

Press release: Amal Clooney addresses Foreign Office Ambassadors on defending journalists

Today (Tuesday 11 June) marks one month until Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt's Global Conference for Media Freedom takes place in London.

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Special Envoy for Media Freedom Amal Clooney on Monday 10 June addressed Foreign Office Ambassadors during the FC0's annual Leadership Week to talk about her work defending journalists across the globe, and the importance of the FC0's own efforts to defend media freedoms.

Ms. Clooney has been appointed to a High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom – a group of the world's top legal minds who will advise governments and others on legal measures that will allow journalists to do their jobs freely and hold those in power to account.

Ms. Clooney said:

The fight for media freedom is one of the key battles of our time. Journalists are under attack like never before, and we have reached the point where there are few places in the world where journalists are not threatened. There is much to be done, but the global decline in press freedom will not be reversed without real leadership. This campaign is the start of that fight.

Also in attendance at the event was the Minister for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon. He addressed the Foreign Office's network of Ambassadors and High Commissioners on his vision for improving media freedom across the globe.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

2018 saw the murder of 99 journalists around the world. As an

international community we have to wake up and take stronger action to protect media freedoms, and that's exactly what our Global Conference for Media Freedom will do next month in London.

British Ambassadors and High Commissioners are on the frontline of the vital diplomacy that is required as we work to uncover those who deny and abuse the freedom of press, which threatens any open democratic society.

[Defend Media Freedom](#)

Further information

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Speech: Resolving cases of missing persons

Thank you, Mr President. And I'd like to welcome you formally to the council today and congratulate you on presiding over it and your team of course for the great work they have been doing this month already.

Every year, thousands of people go missing amidst violence and armed conflict. Every one of those missing persons is an individual. A mother. A father. A son. A daughter. A sister. A brother. Their absence is directly felt by their loved ones for a lifetime. Uncertainty about the fate of family members, whether they are dead or alive, can continue for many years after the fighting ends. The trauma this causes can undermine relationships among communities and makes peacebuilding and reconciliation harder.

The circumstances in which disappearances occur can vary greatly. As armed conflicts create significant mass displacement, many migrants, refugees or internally displaced people go missing because they are afraid or unable to contact their families. Combatants and civilians may go missing as a result of abductions, mass atrocities and forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and, of course, extrajudicial killing. Women and children may be particularly at risk of being abducted for sexual exploitation or enslavement. And the actions of non-state armed groups pose a particular challenge; in northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram has abducted hundreds if not thousands of women and children, including 274 girls kidnapped from their secondary school in Chibok in 2014. Five years on, more than 112 of those girls are still missing. In Iraq, between five and seven thousand Yazidi women and girls were abducted and subjected to sexual slavery by Daesh in

2014. Today, more than 3,000 Yazidi women and children remain unaccounted for. Given the scale of a phenomenon of missing persons globally, the resolution we adopted this morning provides an important opportunity to review and strengthen international cooperation on this issue.

Mr President, the United Kingdom welcomes Kuwait's leadership on this important and complex issue and we are pleased to vote in favour of the resolution that you presented. This resolution underlines the existing international legal obligations in this area and builds on the work of existing mechanisms. It also underscores that states bear the primary responsibility to protect their civilians and uphold the human rights of all individuals within their territory.

But we need international cooperation in addressing the issue of missing persons, both during and after conflicts. After conflicts, international support to resolve this is frequently an important factor in promoting post-conflict peace, security, and reconciliation. And I'd like here to commend the work of the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent and the International Commission on Missing Persons and providing long-term institutional capacity and technical expertise to governments in the location, recovery and identification of missing persons.

Mr President, as we have heard today, the issue of missing persons is a complex and prevalent problem in Iraq and Kuwait but also in many conflict situations around the world. In Kosovo, we welcome the efforts of UNMIK and the Government of Kosovo to address legacy issues, including investigating cases of missing persons. According to the ICRC, more than 17,000 people are still registered as missing from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia that broke out in the 1990s.

Justice for all victims and their families is a crucial part of future stability. The United Kingdom calls on both Pristina and Belgrade to support all necessary action, which must include supporting existing domestic war crimes courts to ensure that outstanding war crimes cases are heard. We urge political leaders to focus on these efforts rather than the divisive political rhetoric which only perpetuates antagonism.

The resolution we have adopted today highlights the actions Member States can take to prevent persons going missing in armed conflict. But sadly there are too many examples of states deliberately acting to target civilians in armed conflict, including through arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in 2012 that enforced disappearances were used by the ruling regime in Syria to eliminate opposition groups and instill a climate of fear. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic estimates that at least 60,000 people have gone missing in Syria since the beginning of the Civil War. Seventeen thousand more are believed to have gone missing as a result of government repression before the beginning of the conflict.

The United Kingdom underlines the importance of the work that the international impartial and independent mechanism is undertaken on accountability and takes note of its plans to develop a system to categorise

and classify material which might be relevant to the location of missing persons.

Mr President, long after conflict ends, families and communities are deeply affected by those who remain missing. Since the beginning of my diplomatic career in Cyprus, I have met many families in this position from a range of conflicts. They suffer every day and those of us who have met them cannot fail to be moved by their suffering. They relive conflicts as others are able to move on. Whatever positions Member States around this table take on individual conflict, let us all agree collectively that resolving cases of missing persons should be a humanitarian priority and let us try to remove this issue from the political arena.

Thank you, Mr President.

News story: Government Chemist and IGFS review key quantitative techniques

The methods of standard additions and of internal standards are regularly used and regarded as self-evident to modern analytical chemists. We seldom, if ever, wonder how they arose.

Prompted by this lacuna, Professor Duncan Thorburn Burns of the Institute for Global Food Security, Queens University Belfast and [Dr Michael Walker](#) collaborated to study the origins and history of these concepts.

The two methods are related by the addition of analytes to the sample prior to their quantitative determination but they are quite different. The method of standard additions measures the analytical responses to a series of known additions of the same analyte from which the amount of the endogenous compound can be calculated.

The method of internal standards adds a known amount of an analogue of the compound of interest that is essentially absent from the sample. Its determination alongside the analyte of interest allows the results to be corrected for inevitable losses of analyte in the measurement process.

The origin of both procedures is missing from current texts on instrumental methods of analysis. They stem from the original work of several chemists whose priority should be properly acknowledged but has been inadvertently misattributed.

In a recent open access feature article in the prestigious journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry* Burns and Walker set the record straight on

priority and review the recorded applications. These range from flame spectroscopy in 1877 and polarography in 1937 through to current use in NMR and in hyphenated techniques.

Burns, D.T. and Walker, M.J., 2019. Origins of the method of standard additions and of the use of an internal standard in quantitative instrumental chemical analyses. *Analytical and bioanalytical chemistry*, 411, 2749 – 2753, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00216-019-01754-w>