

UN Human Rights Council 44: Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Thank you, Madam President,

We must focus on the greatest global crisis in a generation. More than half a million people have died from COVID-19, with untold suffering and damage to our ways of life and economies. The pandemic, and the exceptional measures needed to tackle it, will profoundly affect the enjoyment of human rights. All States must adhere to their human rights obligations. COVID-19 cannot be used as a cover for repression.

The pandemic has affected people differently. While the mortality rate is higher for men, women and girls, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups including minorities and disabled people have been disproportionately affected. Members of such groups must be fully included in the response and recovery, to truly build back better.

The UK is committed to supporting a sustainable and inclusive recovery. We recently hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, raising \$8.8bn to immunise 300 million children and support the global fight against COVID-19. We are all in this together.

Beyond Covid-19, we remain deeply concerned about human rights in many countries, including Syria, China – particularly in Xinjiang, Russia and illegally annexed Crimea, and Myanmar. And as last week's Urgent Debate made clear, racism is a scourge that knows no borders. We all have work to do to tackle it.