

civil society. We assess that this co-operation contributed to improvements in women's rights, including strengthening implementation of China's first domestic violence law.

The UK raised human rights with China robustly and at every level. The UK-China Human Rights Dialogue remained an important channel for relaying a full range of concerns and cases. The 2016 Dialogue focused on pre-trial detention and the importance of an active civil society. We continued to act on cases of concern, including working with international partners and NGOs in China and the UK.

The UK attempted to observe trials, though we were often obstructed by the authorities. We maintained contact with human rights defenders and their families. We raised human rights in China in bilateral and joint statements at the UN Human Rights Council. We supported EU statements and called publicly for the release of detained human rights lawyers and related cases.

In 2017, restrictions are likely to continue, affecting groups that may include lawyers and members of NGOs. Some of those detained in the '709' crackdown may face trial. The operating environment for some foreign NGOs is likely to become more challenging as a result of the FNGO Management Law. We expect to work with China bilaterally and through the UN and G20 to combat all forms of modern slavery.

We will continue to raise human rights and values issues through a range of channels, both publicly and privately.

Finally, in this 20th year since the handover of Hong Kong to China, we assess that the Special Administrative Region is generally working well. Its success continues to be based on the high degree of autonomy, rule of law, independent judiciary and other rights and freedoms set out in the legally-binding Sino-British Joint Declaration. We continue to monitor implementation of the Joint Declaration through Six Monthly Reports to Parliament, and to act on cases of concern. For example, during 2016 we consistently raised concerns relating to the case of the Hong Kong bookseller Lee Po.

Colombia

2016 was an historic year for Colombia, with the signing of a peace agreement on 24 November between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which ended the longest running conflict in the western hemisphere. This followed six weeks of intense negotiations, after an initial deal was rejected by the Colombian people in a plebiscite. Despite progress there are continuing concerns about conflict-related violence, including abuses committed by illegal armed groups. According to the UN, 63 human rights defenders (HRDs) were killed in 2016, 50% higher than in 2015; 75% occurred in rural areas. Civil society reporting suggest this number could be as high as 125.

It is unclear whether there is an ideological pattern behind the killings, but many have taken place in areas vacated by the FARC as illegal armed groups have stepped in. The Colombian Government has taken welcome steps to investigate some of

those murders and in December the President announced the formation of a new commission, involving the military, police, government and civil society to help accelerate investigations of these crimes. There are also continuing concerns about the need to improve prison conditions and access to justice for victims, including those of sexual violence.

There are reports of continuing discrimination against the LGBT community. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reviewed Colombia's Seventh Periodical Review^[12] in November, noting positive developments, including the adoption of a National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking.

Prime Minister Theresa May discussed human rights with President Santos during the Colombian State Visit to the UK in November 2016, when we reaffirmed our shared commitment to human rights in a Joint Declaration. The UK promoted the protection of HRDs through project funding, field visits, high level engagement and joint work with the EU and UN. The Embassy also hosted a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur for HRDs in September 2016. During the review period, Her Majesty's Ambassador continued to take an active role in the "Ambassadors with Defenders" initiative, which launched a media campaign in December to highlight the work of HRDs.

Our Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) projects with women's organisations helped to report and document cases of sexual violence using the International Protocol (1,200 criminal reports and 507 cases documented to date). We also supported the attendance of three Colombian experts at the Wilton Park conference to develop a Global Action Plan against Stigma. The UK chaired the International Cooperation Working Group on Gender Justice and Peace in Bogota in 2016. This initiative was designed to address women's political participation in Colombia.

The Colombian Government reports that it has begun to implement their National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights, which was first launched in December 2015 following collaboration with the UK. We are working with the Colombian Ministry of Mines on a project that focuses on inclusion of the "remedy" pillar of the UN Guiding Principles, which will encourage companies to address adverse affects of their activities on local communities, by resolving them through legitimate processes.

In 2017, the UK will continue to focus on three human rights priority issues in Colombia: HRDs, PSVI and business and human rights. We will continue to work with the Colombian Government to ensure that respect for human rights, access to justice and preventing sexual exploitation continue to be guiding principles during implementation of the peace process with the FARC.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

There was no sign of improvement in human rights in the DPRK during 2016. We continue to have grave concerns

[12] http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/COL/CO/7&Lang=En

about the DPRK's disregard for, and violations of, international human rights norms and obligations. As documented in the UN Commission of Inquiry report on Human Rights in the DPRK, there are widespread violations, including torture; rape; summary executions; disappearances; and using starvation as a means of control and punishment.

In the field of disability rights, there was a small sign of progress in December, when the DPRK Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, in March the country disengaged itself from the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), following the adoption of a Japan-EU-led resolution on the DPRK. The DPRK Foreign Minister stated at the time that the DPRK would never be bound by international resolutions that he claimed were politically motivated. For the remainder of the year, the DPRK continued to refuse meaningful engagement with the international community on human rights and rejected resolutions passed by the UN HRC and UN Security Council (UNSC). Despite this, they have continued to highlight and criticise human rights concerns elsewhere (particularly in the EU, Republic of Korea and the United States).

The UK continued to urge the DPRK Government to acknowledge the existence and extent of its human rights violations and to demonstrate a willingness to take steps to address these issues. The Ambassador and Embassy officials raised human rights issues at a number of meetings with DPRK Government officials in Pyongyang. Senior FCO officials used meetings in London with DPRK Embassy officials to raise concerns over human rights issues, including those documented in the Commission of Inquiry report. UK officials urged the DPRK Government to uphold its human rights obligations, to agree to a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur and other UN officials, and to engage with the international architecture on human rights.

We also maintained pressure on the DPRK through international fora such as the UN General Assembly, the UNSC and the HRC, where UK Government lobbying helped secure widespread support for strong resolutions. The Japan-EU-led resolution on DPRK at the HRC was adopted without a vote on 23 March and included the renewal of the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK.

As part of the UK's policy of critical engagement with the DPRK, we will continue to work bilaterally and with international partners, including on further resolutions, and will raise human rights issues with the DPRK Government at every opportunity. We will continue to support small-scale humanitarian project activities in the DPRK which provide assistance to the more vulnerable elements of DPRK society in remote communities outside Pyongyang.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The human rights situation in the DRC deteriorated further during 2016, particularly as a result of activity by armed groups in eastern DRC, who remain responsible for the majority of abuses. However, there has been a significant increase (400%) of abuses related to elections. There was continued shrinkage

of democratic space, particularly in relation to the electoral process as President Kabila's constitutional mandate drew to a close in December. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (JHRO) documented a total of 1,102 human rights violations, a huge increase since last year. The majority of incidents, for which the state was reportedly responsible, related to arbitrary arrests and detentions; spurious charges against opposition figures; attacks on freedom of speech; and extrajudicial killings by state agents. State human rights violations continued, including the disproportionate use of force by the security services of the DRC against supporters of the political opposition. Additionally, there have been accusations of grave and widespread human rights violations by security forces in the Kasai region in response to a local uprising. In August, the DRC's Family Code was revised, which was a positive outcome for gender, LGBT and minority rights. The DRC currently ranks in the top ten countries for numbers of people in modern slavery, with more than 80,000 people affected.

The UK's human rights work focused on protecting political space and preventing sexual and gender-based violence. The FCO funded projects to help victims of sexual violence in conflict to obtain justice and worked with the DRC Government to encourage use of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict by legal and medical practitioners. The UK continued to contribute towards long term stability in eastern DRC, through support to the MONUSCO (UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC); the work of the Department for International Development (DFID); and projects and programmes supported by the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). We remain deeply concerned about the risk of further massacres in and around the city of Beni, and are supporting MONUSCO in its work to prevent future incidences and reduce human rights violations and abuses in the east of the country. Our office in Goma has facilitated and driven the sharing of information about the massacres amongst those investigating a number of massacres in Beni territory.

In 2017, the UK will continue to focus on preventing human rights violations and abuses during the electoral period. We will monitor arrests, detentions and disappearances of opposition and civil society figures, and will raise any concerns with the DRC Government. We will continue to encourage the DRC Government to take concrete steps to improve respect for human rights, particularly by taking action against armed groups in the east. We will look for ways to include work against modern slavery and people trafficking in our existing and forthcoming programme activity. We will also continue our work on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, funding a number of grassroots projects and working closely with the DRC President's Personal Representative on the Fight Against Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment, as well as other relevant ministries.

Egypt

The human rights situation in Egypt in 2016 saw increased restrictions on civil society, freedom of expression and reports of police abuses.