming a disappointment. *The FCO must now move beyond the rhetoric to demonstrate impact in defending media freedom. It must move beyond assurances to demonstrate working structures that will sustain that impact beyond the current year, the current campaign, and the past tenure of Jeremy Hunt as Foreign Secretary. We ask the FCO to provide updates every six months on its work in this area. We will return to this topic to assess the FCO’s progress.* (Paragraph 12)
3. We welcome the FCO’s aim of assisting countries to ensure that their laws protect media freedom (even though witnesses asserted that the UK itself could improve in this respect). We worry nonetheless that those most likely to abuse the media are those least likely to comply with ‘Pledges’, ‘Action Plans’, or a ‘High-Level Panel of Legal Experts’, for as long as these remain voluntary and non-binding. Laws must be enforced and, when protections for journalists are flouted or absent, those who violate media freedom must be punished.
  - *The UK should support training to the law-enforcement branches of countries so that they are willing and able to protect journalists.*
  - *The FCO should give more consideration to supporting an international mechanism for investigating and punishing the abuse of journalists when governments cannot or will not do so.* (Paragraph 20)
4. *We praise the work of the FCO to raise the cases or attend the trials of persecuted journalists. We also welcome the FCO’s convening of a coalition to lobby in unison and amplify its impact through coordination with other countries. However, the FCO must do more in public to shame perpetrators; including when those perpetrators are governments. There is concern that the FCO’s preferred method is a firm word behind*

*closed doors, especially when other UK interests are involved. The UK is seen, quite literally in some cases, as trading away its values. Three cases were repeated among those raised by our witnesses:*

- *As part of its campaign to defend global media freedom, the FCO should publicly press for an independent judicial public inquiry in Malta into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Her death should set a precedent for accountability and not, as it does currently, for impunity.*
  - *Likewise, in one of its submissions, the FCO referred for the first time to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi "by Saudi Arabia". It should build on that acknowledgement, and work with international partners, to achieve accountability through public criticism and sanctions against Saudi perpetrators.*
  - *Severe reductions in media freedom have taken place in Turkey. The journalists who wrote to us from there were too fearful of reprisals to have their names or views published. The FCO should designate Turkey a Human Rights Priority Country. It should criticise the violations taking place there publicly and forcefully. (Paragraph 21)*
5. *In general, the FCO should use sanctions to punish abusers of the media through a material cost, such as economic sanctions or travel bans. It should likewise coordinate such action with other countries, to amplify its impact. (Paragraph 22)*
6. *Beyond the physical threats to journalists are issues of harassment and intimidation that also play a crucial role in silencing the media. Journalists who seek escape abroad might face their families or associates being thus targeted in their countries of origin. And the evolving cross-border nature of this threat means that distance is no longer a deterrent: digital technology and the online space give new opportunities for journalists to work, but also new avenues through which they can be targeted wherever they are in the world. (Paragraph 27)*
7. *The FCO should:*
- *coordinate more closely with the Home Office to ensure that visas or asylum are not unduly denied to those journalists, and their associates or families, who are abused in their own countries.*
  - *urge the Government to consider a particular class of visa for journalists, and their associates or families, threatened with violence to ensure journalists have the confidence to keep reporting, knowing they can make the judgement to leave when they need, not simply when they have the most chance of securing asylum.*
  - *put the online and digital threats to journalists at the heart of their strategy, including the FCO's work to achieve legal reform. Such threats are increasing, and they mean that those who deny media freedom can project their impact—and their violations of our values—across borders and around the world. The future threat will often come through our cables and airwaves. Being an island will not protect the UK's media freedom. Journalists must be able to work online and offline, free from surveillance and intimidation, and confident in the security of their sources and data.*

- *deliver specific training or technical assistance for journalists to counter the threats of harassment, intimidation, or the impeding of their work, especially as these threats often manifest themselves through digital means.* (Paragraph 28)
8. Journalists need to fund their operations. And they need to do so without vulnerability to corruption or editorial interference derived from financial dependence on governments, wealthy individuals, or other vested interests. Yet the disruption of the conventional funding models for independent journalism is making that harder and harder, especially given the emergence of rival online platforms and the decline of advertising revenue. These financial challenges might not be physical, like the risks of death or injury or imprisonment. Nevertheless, like the risks of harassment and intimidation, they are having a debilitating real-world effect of silencing the free media. (Paragraph 32)
  9. *We praise the FCO for its work to establish the Global Media Defence Fund. The FCO should consider widening the remit of this Fund, further to support journalists trying to preserve their work and independence despite their financial vulnerability and malicious efforts to silence them by exploiting it. The FCO's proposed training and legal assistance will be of real benefit, but limited use to journalists financially. Further to this point, the Government should also consider measures such as expanding its advertising with suitable media organisations abroad, to give journalists a legitimate source of revenue, or taking steps such as donating equipment to lower the costs associated with their job.* (Paragraph 33)
  10. The BBC World Service is a vital force for projecting and encouraging the free media globally. The £291 million of additional Government funding announced in 2015 has expanded the World Service's reach. That funding was nevertheless due to expire in March 2020. The Government has already given the World Service a six-month funding extension. *The Government should extend that funding for at least an additional six months, to give the World Service greater financial certainty.* (Paragraph 35)

# Formal minutes

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**Wednesday 4 September 2019**

Members present:

Tom Tugendhat, in the Chair

Bob Seely                      Catherine West

Royston Smith

Draft Report ("*Media freedom is under attack*": *The FCO's defence of an endangered liberty*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 36 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Twenty-First Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 10 September at 1pm]

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

### Tuesday 7 May 2019

**Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC**, Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers, **Julie Posetti**, Senior Research Fellow, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, **Olga Robinson**, Russia and Disinformation Specialist, BBC Monitoring, **Professor Jackie Harrison**, UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety, and the Issue of Impunity, University of Sheffield

[Q1–40](#)

### Tuesday 21 May 2019

**Rosie Parkyn**, Director of Programmes, Internews, **Michelle Stanistreet**, General Secretary, National Union of Journalists (NUJ), **Scott Griffen**, Deputy Director, International Press Institute (IPI)

[Q41–93](#)

### Tuesday 11 June 2019

**Rana Rahimpour**, Senior Presenter, BBC Persian, **Jessikka Aro**, Reporter, Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle), **Beata Balogová**, Editor-in-Chief, SME newspaper, Slovakia

[Q94–123](#)

## Published written evidence

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The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

GMF numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 AIB | Association for International Broadcasting ([GMF0027](#))
- 2 Albany Associates Ltd ([GMF0006](#))
- 3 Balogová, Beata ([GMF0018](#))
- 4 BBC Media Action ([GMF0024](#))
- 5 BBC World Service ([GMF0009](#))
- 6 Bellingcat ([GMF0038](#))
- 7 Blueprint for Free Speech ([GMF0041](#))
- 8 Burma Campaign UK ([GMF0002](#))
- 9 Caruana Galizia, Paul ([GMF0025](#))
- 10 Chirwa, Joan ([GMF0013](#))
- 11 Chávez, Gerall ([GMF0029](#))
- 12 Dr Martin Scott and Dr Mary Myers ([GMF0033](#))
- 13 Draghici, Dr Carmen ([GMF0031](#))
- 14 English PEN ([GMF0008](#))
- 15 FCO ([GMF0034](#))
- 16 Foreign & Commonwealth Office ([GMF0004](#))
- 17 Foreign & Commonwealth Office ([GMF0042](#))
- 18 Gulf Centre for Human Rights and ALQST ([GMF0040](#))
- 19 Hong Kong Journalists Association ([GMF0026](#))
- 20 Index on Censorship ([GMF0017](#))
- 21 Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([GMF0003](#))
- 22 International Media Support (IMS) ([GMF0007](#))
- 23 International Press Institute ([GMF0019](#))
- 24 Internews ([GMF0011](#))
- 25 Kuttab, Daoud ([GMF0012](#))
- 26 The National Union of Journalists in the UK and Ireland (NUJ) and International Federation of Journalists ([GMF0010](#))
- 27 NewsGuard Technologies ([GMF0023](#))
- 28 Parmar, Dr Sejal ([GMF0022](#))
- 29 Pastrana, Daniela ([GMF0028](#))
- 30 Reporters Without Borders ([GMF0039](#))
- 31 Scottish PEN & PEN International ([GMF0030](#))
- 32 Sharifi, Najib ([GMF0020](#))
- 33 TAPOL ([GMF0032](#))
- 34 UNESCO ([GMF0005](#))
- 35 University of Sussex ([GMF0001](#))

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

### Session 2017–19

First Report	Violence in Rakhine State and the UK's response	HC 435
Second Report	The future of UK diplomacy in Europe	HC 514
Third Report	Kurdish aspirations and the interests of the UK	HC 518
Fourth Report	2017 elections to the International Court of Justice	HC 860
Fifth Report	The UK's response to hurricanes in its Overseas Territories	HC 722
Sixth Report	Global Britain	HC 780
Seventh Report	Global Britain and the 2018 Commonwealth Summit	HC 831
Eighth Report	Moscow's Gold: Russian Corruption in the UK	HC 932
Ninth Report	The FCO's preparations for the 2018 World Cup	HC 1011
Tenth Report	Global Britain and the Western Balkans	HC 1013
Eleventh Report	UK arms exports during 2016	HC 666
Twelfth Report	Global Britain: The Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention	HC 1005
Thirteenth Report	Global Britain: Human rights and the rule of law	HC 874
Fourteenth Report	Global Britain: FCO Skills	HC 1254
Fifteenth Report	Global Britain and the British Overseas Territories: Resetting the relationship	HC 1464
Sixteenth Report	China and the Rules-Based International System	HC 612
Seventeenth Report	Fragmented and incoherent: the UK's sanctions policy	HC 1703
Eighteenth Report	Building Bridges: Reawakening UK-India ties	HC 1465

Nineteenth Report	Stemming the flow: An urgent look at tackling a culture of leaks	HC 2541
Twentieth Report	Global Britain and South America	HC 1617
First Special Report	The United Kingdom’s relations with Russia: Government Response to the Committee’s Seventh Report of Session 2016–17	HC 322
Second Special Report	The UK’s relations with Turkey: Government Response to the Committee’s Tenth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 333
Third Special Report	‘Political Islam’, and the Muslim Brotherhood Review: Government Response to the Committee’s Eighth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 334
Fourth Special Report	Violence in Rakhine State and the UK’s response: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report	HC 868
Fifth Special Report	The future of UK diplomacy in Europe: Government response to the Committee’s Second Report	HC 918
Sixth Special Report	Kurdish aspirations and the interests of the UK: Government response to the Committee’s Third Report	HC 983
Seventh Special Report	2017 elections to the International Court of Justice: Government response to the Committee’s Fourth Report	HC 1012
Eighth Special Report	Article 50 negotiations: Implications of “No Deal”: Government response to the Committee’s Ninth Report	HC 1053
Ninth Special Report	The UK’s response to hurricanes in its Overseas Territories: Government response to the Committee’s 5th Report	HC 1052
Tenth Special Report	Global Britain: Government response to the Committee’s 6th Report	HC 1236
Eleventh Special Report	Global Britain and the 2018 Commonwealth Summit: Government response to the Committee’s 7th Report	HC 1427
Twelfth Special Report	Moscow’s Gold: Russian Corruption in the UK: Government response to the Committee’s 8th Report	HC 1488
Thirteenth Special Report	The FCO’s preparations for the 2018 World Cup in Russia: Government response to the Committee’s 9th Report	HC 1507
Fourteenth Special Report	Global Britain and the Western Balkans: Government Response to the Committee’s Tenth Report	HC 1572
Fifteenth Special Report	Global Britain: The Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention: Government response to the Committee’s Twelfth Report	HC 1719

Sixteenth Special Report	Global Britain: Human rights and the rule of law: Government response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report	HC 1759
Seventeenth Special Report	Global Britain and the Western Balkans: Supplementary Government response to the Committee's Tenth Report	HC 1760
Eighteenth Special Report	UK arms exports during 2016: Government Response to the Committees' First Joint Report	HC 1789
Nineteenth Special Report	Delivering Global Britain: FCO Skills: Government Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report	HC 1937
Twentieth Special Report	Global Britain and the British Overseas Territories: Resetting the relationship: Government response to the Committee's Fifteenth Report	HC 2174
Twenty-First Special Report	China and the Rules-Based International System: Government Response to the Committee's Sixteenth Report	HC 2362