



Human Rights Institute

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Statement from the Chair and Deputy Chair of the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom¹ on the UK global human rights sanctions regime

Tuesday 06 July 2020

We welcome the announcement by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office that the UK's global human rights sanctions regime is now operational and that the first targets have been designated. As we stated in our [report](#) on sanctions published in February 2020, targeted sanctions against individuals are one of the most valuable tools available to states to impose accountability for human rights abuses and enforce international norms.

That is why we have encouraged the UK to implement its system of global human rights sanctions, and we welcome the step that the Government has taken today to advance this programme. We hope that others will adopt a similar regime, including the EU and Australia, whose Parliament we [recently addressed](#) on this issue.

We also welcome the Government's statement that it seeks to 'champion human rights' and that designations under the sanctions regime will be guided by the FCO's 'human rights priorities' including 'media freedom' and the 'protection of human rights defenders' and journalists. We note, however, that the bases for designations that have been announced today are not as broad as they could be under the Sanctions Act. We hope that in the near future the scope of the regime will be broadened, in line with our [recommendations](#), and that additional designations will be announced to respond to serious abuses of human rights being perpetrated around the world.

¹ High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom, Chair, Lord Neuberger, former President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and Deputy Chair, Ms Amal Clooney, Barrister and the UK's Special Envoy on Media Freedom.