

UN Human Rights Council 61: UK Statement for the Item 4 General Debate

16.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

UK Statement for the Item 4 General Debate. Delivered by the UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Eleanor Sanders.

Thank you Mr President,

As the Human Rights Council reaches its 20th anniversary, it is apparent we need this Council to address human rights challenges across the globe. We all see the increase in conflict, the shrinking of civic space, the continued oppression of women, which we see most starkly in Afghanistan.

The Taliban's new criminal procedures directive embeds religious discrimination, suppresses freedom of expression and legitimises violence against women and children. We call for these rules, alongside the numerous other oppressive measures imposed by the Taliban, to be rescinded if the rights of all Afghans are to be protected.

On Sudan, the horrendous findings in the Fact-Finding Mission's report on El Fasher are truly shocking: ethnic targeting of civilians, mass rapes, communities starved, and aid deliberately blocked. These crimes cannot be ignored. We must act to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors, and ensure justice for those orchestrating this brutality.

We remain unwavering in our support for Hong Kong. We call for the Beijing-imposed National Security Law to be repealed, and for an end to the prosecution of all individuals charged under it, including Jimmy Lai. We also remain deeply concerned about religious and cultural restrictions in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Thank you.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-61-uk-statement-for-the-item-4-general-debate>