

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	631
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	FCO - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (formerly FCO)
Titel:	Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth & Developments office report
Udgivet:	8. juli 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	6. december 2021

Document #2056823

FCO – UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly FCO)

Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office report

[Photos removed for republication on ecoi.net. See [original link](#) for version including photos.]

Preface by the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab

2020 was a very challenging year. In addition to its grave health impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a number of negative trends, including the erosion of human rights and democracy in different parts of the world. It has provided an opportunity for unscrupulous and opportunistic governments to increase repression and flout international law.

Against this backdrop, the UK played a critical role as a champion of open, democratic societies, human rights and the rule of law, including through our G7 Presidency and as co-chair of the global Media Freedom Coalition.

In September, we merged FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and DFID (Department for International Trade) – bringing diplomacy and development together to maximise our impact, placing our world-class aid programme at the beating heart of our foreign policy decision-making. Defending open societies, including human rights, is one of the seven strategic priorities for our development work. The new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is now working to tackle the world’s greatest challenges in a modern and innovative way.

We set out our vision for the new department and for the UK’s role in the world in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, titled ‘Global Britain in a competitive world’. It is the most comprehensive and far-reaching foreign and security policy strategy published by a British Government in decades.

We want to see a world that is safe for open and free societies to thrive, and we are confident and ambitious about our role as a protector of human rights and a beacon of democratic sovereignty. That’s why we are leading campaigns on the freedom of religion or belief, media freedom, Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, LGBT+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights, and girls’ education. We have also joined with Canada and over 50 other partners in working to end the practice of arbitrary arrests, detentions or sentencing.

We are ready to stand up for our values in the face of human rights violations, fraudulent elections and attacks on democracy – for example in countries including Russia, China, Myanmar and Belarus.

We have continued to stand up for the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong. We have called out China’s egregious actions, alongside our international partners. We launched a new immigration route for British Nationals (Overseas) providing many of those that feel they need to leave with another option for doing so. We also took a number of further steps in 2020, including suspending indefinitely our Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to cover Hong Kong.

We have challenged and exposed human rights violations together with our like-minded partners and through multilateral bodies, such as the Human Rights Council. Underlining our commitment to upholding international laws and norms, the UK has been re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, and at the International Criminal Court we have seen the elections of Joanna Kerner as Judge and Karim Khan as Chief Prosecutor.

With the UK’s Global Human Rights sanctions regime, we have imposed sanctions on the perpetrators. In 2020 the UK imposed sanctions on individuals and entities in Russia, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, DPRK, Belarus, Chechnya, Venezuela, The Gambia and Pakistan. Our Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions Regime launched in 2021 completes the UK’s Magnitsky sanctions framework. This will prevent corrupt actors from using the UK as a haven for dirty money, while combatting corruption around the world.

In these challenging times, we will continue to bring to bear all of the diplomatic and development levers available to us to defend the international rule of law and the rights and freedoms of the most oppressed and most vulnerable around the world. This is the mission of Global Britain as a force for good.

Foreword by the Minister for Human Rights, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon

The Government’s Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy – our vision for Global Britain – places a major focus on championing human rights, democratic values, good governance, the rule of law, and open societies. This is central to our role as a force for good in the world.

China

The human rights situation in China continued to deteriorate in 2020. Evidence grew of widespread and serious violations in Xinjiang against the Uyghur Muslims. The authorities continued to place extensive restrictions on media freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion or belief. China's detention and poor treatment of human rights defenders ([HRDs \(Human Rights Defenders\)](#)) persisted, as did restrictions preventing civil society from operating freely.

There was extensive evidence of the scale and severity of the human rights violations being perpetrated in Xinjiang. Leaked and publicly available Chinese government documents, satellite imagery analysis, and first-hand testimonies gave further evidence of 'political re-education camps'—where over a million Uyghurs and individuals from other ethnic minorities were detained—and of the region's expanding prison network. Visits by members of the British Embassy in Beijing corroborated open source reporting. Severe restrictions remained on the practice of religion and culture. Credible reports mounted of forced labour and forced birth control ([footnote 76](#)). Uyghurs overseas continued to report harassment and intimidation from the Chinese authorities.

Severe restrictions continued on culture, language, and freedom of religion or belief, movement, speech, and assembly in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas. Access for foreign nationals—including diplomats and journalists—remained heavily circumscribed. New reports emerged of large-scale mandatory vocational training programmes ([footnote 77](#)). In Inner Mongolia, the authorities placed further restrictions on the Mongolian language in schools, leading to mass protests.

The Government maintained severe restrictions on media and internet freedoms. The authorities responded to the emergence of COVID-19 in Wuhan by censoring social media and silencing those who raised concerns, most notably Wuhan ophthalmologist Dr Li Wenliang. Citizen journalists, including Zhang Zhan, Chen Qiushi, and Fang Bin, were detained for their reporting: some remained missing by the end of the year. At least 47 journalists in China were in detention, more than in any other country. Intimidation and harassment of foreign journalists continued to grow, and over a dozen correspondents were expelled. Social media posts by the British Embassy in Beijing were censored on issues deemed 'sensitive' by the authorities.

Lawyers working on civil rights issues faced harassment and intimidation, including through revocation of their professional licenses. Lawyer Gao Zhisheng had been missing since 2017. Lawyer Yu Wensheng was tried in secret and sentenced to four years' imprisonment, followed by three years' deprivation of political rights, after almost three years in pre-trial detention. Reports continued of torture and mistreatment in detention, and in many cases detainees could not meet lawyers of their choosing. In a secret trial, Swedish national Gui Minhai was sentenced to ten years in prison.

The policy to 'sinicise' religion further restricted freedom of religion or belief. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others continued to face persecution on the grounds of their religion or belief.

Independent civil society continued to face heavy restrictions: labour rights activists remained in detention, and one of China's leading [LGBT+ \(Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender\)](#) organisations, Shanghai PRIDE, was pressured into closing in August. Staff from anti-discrimination [NGO \(Non-governmental Organisation\)](#) Changsha Funeng were tried on charges of subversion. Civil rights activists Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi and others detained in the '12.26 Crackdown' (of those participating in a meeting of civil rights lawyers and activists in December 2019) were also charged with subversion.

In May, the National People's Congress passed the 'Civil Code', which strengthened rights protection in some areas, including in the law relating to family, inheritance and torts. In July, a court upheld the verdict in favour of the plaintiff in China's first successful prosecution for sexual harassment.

The UK government continued to support projects to strengthen human rights in China, working with NGOs and institutions inside and outside the country. Diplomats tried to attend trials of [HRDs \(Human Rights Defenders\)](#) and visited Xinjiang and other ethnic minority areas (including Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu, and Inner Mongolia). At the UN, the UK raised concerns on a wide range of issues, most notably Xinjiang and Hong Kong, including by leading a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council in June. For the first time since 2018, the UK devoted its entire 'Item 4' statement to one country: China. Ministers, including the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab and Lord Tariq Ahmad, made public statements and consistently raised concerns directly with the Chinese authorities.

On Hong Kong, China breached the legally-binding Sino-British Joint Declaration twice in 2020. In June, China imposed a National Security Law on Hong Kong, violating Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, and threatening directly the rights protected in the Joint Declaration. In November, China breached the Joint Declaration again by imposing new rules to disqualify elected legislators.

A number of pro-democracy supporters and activists were arrested during 2020 for illegal assembly after participating in 2019's anti-extradition law protests. Twelve candidates were barred from participating in legislative elections, apparently for their political views. According to local media, 40 people were arrested for national security offences, including the owner of one of Hong Kong's largest newspapers. The threat of national security charges was used to encourage self-censorship, restrict civil society and curtail freedom of speech.

The UK took a number of actions in response to the National Security Law: offering a new immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas); suspending the extradition treaty with Hong Kong; and extending the UK's arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

In 2021, the UK will continue to lead international efforts to hold China to account on priority issues, including Hong Kong and Xinjiang. We will press for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to have unfettered access to Xinjiang.

Colombia

While significant progress had been made since the signature of Colombia’s landmark Peace Agreement in 2016, considerable human rights concerns remained, particularly around the high number of killings of human rights defenders (HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#))) and continued violence in some areas. The UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, identified these concerns as the biggest threat posed to the success of the Peace Agreement.

Although there was a reduction of the national homicide rate (from 25 to 23.7 per 100,000 persons in 2020, compared to 2019), killings increased in certain areas of the country throughout the year, largely where the Peace Agreement’s crop substitution programme and the PDETs (Territorially Focused Development Plans) were being implemented. Lockdown measures and travel restrictions introduced to combat COVID-19 increased the risk to HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)) from illegal armed groups, since they were more easily targeted, and often killed, near their homes. Community and indigenous leaders were most affected. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR ([Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#))) confirmed that at least 133 HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)) had been killed in 2020^{[\[footnote 78\]](#)}, an increase from 108 in 2019.

The Colombian Government reiterated its commitment to protecting HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)), and there were some improvements in the situation. The Attorney General’s Office increased convictions of perpetrators, including of those ordering the killings. The UK contributed to the protection of Colombian HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)) in many ways. For example, we supported the special unit at the Attorney General’s Office in charge of investigating attacks against HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)); helped boost the capacity of the Ombudsman’s Office early warning system to act against threats; contributed to the funding of a study to identify patterns and causes of attacks against HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)); and supported the system set up to establish protection mechanisms. In 2021, the UK will support a new joint programme, funded through the UN Trust Fund, working across the Colombian Government to establish safe spaces for social leaders and former FARC fighters.

The full implementation of the Peace Agreement continued to be crucial to improve the security situation for former FARC combatants, 248 of whom were killed from 2016 to 2020^{[\[footnote 79\]](#)}, with 73 of these killings taking place in 2020. The Government expressed its solidarity, and committed to protecting them and their families, but not enough was done to provide security in conflict-affected areas.

Colombia’s lengthy lockdown because of COVID-19 allowed illegal armed groups to expand and exert more control over certain communities. As well as threats and killings, armed groups carried out forced displacements and vehicle incinerations as punishment for not abiding by their movement restrictions. In addition, they blocked land and waterways, and disrupted the arrival of food and medical supplies. Although the national lockdown was lifted on 1 September, armed groups continued their own lockdowns in some regions.

Criminal groups settling scores or vying for control of territory led to the killing of at least 292 people^{[\[footnote 80\]](#)}, with perpetrators ranging from narco-trafficking organisations to armed groups and dissidents who rejected the peace process. The Colombian Defence Ministry created a Special Unit to identify, locate and prosecute the perpetrators.

Colombia fell one place in the Reporters without Borders Media Freedom Index, ranking 130 out of 180 countries^{[\[footnote 81\]](#)}. Violence and fear leading to self-censorship were the most common threats. The UK continued to defend media freedom through supporting projects to strengthen and facilitate the creation of local media outlets in municipalities lacking them.

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI ([Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative](#))) remained one of the UK’s top priorities. We engaged in high-level conversations to address sexual violence in conflict, and funded a project to produce informative and educational pieces to tackle sexual and gender-based violence and mental health in indigenous communities.

Violent protests broke out in September after a video went viral on social media, showing Bogotá police repeatedly shocking a man with a taser during an arrest; he later died in hospital. 13 protesters died in the demonstrations that followed, and over 400 people were injured, including over 100 police officers. There were reports of some police firing indiscriminately into crowds gathered outside police stations, a number of which were burned down during the protests. The Government condemned the excessive use of force by some police, suspended the officers involved, and launched an investigation. The UK welcomed this investigation and affirmed its support for Colombians’ right to protest peacefully.

In addition to its programme activities, the UK continued to raise concerns about human rights both directly with the Government and in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council. In October, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister responsible for human rights, held a virtual visit to Colombia. He met HRDs ([Human Rights Defenders](#)), survivors of sexual violence, journalists, and a range of government officials including the Deputy Attorney General, Martha Mancera, to discuss how the UK could provide further support. In 2021, we plan to build on these suggestions and seek to provide targeted UK expertise and assistance where it can make the most impact.

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

There was no improvement in the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2020. Human rights violations remained widespread and systematic, and the perpetrators unaccountable. On paper, freedom of speech, religion or belief, the press, association, and demonstration were guaranteed by the North Korean