



HOUSE OF LORDS

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Sexual Violence in Conflict Committee of the House of Lords, chaired by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, is conducting an inquiry into preventing sexual violence in conflict. The Committee invites interested individuals and organisations to submit evidence to this inquiry.

Written evidence is sought by 18 September 2015. The submissions we receive will guide the Committee's deliberations in oral evidence sessions later this year, and also inform the Committee's final conclusions and recommendations. Public hearings will begin in early September and will continue until early December. The report will receive a response from the Government, and may be debated in the House.

Background

The terms of reference for the inquiry are "to consider the United Kingdom's policy and practice of preventing sexual violence in conflict". We have been instructed to report by 23 March 2016.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is the lead department on preventing sexual violence in conflict. Its work in this area is branded under the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PVSI). High-profile manifestations of the FCO's campaign include: the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict; the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in London in 2014. There is a general consensus that these initiatives have raised the international profile of the issue of sexual violence in conflict. The Department for International Development (DfID) leads the Government's work on violence against women and girls overseas (VAWG), including addressing behavioural change, security sector and justice reform programmes and responding to humanitarian emergencies.

The Committee will be looking at UK Government policy and practice on preventing sexual violence in conflict to see whether this is effective. It will consider whether the legal, military and political aspects of these are satisfactory and what further might usefully be done to prevent and mitigate sexual violence in conflict. As such the Committee will focus its inquiry on three overarching themes:

- The international policy agenda;
- Prevention; and
- The needs of survivors.

The experiences of those who have suffered sexual violence in conflict are valuable and welcome. But the Committee will not be in a position to review or comment on individual cases, nor to forward them elsewhere. If you consider that your experiences may involve the commission of a criminal offence under the law of any part of the UK, you should refer the matter to a police force with jurisdiction in that part of the UK.

Issues

The Committee seeks evidence on any aspect of this topic, and particularly on the following questions. Please answer only those questions that are pertinent to you or your organisation's areas of interest and expertise.

The international policy agenda

1. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the UK's engagement to date, with the global policy agenda on preventing sexual violence in conflict?
 - a. How can the commitments and aspirations set out in documents such as the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and the UN General Assembly Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict be coordinated and monitored?
 - b. How can States be held accountable to the commitments they made at the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict?
 - c. How can the UK use its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to advance the global policy agenda on preventing sexual violence in conflict, for example, through the UK's input to the Security Council's High-level Review of Resolution 1325?
 - d. How might the UK use the World Humanitarian Summit that will take place in May 2016 to further the prevention of sexual violence in conflict? What other fora might the UK use to advance its objectives?
2. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the UK's work with other States, multinational, regional and international bodies to prevent sexual violence in conflict?
 - a. What more could the Government do to ensure international and multilateral organisations prioritise the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and embed this into their policies and practice?

Causes of sexual violence in conflict

3. What evidence is there as to the causes of sexual violence in conflict?
 - a. To what extent are cultural and societal factors responsible for sexual violence in conflict and how effective has the Government's response to these been?
 - b. To what extent is sexual violence in conflict used as a deliberate tactic?
 - c. To what extent is inequality a factor underlying sexual violence in conflict? How effective has the Government been in ensuring compliance with the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and how effective is the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

Prevention

4. Preventing conflict is the best single way of preventing sexual violence in conflict. Is enough being done in this respect?
 - a. What measures to prevent sexual violence in conflict have been shown to work and how can such measures be disseminated and scaled?
 - b. PSVI recognised that men and boys can be victims as well as perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict. To what extent are prevention programmes targeted at men and boys, and are existing approaches effective?
 - c. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the Government's policy and practice in relation to preventing sexual violence in conflict as committed by non-State actors? What more might usefully be done to prevent and mitigate the actions of such groups?
 - d. What can the Government and the international community do to support human rights defenders and civil society in their work to prevent and mitigate sexual violence in conflict?
 - e. How can early warning of potential outbreaks of sexual violence in conflict best be achieved?
 - f. Are there further measures that the UK might usefully take? Should, for example, the Government consider ratifying the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention)?

The needs of survivors

5. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the Government's support, assistance and reparation for survivors of sexual violence in conflict? How can the UK best assist with the gathering of evidence and dissemination of good practice in this area?
 - a. What can be done to lessen the stigma that is often experienced by survivors of sexual violence in conflict?

Participation

6. How can the UK best use its influence to promote and increase the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution?
 - a. What are the barriers to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and how can the UK assist in tackling these?

The role of the military

7. Does UK military doctrine and training adequately support the prevention and response to sexual violence in conflict?
 - a. What is military good practice in this area and how can this be scaled and implemented?
 - b. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the UK-led training and support provided to the forces of other States, how can this be scaled and monitored?
 - c. How can the UK best work with the EU, NATO and other bodies to ensure the prevention of sexual violence in conflict is appropriately incorporated into training programmes, missions and multilateral defence policy?

Peacekeeping

8. How do we ensure that international peacekeepers are held to the highest standards and that any perpetrators of sexual violence and/or exploitation are held to account?

Accountability

9. The Government is seeking to address the culture of impunity that exists for crimes of sexual violence in conflict and increase the number of perpetrators held to account. What progress has been made, what remains to be done and what are the barriers to achieving these goals?
 - a. What evidence is there on the effectiveness of the UK's contribution to the reform of national justice programmes and, going forward, what are the priority areas to address?
 - b. How can the UK best support the gathering and utilisation of data in this area?
 - c. To date, there have been no convictions at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes of sexual violence in conflict situations. Why is this and how could it be addressed? What lessons can be learned from the prosecutions of sexual violence at the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Tribunal for Rwanda (ITR) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL)?
 - d. The UK Team of Experts has carried out 65 deployments since its creation in 2012. How important are these kind of interventions and what should their future role be?
 - e. What evidence is there on the effectiveness and usage of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict? How can the dissemination and usage of the Protocol best be supported?

July 2015

Instructions for submitting written evidence

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at <http://www.parliament.uk/svc-committee>. This page also provides guidance on submitting evidence. If you have difficulty submitting evidence online, please contact the Committee staff by email at hlsvcmttee@parliament.uk or by telephoning 020 7219 6968.

The deadline for written evidence is 18 September.

Short submissions are preferred. A submission longer than six pages should include a one-page summary.

Paragraphs should be numbered. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Evidence should be dated, with a note of the author's name and status, and of whether the evidence is submitted on an individual or corporate basis. Where acronyms are used, such as for organisations, these should be spelt out in full when first used.

Evidence which is accepted by the Committee may be published online at any stage; when it is so published it becomes subject to parliamentary copyright and is protected by parliamentary privilege. Submissions which have been previously published will not be accepted as evidence. Once you have received acknowledgement that the evidence has been accepted you will receive a further email, and at this point you may publicise or publish your evidence yourself. In doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee, and you should be aware that your publication or re-publication of your evidence may not be protected by parliamentary privilege.

Personal contact details will be removed from evidence before publication, but will be retained by the Committee Office and used for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, for instance to seek additional information.

Persons who submit written evidence, and others, may be invited to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast online; transcripts are also taken and published online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk of the Committee, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public Call for Evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy directly.

You may follow the progress of the inquiry at <http://www.parliament.uk/svc-committee>. You may also wish to join the discussion on Twitter using #HLSVCmttee.