



All-Party Parliamentary Group
on the Preventing Sexual
Violence in Conflict Initiative

Consultation on Re-energising the international community to prevent sexual violence in conflict

June 2020

APPG on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative

Contents

Scope of the consultation	2
Section 1 - The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative	3
Background	3
Overlap and integration with other UK-led initiatives	5
Longer-term strategy	6
Learning	7
Survivor engagement	8
Male and LGBT survivors	9
Section 2 - Reforming UK aid	10
Background	10
Levels of Funding	11
Funding rules	12
Section 3 - The role of Global Britain	13
Background	13
International evidence collection	14
Women in Peace Processes	15
Use of Diplomatic Network	16
Sanctions	17
Section 4 - Other ideas	18
Full list of questions	19

Scope of the consultation

To-pic of this consultation:	This consultation seeks views on re-energising the international community to prevent sexual violence in conflict.
Scope of this consultation:	This consultation seeks view from all parties, including relevant think tanks, charities, and experts.
Duration:	This consultation will last for 13 weeks from 19 June 2020, with all comments to be received by 18 September 2020.
Enquiries:	For any enquiries about the consultation please contact anthony.mangnall.mp@parliament.uk .
How to respond:	<p>Please email your response to the questions in this consultation to anthony.mangnall.mp@parliament.uk, making clear which questions you are responding to.</p> <p>When you reply it would be very useful if you confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation.</p>

Section 1 - The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative

Background

1. The UK Government's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), launched in 2012, aims to eradicate impunity related to using rape as a weapon of war.¹
2. The Initiative seeks to achieve this through a global campaign to:²
 - a. end impunity for perpetrators;
 - b. deter and prevent sexual violence;
 - c. support and recognise survivors; and
 - d. change the global attitudes that fuel these crimes.
3. In January 2020, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) published a report on the success of the UK's PSVI programme, concluding that, while the Initiative was 'an important body of work on a neglected topic' its activity since 2014 'falls short of the government's stated ambitions'.³
4. The Government responded to the report in February 2020.⁴

¹ FCO, Speech, [29.05.12](#)

² FCO, WMS, [14.07.14](#)

³ ICAI, 'Report: The UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative', [09.01.20](#)

⁴ FCO, 'Government response to ICAI recommendations on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative', [20.02.20](#)

Cross-departmental collaboration

5. PSVI is a cross-departmental initiative, led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).
6. The Initiative is led by a PSVI team within the Gender Equality Unit at the FCO, under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon. When the Initiative began, responsibility for PSVI rested with the then Foreign Secretary Lord Hague of Richmond.
7. The ICAI report found that 'Little progress has been made in cross-departmental collaboration While all agree that the FCO leads the Initiative, DFID and the MOD see their contributions to the PSVI as supplemental rather than as integral pieces of the PSVI portfolio.'

Question 1 - Do you have any views on what can be done to boost cross-departmental collaboration on PSVI?

Question 2 - Do you have any views on what ministerial level responsibility for PSVI and other similar initiatives should sit at?

Overlap and integration with UK-led initiatives

8. PSVI is complemented by similar Government programmes, such as the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) and the UK's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).
9. While there is a great deal of overlap between PSVI, VAWG, and the WPS, each specialises in specific policy areas. For example, the PSVI programme supports men and boys who are victims of conflict-related sexual violence, where as the others do not.
10. The ICAI reported that, in the absence of an existing cross-departmental plan on PSVI, 'some government stakeholders explained that the UK's National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security serves as the PSVI's strategic plan'.

Question 3 - Do you have any views on how to ensure that PSVI's objectives, strategy and structures are clearly defined and maintained?

Longer-term strategy

11. Following the ICAI's report, the Government announced that they would develop a three-year, cross-departmental plan on PSVI.
12. The ICAI report found that 'survivors call for long-term interventions that address the deep-rooted causes and effects of sexual violence'.
13. The Government has proposed statutory requirements for regular reporting on a number of initiatives. For example, the Agriculture Bill will introduce a duty to report to Parliament on UK food security at least every five years, while the Environment Bill will introduce a duty to produce an annual report on the progress of the Environmental Improvement Plan.

Question 4 - Do you have any views on whether a longer-term strategy would be more appropriate, given the need for longer-term interventions?

Question 5 - Do you have any views on whether there should be a statutory duty for the Government to regularly report on the success of PSVI and similar initiatives?

Learning

14. The ICAI report found that ‘the Initiative lacks a system for monitoring, analysing, sharing or storing results information, and learning is ad hoc rather than part of a systematic learning approach. This hinders learning both internally and externally in a field that suffers from a dearth of evidence.’
15. In their response, the Government said that they were ‘considering ways to ensure more systematic lesson learning to ending conflict-related sexual violence and improved learning will support this.’

Question 6 - Do you have any views on how systematic lesson learning can be embedded in PSVI?

Survivor engagement

16. In October 2019, the Foreign Office appointed two PSVI Survivor Champions, Nadine Tunasi and Kolbassia Haoussou. Their role involved meeting regularly with survivors and their networks, as well as the Government, in order 'to ensure that survivors are at the centre of efforts to tackle this issue.'⁵
17. While welcoming the appointment of Survivor Champions, the ICAI report found that 'there is little room for meaningful inclusion of survivors in programme design' which 'runs counter to the Initiative's stated goal of survivor inclusion and global best practice for addressing sexual violence, in conflict-affected settings or otherwise.'

Question 7 - Do you have any views on what more can be done to ensure meaningful inclusion of survivors in PSVI programme design?

⁵ FCO, PR, [17.10.19](#)

Male and LGBT survivors

18. As discussed above, the ICAI report noted that PSVI supports survivors regardless of sex or gender, while similar initiatives, such as VAWG, 'almost entirely engage men and boys as (potential) perpetrators and only rarely as possible survivors.'
19. While women and girls are disproportionately the victims of conflict-related sexual violence, a number of expert organisations have called for greater support to be given to male and LGBT survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Chatham House, and the All Survivors Project.⁶

Question 8 - Do you have any views on how to better prevent conflict-related sexual violence against men, boys and LGBT people?

Question 9 - Do you have any views on how to better support male and LGBT survivors of conflict-related sexual violence?

Question 10 - Do you have any views on how to better raise awareness of the impact that conflict-related sexual violence has on multiple genders?

⁶ UNHCR, "'We Keep It In Our Heart": Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in the Syria Crisis', [October 2017](#); Chatham House, 'Ignoring Male Victims of Sexual Violence in Conflict Is Short-sighted and Wrong', [10.01.19](#); All Survivors Project, [link](#).

Section 2 - Reforming UK aid

Background

20. The UK's PSVI is impacted by wider issues and developments in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, DFID, and the MOD.
21. The forthcoming Spending Review will set multi-year budgets for each department, while the Government's Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development will re-examine the UK's priorities and objectives in these areas.
22. In February 2020, the Prime Minister's reshuffle resulted in seven appointments becoming joint ministers for the FCO and DFID. The appointment of these joint ministers led to some speculation that DFID may be folded into the FCO.
23. In June 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would merge to become the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office from September 2020.⁷

Question 11 - Do you have any views on what impact the decision to integrate DFID and the FCO into a new department will have on initiatives like PSVI?

⁷ Prime Minister, Oral Statement, [16.06.20](#)

Levels of Funding

24. Analysis by the ICAI shows that direct funding for the PSVI Unit at the FCO fell from £15 million in 2014-15 to just under £2 million in 2018-19, a drop of 87%.
25. In 2018, £32.6 million was spent in bilateral aid on ending VAWG, with a further estimated £12.4 million spent on ending VAWG through multilateral partnerships. Together, this accounted for 0.31% of UK Official Development Assistance that year.⁸
26. Foreign policy experts Baroness Helic and Chloe Dalton have argued that the Government 'should announce that the UK will devote a minimum 1% of the International Development budget' for fighting sexual and gender-based violence, to prevent any funding shortfall in these areas, and call on like-minded allies to do the same.⁹

Question 12 - Do you have any views on whether the funding for PSVI and tackling broader gender-based violence is sufficient to meet the UK's objectives in these areas?

Question 13 - Do you have any views on whether the Government should ring-fence a proportion of the UK's international development budget on tackling gender-based violence?

Question 14 - Do you have any views on whether ringfencing funding for tackling gender-based violence would also encourage allied countries to better fund international development work on this issue?

Question 15 - Do you have any views on whether a dedicated funding pot for projects tackling sexual violence in conflict and gender-based violence would be appropriate?

⁸ Wendy Morton MP, HCWA, [20.05.20](#)

⁹ Baroness Helic and Chloe Dalton, 'The victims of sexual violence in war have no #MeToo hashtag to highlight their story', *Conservative Home*, [14.04.18](#)

Funding rules

27. The ICAI found that ‘the FCO’s one-year funding cycle has restricted the Initiative’s ability to address deep-rooted issues’, by encouraging project partners to focus on addressing symptoms and short-term fixes.
28. In their response, the Government said that they ‘will keep the future funding cycle under review as the 2020 Spending Review progresses.’
29. The ICAI also concluded that the FCO’s 80% rule - requiring that 80% of funds be spent by December of each financial year - can lead to partners spending PSVI funds ‘very fast, with disregard for the quality of programmes’ to complete spending before the funding cycle ended.
30. The 80% rule was not addressed by the Government in their response to the ICAI report, but in a recent House of Commons Written Answer, Foreign Office Minister Nigel Adams MP said:

“The UK is committed by law to spending 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) each year on Official Development Assistance (ODA). To ensure this target is met, HM Treasury requires all ODA-spending government departments to spend at least 80% of their ODA funding by the end of a calendar year (i.e. 31 December). The FCO is therefore required to spend 80% of its ODA allocation before the end of December, and all funds (ODA and non-ODA) must be spent by the end of the financial year.”¹⁰

Question 16 - Do you have any views on whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should focus more on multi-year funding cycles, both for international development projects generally or PSVI projects specifically?

Question 17 - Do you have any views on whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should rethink its 80% rule, both for international development projects generally or PSVI projects specifically?

Question 18 - Do you have any views on whether moving to a commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA over a fixed multi-year period instead of each year would improve the effectiveness of the Government’s spending on international development?

¹⁰ Nigel Adams MP, HCWA, [15.05.20](#)

Section 3 - The role of Global Britain

Background

31. One of the areas that the UK has been most successful on PSVI is leading on global efforts on this issue, with many other countries following our example and adopting their own measures to tackle conflict-related sexual violence.
32. In 2014, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, co-hosted by the then Foreign Secretary Lord Hague and UN Human Rights Council Special Envoy Angelina Jolie brought together 1,700 high-level delegates, including politicians, celebrities, and survivors.¹¹
33. This summit led to the launch of the first International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which sets out a series of standards and best practices to help survivors overcome the barriers to pursuing justice.¹²
34. This Protocol has been used by the International Criminal Court, the UN and in countries across the world, from Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia and Burma, to the DRC, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Uganda.¹³
35. An international conference on PSVI, 'Time for Justice: Putting Survivors First', was scheduled to take place in London between 18 and 20 November 2019, but this was delayed due to the 2019 General Election.¹⁴
36. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Government announced in April that the conference would be further delayed, and will announce a new date in due course.¹⁵

Question 19 - Do you have any views on how the UK should use the forthcoming 'Time for Justice' conference to revitalise the UK's approach to PSVI, inspire other countries to follow our lead, and reassert our dominance on this global issue?

¹¹ PSVI, 'Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict', [link](#)

¹² FCO, Report, [29.12.14](#)

¹³ FCO, WMS, [19.06.18](#)

¹⁴ FCO, PR, [04.11.19](#)

¹⁵ FCO, PR, [14.04.20](#)

International evidence collection

37. The UK's PSVI team of experts have been deployed over 90 times since the Initiative was set up in 2012, training and supporting others to collect evidence on conflict-related sexual violence.¹⁶
38. By doing so, these experts help to inform prosecutions and perpetrators to justice, thereby delivering some degree of closure to survivors and deterring others from committing such atrocities. While the prosecution of such war criminals is crucial to PSVI, the collection of evidence to secure a conviction can be difficult.
39. For example, when responding to a previous inquiry by the International Development Committee on the Rohingya crisis, the Government conceded that the 'continuing restrictions on access into northern Rakhine ... makes it extremely difficult for ... credible bodies to gather evidence in Burma'.¹⁷
40. At a recent oral evidence session with the Foreign Affairs Committee, former Foreign Secretary Lord Hague of Richmond remarked that 'it might be possible to create an international commission ... to ensure that the evidence for prosecutions of war crimes—the crimes I am particularly focused on of crimes of sexual violence in conflict—can be gathered and preserved and justice ultimately done'.¹⁸

Question 20 - Do you have any views on what can be done to strengthen the UK's PSVI team of experts and support them to make an increased number of deployments?

Question 21 - Do you have any views on how the UK can better engage the international community in the collection and preservation of evidence relating to conflict-related sexual violence?

Question 22 - Do you have any views on whether a new international and independent body should be created to collect and preserve evidence of conflict-related sexual violence and help determine grounds for criminal prosecutions?

¹⁶ Nigel Adams MP, HC Deb, [17.03.20](#)

¹⁷ DFID, Response to 'Bangladesh and Burma: the Rohingya crisis', [20.03.18](#)

¹⁸ The Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, oral evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, [19.05.20](#)

Women in Peace Processes

41. Women can play a particularly important role in preventing sexual violence in conflict, with the UN recognising that women peacekeepers are more able to engage with and inspire women survivors.¹⁹
42. As of 2019, women account for 6% of deployed uniformed UN peacekeeper personnel, up from 1% of in 1993. In 2015, the UN Security Council's Resolution 2242 set ambitious targets to double the number of women in uniformed components of peacekeeping operations by 2028.²⁰
43. The UK Government supports efforts to increase the proportion of women peacekeepers and has provided £1 million in funding for the Elsie Initiative to help troop-contributing countries overcome practical barriers preventing further deployment of uniformed female peacekeepers to operations.²¹
44. In 2014, the Foreign Office also committed to supporting the "formal inclusion of women in peace processes as a new international norm".²²

Question 23 - Do you have any views on what more can be done to tackle barriers preventing an increased number of women UN peacekeepers?

Question 24 - Do you have any views on what more can be done to make the inclusion of women in peace processes the new international norm?

¹⁹ UN Peacekeeping, 'Women in peacekeeping', [link](#)

²⁰ *Ibid*; UNSC, PR, [13.10.15](#)

²¹ Nigel Adams MP, HCWA, [20.05.20](#)

²² FCO, WMS, [14.07.14](#)

Use of Diplomatic Network

45. In 2014, the Foreign Office committed to 'use the networks of UK posts overseas to pursue these objectives, and ensure that embassies will write PSVI objectives into either their country or multilateral business plans where relevant.'²³

Question 25 - Do you have any views on how UK embassies and our country's diplomatic network can be better used to support our PSVI objectives?

²³ FCO, WMS, [14.07.14](#)

Sanctions

46. The Government has announced plans for an autonomous Global Human Rights sanction regime, similar to that introduced in the US following the Magnitsky Act. It will be introduced via secondary legislation.²⁴

47. The primary legislation to enable this new sanctions regime is the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. Clause 1 of this Act allows sanctions which seek to 'promote the resolution of armed conflicts or the protection of civilians in conflict zones' or 'provide accountability for or be a deterrent to gross violations of human rights'.²⁵

48. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office say that this new sanctions regime 'will allow us to respond to serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world' and 'help support our human rights objectives'.²⁶

Question 26 - Do you have any views on how the UK's sanction regime can be used to target those who commit or encourage conflict-related sexual violence?

Question 27 - Do you have any views on how the UK can better utilise internationally-agreed sanctions to target those who commit or encourage conflict-related sexual violence?

²⁴ FCO, HCWA, [29.04.20](#)

²⁵ HoCL, 'Magnitsky Legislation', [27.07.18](#); The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, [link](#)

²⁶ FCO, HCWA, [13.01.20](#)

Section 4 - Other ideas

The APPG would welcome any other policy suggestions on how to improve the UK's PSVI programme.

Question 28 - Do you have any other views, comments, or suggestions for how the UK can improve its PSVI programme or the wider aid sector?

Full list of questions

Below is the full list of questions for our consultation.

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