

Ambassador Manley statement on Xinjiang

World news story

Ambassador Simon Manley, Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, made the below comments following the vote on whether the UN Human Rights Council should hold a debate on the situation of human rights in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.



Ambassador Simon Manley, the UK's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, said:

Given the gravity of the report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights which found that China has carried out serious human rights violations including possible 'crimes against humanity' in Xinjiang, it is important that UN members are given the opportunity to consider it fully. China's attempts to stifle debate and hide the truth will not succeed.

Today's vote sent a clear message to China: that a significant number of countries will not be silenced when it comes to egregious human rights violations – no matter where and by whom they are

committed. We will continue to work with our partners to hold the Chinese authorities to account and to shine a spotlight on China's human rights violations.

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Cocaine supplier receives increased sentence after hearing at the Court of Appeal

News story

The offender acted as a courier to drive 90kg of cocaine from Surrey to London



A man who acted as a courier to transport 90kg of cocaine has been ordered to serve a longer prison term after the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient.

Sam Whicker, now 31, was part of an organised crime group involved in the supply of class A drugs (cocaine). Whicker acted as a courier and drove 90kg of cocaine from Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, to Northolt, West London.

In addition to this offence, Whicker also has 38 previous convictions for 71 offences.

On 6 July 2022, Whicker was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment at Southwark Crown Court for being concerned in the supply of a class A drug (cocaine). Whicker was also ordered to forfeit the drugs and vehicle for destruction.

Following the sentencing, Whicker's sentence was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

On 6 October 2022, the Court found Whicker's original sentence to be unduly lenient, and he was ordered to serve a new sentence of 5 years and 4 months' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, HM Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP said:

Supplying class A drugs, especially given the significant quantity involved in this case, is an incredibly serious crime, so it was clear to me that a stronger sentence was appropriate in this case.

Today's verdict shows that no amount of money offered to supply and transport drugs will ever be worth it.

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[UN Human Rights Council 51: General Comment on human rights in Xinjiang](#)

Mr President,

The United Kingdom has consistently raised the grave human rights situation in Xinjiang. We are not alone in our concerns. Indeed, since our first joint statement on this issue at the UN General Assembly back in 2019, the growing number of countries from around the world have spoken up – including here at the Human Rights Council.

We have heard concerns from elsewhere too. Special Procedure mandate holders, Treaty Bodies and Non-Governmental organisations have all repeatedly expressed alarm following numerous reports of gross violations and systemic discrimination over several years.

There has been no shortage of reports on Xinjiang. But the recently published assessment by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the most significant to date. We now have a thorough, objective and independent assessment from the principle UN human rights body which confirms our worst fears.

If I may quote the exact words of the assessment – “the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of the Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity”.

These crimes include – torture, sexual and gender-based violence, forced sterilisations, severe restrictions on freedom of religion and belief and forced disappearances on a massive scale.

And what is all the more significant is that so many of those findings are based on official public information from the Chinese authorities – corroborated by other sources.

Our ask today is a simple one – a debate at the next session of this Council. Given the harrowing details and serious findings by the Office of the High Commissioner – this really is the minimum that an assessment of this nature should lead to.

So, Mr President, I urge us to remember why we are here. We are members of the Human Rights Council. We are here to raise situations of systemic discrimination. We are here to discuss the most serious human rights violations and abuses, wherever and by whomever they are committed. There can be no doubt that the gravity and scale of what has been reported in Xinjiang warrants such a debate.

I therefore appeal to our fellow members of this Council to do what is right. Not to turn a blind eye. But to support the decision simply to have a debate. No more, no less.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Change of His Majesty's Ambassador to Turkey: Jill Morris](#)

Press release

Ms Jill Morris CMG has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Türkiye.



Ms Jill Morris CMG has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Türkiye in succession to Sir Dominick Chilcott KCMG who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service. Ms Morris will take up her appointment during January 2023.

Full name: Jill Morris

2016 to 2022 Rome, Her Late Majesty's Ambassador to Italy and Her Late Majesty's Non-Resident Ambassador to San Marino

2012 to 2015 FCO, Director, Europe

2011 FCO, Head, Counter-Proliferation Department

2008 to 2010 FCO, Head, Consular Strategy Department

2006 to 2008 Brussels, Counsellor, UK Permanent Representation to the EU

2005 to 2006 Brussels, Desk Officer – External Relations, UK Permanent Representation to the EU

2001 to 2005 Nicosia, Second Secretary

1999 to 2000 FCO, Desk Officer, United Nations Department

1999 Joined FCO

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[UN Human Rights Council 51: Resolution Introduction for Sri Lanka](#)

Thank you Mr President

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution L1 Rev 1 entitled 'Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka' which has been proposed by a group of states comprising Canada, Germany, Malawi, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The text is largely based on last year's resolution but has been updated to reflect some of the key developments over the last 18 months in what has been a rather dramatic time for Sri Lanka – an economic crisis, mass protests, and a change in government, all of which have had a significant bearing on the human rights situation in the country.

The draft both recognises the challenges which Sri Lanka has faced during this period and acknowledges progress where this has occurred.

It reflects some of the more recent concerns outlined in the High Commissioner's report, especially the human rights impact of the economic crisis.

And it also addresses several longstanding issues which still need to be

addressed. These include the lack of accountability for past violations, the many unresolved cases of enforced disappearances, the need for Sri Lanka to meet its own commitments on the devolution of political authority, as well as the need to uphold the rights of all people in Sri Lanka including Tamils and Muslims.

The main requests in the resolution are in Operative Paragraphs (OP) 8 and 18.

OP8 seeks to continue the work initiated in last year's resolution which created capacity within the Office of the High Commissioner to collect, consolidate, analyse and preserve information to support judicial and other proceedings.

This capacity was set up in response to the lack of progress made by Sri Lanka's domestic legal mechanisms towards accountability for past alleged gross violations of human rights. Unfortunately, this capacity has only been fully operational since May of this year and so requires more time to complete its mandate. We are therefore seeking to extend it for a further period as recommended by the former High Commissioner.

OP18 requests further reporting by OHCHR and proposes to move from an 18-month time frame to 2 years. This is in recognition of the severe challenges which Sri Lanka is currently facing – allowing Sri Lanka sufficient time and space to make progress on human rights in what we all recognise is a very difficult context.

Mr President – the UK is a close partner to and long-standing friend of Sri Lanka, our times run deep. We bring this resolution in order to help Sri Lanka address ongoing challenges and in order to encourage progress on reconciliation, justice and human rights.

I commend this draft resolution to my fellow members of this Council.