

UN Human Rights Council 41: general comment on sexual orientation and gender identity

The UK reaffirmed support for the Independent Expert's mandate and explained how they fully backed the resolution and opposed any amendments.

Published 12 July 2019 From: [UK Mission to the United Nations Geneva](#)



Thank you, Mr President,

The UK attaches great importance to the enjoyment of universal rights by all people, on a free and equal basis.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the benchmark: human rights apply equally to all people, at all times, in all places. The resolution under consideration is a powerful reminder of this truth.

It is a fact that no state has perfected the promotion and protection of these universal rights. My own country has worked hard, and continues to work hard, to play a leading role on LGBT rights – and yet we know that there is still much more for us to do. We are working hard to deliver our domestic LGBT Action Plan to improve rights in our own country. And as the co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition, alongside Argentina, we are working with the Coalition's growing membership to achieve LGBT equality.

This resolution to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity by this Human Rights Council represents a landmark moment – almost as much as it was three years ago. Its renewal will send a message that will resonate and amplify far beyond this chamber.

It will send a crucial message of support to those living in the 69 countries

where people live in fear of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment because it remains a punishable offence to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. Laws that criminalise sexual orientation or gender identity are unjust, and serve no acceptable purpose. Criminalisation creates a vicious cycle, creating a climate of intolerance that fosters violence and stigmatisation, discrimination and division.

The UK strongly supports the efforts of the core group of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay to ensure that the work of the Independent Expert will continue. It is with deep – and colourful – pride that we remain a committed and strong partner to the core group, and will work with the Independent Expert for as long as it takes to create a world where his mandate is no longer needed.

The United Kingdom supports this resolution in the strongest terms and opposes all the amendments to it.

Thank you, Mr President.

[How the Council for Science and Technology makes a difference](#)

An overview of the work of the Council for Science and Technology. Published 12 July 2019

From: [Council for Science and Technology](#)



Since it was established in 1993, the Council for Science and Technology (CST) has written more than 50 reports for the Prime Minister and senior officials. These reports have covered a wide range of topics from science

funding, infrastructure and governance to robotics, automation and artificial intelligence. Their most recent advice on [International Research and Innovation Collaboration](#) helped inform the development of the International Research and Innovation Strategy.

Some of the Council's most high-profile impacts include:

- encouraging the establishment of a national institute to promote advanced research and translational work in algorithms and the application of data science. This has now been set up as [The Alan Turing Institute](#), linking over 400 researchers and 13 university partners.
- the 100,000 Genomes project to help diagnose and treat over 100 rare diseases and cancers through genome sequencing, which was inspired by CST's [advice on the NHS and innovation](#) on the NHS and innovation describing developments in genome science and human genetics and the opportunity to deliver new diagnostic methods and innovative products.
- CST proposed a review of long term investment environment after looking into factors that help UK science and technology companies to grow. The Patient Capital review, concluded in 2017, led to the launch of the £2.5 billion British Patient Capital programme to enable long term investment in innovative UK companies.

The Council for Science and Technology is the Prime Minister's independent advisory body on cross-cutting science and technology issues. It is chaired by the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and an independent co-chair, currently Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University. Members are leading figures in the science and technology community, including presidents from the other national academies and UKRI (ex officio), and representation from academia and key high-tech businesses. Senior officials from BEIS and HM Treasury attend as observers.

A full list of Members' [biographies and recent reports](#) are available.

Members serve 3 year terms and are recruited via open competition via the [public appointments website](#).

[News story: How the Council for Science and Technology makes a difference](#)

An overview of the work of the Council for Science and Technology.

UN Human Rights Council 41: explanation of vote on violence against girls

The UK stated the reasons why it would vote against Russia's proposed amendment and encouraged other members to do the same.

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Thank you Mr President

The United Kingdom rejects the Amendment proposed by the Russian Federation contained in document L.43.

This amendment contains numerous changes, additions, caveats and deletions, all of which were raised over the course of a number of open and transparent informal meetings. As with the other amendments presented today, they failed to garner support from the delegations participating in these informal meetings, or from the main sponsors of this resolution, and were therefore not incorporated.

We are particularly concerned that this amendment seeks to strike references to girls' participation in society, the economy, and in both political and individual decision-making. Over the course of this Council, we have seen consistent efforts by the Russian Federation to erase girls from texts that seek to promote and protect their human rights, to empower them and to give them voice and control over their own lives. This does not do justice to the millions of young women and girls around the world who actively participate and contribute, day in and day out, to every aspect of life.

To suggest that girls are not capable of participating in the elaboration of solutions to their own concerns is absurd. For too long, girls have been

written out of history; this Council has a responsibility to do better.

This resolution seeks to eliminate violence against women and girls in the context of the workplace; this resolution certainly does not endorse children in the workplace, but it recognises that in the real world, girls do engage in the workplace, and when they do, they should not face violence.

Furthermore, the passage of this amendment would set a bad precedent for the working of this Council. At this stage in our deliberations, as I said yesterday, Council Members should be considering thoughtful and well-articulated amendments that reflect concerns and issues of specific importance to delegations. This amendment does not meet that criteria.

For these reasons, we will vote against this amendment and we call on all other Members of the Human Rights Council to do the same.

Thank you, Mr President.

Criminals to face fresh crackdown in fight against dirty money

- government, law enforcement and business agree joint plan to work closer together to tackle fraud, money laundering, bribery and corruption
- £6.5 million from major financial institutions to reform the Suspicious Activity Reporting regime
- action on cryptoassets to ensure these are not being used for money laundering and other illicit activity
- Asset Recovery Action Plan will help claw back the proceeds of crime, with £1.6 billion taken from criminals between 2010 and 2018

Criminals will have nowhere left to hide their ill-gotten gains thanks to a joint crackdown by government and businesses, ministers will announce.

Today sees the publication of the new [Economic Crime Plan](#), agreed between the Chancellor Philip Hammond, Home Secretary Sajid Javid, and heads of law enforcement, major financial institutions and legal, accountancy and property organisations.

The plan sets out actions to better tackle the scourge of 'dirty money' in the UK. It brings together the public and private sectors in closer cooperation than ever before, with improved levels of information sharing, resource pooling and technological innovation. This will help tackle economic crime both at home and overseas, while maintaining the UK's place as one of

the safest and most transparent places to do business.

The plan draws together actions to overhaul the approach to tackling economic crime, including:

- a boost to law enforcement capability, with £48 million of previously announced funding to continue to build the National Economic Crime Centre and help the National Crime Agency to better utilise data to proactively target fraudsters and those laundering dirty money
- reform of the Suspicious Activity Reporting regime, with Barclays, HSBC UK, Lloyds Banking Group, Nationwide, RBS and Santander UK investing £6.5 million in 2019/20, in addition to the £3.5 million committed by the Home Office this year. All parties will work together on longer term funding for developing richer intelligence and improving operational effectiveness in the fight against dirty money.
- establishing a new cryptoassets regime with the Financial Conduct Authority, going beyond international standards to create one of the most comprehensive global responses to the use of cryptoassets in illicit activity
- promoting innovation in the private sector and encouraging businesses to take advantage of pioneering technologies to combat economic crime, as well as reduce their compliance costs
- Implementing the new Asset Recovery Action Plan, setting out a range of measures designed to enhance efforts to claw back the proceeds of crime, including those held abroad.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

The UK has one of the toughest systems for combatting money laundering, but too many people are still falling victim to fraud.

This crime fuels everything from drug dealing to modern slavery, fundamentally undermining people's faith in our financial system and impacting economic growth.

By bringing together leaders from across government, law enforcement and business, we can better tackle the scourge of dirty money, and ensure the UK continues to be one of the safest places in the world to invest and do business.

The Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Economic crime in all its guises threatens our security and prosperity and leaves a trail of victims in its wake.

We've made progress in the fight to stop criminals profiting from their offending – but we must go further.

Our new plan represents a step-change in our response, bringing together the public and private sectors to relentlessly pursue the perpetrators and their dirty money.

Chairman of UK Finance, Bob Wigley, said:

Tackling economic crime in partnership with government and law enforcement is a top priority for the finance and banking sector. This plan provides a vital blueprint for how the public and private sector will work together to crack down on the criminals responsible and make this country the cleanest and most transparent for financial business in the world.

Access to high quality intelligence on the latest threats is essential in stopping economic crime. That is why a key part of this plan is about reforming and improving the current Suspicious Activity Reporting regime. To support this work the industry has committed to providing £6.5 million in funding for this project and UK Finance is hosting a team of industry and Home Office experts to help deliver this work.

Director General of the National Economic Crime Centre, Graeme Biggar, said:

We have had some brilliant results working with the private sector. Harnessing the intelligence and capabilities across the public and private sectors is going to make a real difference to our ability to tackle economic crime.

Having a detailed, up to date joint understanding of the threat helps ensure we focus our response where it will have the biggest impact. Our joint work has highlighted the scale and sophistication of the challenge, the extent to which fraud is now cyber enabled, the key role that corrupt or complicit lawyers and accountants and complex corporate structures can play in money laundering, and the importance of tackling money mules.

We will work closely with our partners in law enforcement, as well as with the private sector, civil society and the public, to bring those committing economic crime to justice.

The UK has been recognised as a world-leader in combatting economic crime, yet the activity still poses a significant threat to the country's security

and prosperity, with the financial sector a major target for criminals. Serious and organised crime is estimated to cost the UK at least £37 billion each year.

While numerous government agencies work to combat illicit financial activity, major financial institutions, lawyers and accountants are often the first line of defence, collecting significant information which can be vital to preventing this activity from occurring in the first place.

One in fifteen members of the public are now believed to be falling victim to fraud, with gang violence and drug trafficking regularly financed through this.

Alongside the Economic Crime Plan, the Government is publishing a new Asset Recovery Action Plan.

It highlights how more assets have been recovered under this government than ever before, with £1.6 billion taken from criminals between April 2010 and March 2018 using the powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA). Many hundreds of millions more have been frozen.

The recovery of assets also helps contribute to ongoing efforts to tackle crime, including work to follow the money as an effective way of disrupting serious crime and depriving more offenders of the proceeds of their offending.

But the government is determined to go further and ensure criminals have nowhere to hide their illicit finances. The plan sets out measures designed to ensure the relevant agencies have the powers they need; strengthen our operational response; drive best practice; and foster innovation and collaborative working.

These plans build on other ongoing work to combat economic crime. This includes encouraging transparency around the ownership of assets, with recent proposals to reform Companies House so that ownership and control of companies is clearer.

Notes to editors

- The Economic Crime Plan and Asset Recovery Action Plan will be published on Friday 12 July
- Economic crime covers a broad range of illicit activity involving money, finance or assets which causes serious harm to the public. Economic crimes like fraud, corruption and money laundering enable and fund other crimes which cause lasting harm – such as child sexual exploitation, drug dealing, human trafficking and modern slavery.
- This Economic Crime Plan was commissioned by the Economic Crime Strategic Board and developed through its main working groups: the

Economic Crime Delivery Board and the Private Sector Steering Group

- The Economic Crime Strategic Board was held on Wednesday 10 July. This included attendees from the Financial Conduct Authority; National Economic Crime Centre; Bank of England; Santander UK; Lloyds Banking Group; Attorney General; City of London Police; RBS; Standard Chartered; Nationwide; NAEA Propertymark; Crown Prosecution Service; Home Office; BDO LLP; Serious Fraud Office; Barclays; Anti-Corruption Champion; Solicitors Regulation Authority; HM Treasury; HSBC UK; Law Society; BEIS; ICAEW; UK Finance; Morgan Stanley; and HMRC.

Please see [the Economic Crime Plan](#).