



[United Kingdom Announces Sanctions Against Human Rights Abusers](#)

The United Kingdom is imposing sanctions on individuals and organizations involved in grave human rights abuses including extra-judicial killings, torture, forced labor, and servitude. U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced the measures which target violators in Saudi Arabia, Russia, North Korea, and Myanmar with travel bans and asset freezes. Specifically, those punished with the sanctions are: 20 Saudi Arabian nationals involved in the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, 25 Russian nationals involved in the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, two organizations engaged in forced labor, torture, and murder in North Korean gulags, and two military generals in Myanmar involved in violence against the Rohingya people and other ethnic minorities. The sanctions mark the first time that the U.K. has implemented its own independent mechanism focused entirely on human rights abusers.

The culprits on the list include the former deputy head of the Saudi Arabian intelligence services and a former minister in the Russian interior department. The violators will be prohibited from entering the United Kingdom, funneling money into the country, and profiting from the British economy through assets that they may own. In Foreign Secretary Raab's statement to Parliament, he told lawmakers that "Today this government and this House sends a very clear message on behalf of the British people that those with blood on their hands, the thugs of despots, the henchmen of dictators, will not be free to waltz into this country." The initial targets of the sanctions are the first names to be released, however more are expected to be added to the list later. Lawmakers are keen to call out some Chinese government officials as well, particularly for human rights violations against Uyghurs.

The sanctions imposed by the U.K. are the first taken independently of the United Nations and the European Union. Prior to now, the country has almost always acted in coordination with the European Union, but the U.K. government wants to be viewed as one of the leading defenders of human rights. The United States and Canada have similar mechanisms, and the European Union is working on its own version as well. Since sanctions are more effective when used collectively, it remains to be seen whether the U.K. can get support from other countries. However, at the very least, they hope the restrictions will have a significant impact on the violators due to the country being a major hub of international finance and travel.

After officially leaving the European Union earlier this year back in late January, the U.K. government expressed a desire to establish a new independent role for the nation in trade and foreign affairs. These sanctions are viewed as the first step to doing so and imposing measures on their own. Foreign Secretary Raab emphasized that the sanction list would be kept under constant review and that the government was already working on further designations that can be made. Additionally, The Foreign Office stated that its new sanctions mechanism could be extended in the future to include individuals and governments guilty of corruption as well.