

Global Britain Scorecard



UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson [has said](#) that a “Global Britain” means an outward-looking foreign policy which “is in the interests both of Britain and the world”.

UNA-UK agrees, and we want to help the UK flesh out its vision. This scorecard sets out key policy areas we believe are central to a “Global Britain” and asks: are we making progress?

Assessments have been made using the words of UN officials, cross-party committees of MPs and the UK’s voting and participation record at the UN.

For more information and our snapshot 1 pager, please visit the scorecard mini-site: www.una.org.uk/scorecard.

Purpose and methodology

Against the current challenges of rising global tensions and faltering global leadership, the UK must take positive action to sustain the international system from which we all benefit.

For this reason, the policy areas monitored by the Scorecard all present clear opportunities for UK action to contribute to the health of the international system.

Our methodology follows the UK’s own analysis that Britain’s security and prosperity is underpinned by a strong, rules-based international system with the United Nations at its heart. It uses a traffic light system to score the UK’s performance on these issues as “green”, “amber” or “red”.

Impact on the rules-based international system

While acknowledging that the real picture is far more complex, we feel that a simple traffic lights scoring system gives a useful assessment of the UK’s direction of travel. An impartial source and more detailed analysis accompanies each score.

“GREEN”

The UK’s actions are helping to strengthen the rules-based international system and serve as a positive example to other states.

“AMBER”

The UK’s record is mixed; on some fronts the UK’s conduct reinforces the rules-based international system, on others, it isn’t.

RED

The UK’s actions are undermining the rules-based international system - we recommend a course correction.

Source

The score for each of the issues below has been determined using an impartial source that meets at least one of the following thresholds:

1. A cross-party group of MPs
2. A senior UN official or an official UN report
3. UK attendance/voting in fora such as the UN

Period being monitored

The scorecard reflects an assessment of current UK Government policy and will be updated annually, or when significant changes to policy occur.

The Scorecard

Global Britain objectives	Traffic lights	Comments	Source	UNA-UK’s analysis
Responsible arms trading	RED	The UK’s practice of selling weapons to regimes with bad human rights records is undermining the	In September 2016, two cross-party parliamentary committees called for the suspension of arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Alongside humanitarian concerns, the committees cited the negative effect the UK’s	According to a 2016 report by the UK’s Department of Trade and Industry, the UK has been the second-largest defence exporter for over a decade. This trade includes arms sales to countries that the UK itself has labelled countries of human rights concern . Saudi Arabia is one of them. Over the past two and a half years, the UK has licensed £3.6bn of weapons to the country,

		<p>Arms Trade Treaty. Civilians are paying the cost.</p>	<p>conduct was perceived to be having on the Arms Trade Treaty and the rules-based international system more broadly.</p>	<p>including significant quantities of munitions for use in the aerial bombardment of Yemen, which the UN has described as the world's largest humanitarian disaster.</p> <p>Over 20 million people are in need of assistance, and an estimated 10,000 civilians have been killed since the conflict began in March 2015. The Saudi-led coalition has been identified as responsible for the majority of these casualties.</p> <p>Despite the advice of two parliamentary committees and a UN report pointing to “widespread violations of international humanitarian law” by the coalition, the UK weapons sales continue. The recent High Court decision on the legality of the arms sales raised further concerns about the accountability of the UK’s arms export control processes.</p> <p>The actions of the UK - which was a leading champion of the Arms Trades Treaty - have not gone unnoticed internationally. Russia has used support for the Saudi-led coalition to justify its support to Syria. Other states have made reference to the negative impact on the Arms Trade Treaty. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and the lead country on Yemen within the Council, the UK’s standing and its perceived support for the rules-based international system is in doubt.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK’s recommendations</p>
Effective UN Peacekeeping	GREEN	<p>The UK has made a significant contribution to UN peacekeeping. It must now</p>	<p>The House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations welcomed the UK’s increase in contributions to UN peacekeeping: “the numbers of personnel were small but praised the UK’s specialised</p>	<p>UN peacekeeping is one of the international community’s most important tools. Over the past 70 years, UN missions have helped to end conflicts and foster reconciliation in dozens of countries, from El Salvador to Tajikistan. Studies have found it to be more effective and substantially cheaper than comparable operations.</p> <p>The UK has a commendable record on UN peacekeeping. It is one of the largest financial contributors and used to be one of the largest</p>

		<p>encourage others to follow suit and support effective reforms.</p>	<p>assistance... The UK should consider how it can add value to the range of capabilities available to UN peacekeeping.”</p>	<p>contributors of troops. While troop numbers have been relatively small since the 1990s, the UK recently pledged to double its total number of peacekeepers with a deployment of 370 troops to Somalia and South Sudan. As a permanent member of the Security Council, the UK also plays a vital role in the creation of missions.</p> <p>However, there is reason and scope to do more. UN peacekeeping can help the UK to address threats to its national security - from extremism to disrupted trade - that it cannot tackle alone, through missions that are collectively funded and staffed.</p> <p>UK troop numbers are still on modest, representing less than one per cent of the UN's total uniformed personnel. There is currently capacity to contribute more UK troops - an opportunity which should be take. Equipment and technology such as helicopters and mobile communications are also sorely needed.</p> <p>At a time when political and financial pressures are putting missions at risk, the UK - which “holds the pen” at the Security Council for peacekeeping - needs to shepherd peacekeeping through this difficult time and push for the reforms necessary to make it fit for the 21st century. This includes designing people-centred missions; promoting greater transparency of the restrictions and caveats that states place upon the troops they contribute; and establishing accountability mechanisms to deal with sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>UNA-UK's recommendations</p>
<p>Preventing atrocities</p>	<p>AMBER</p>	<p>The UK's record is mixed - as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it bears particular responsibility for preventing</p>	<p>The UK has championed the international community's “responsibility to protect” people from atrocity crimes, and often pushed for positive action at the Security Council.</p> <p>However, the UK has not been consistent and some of its</p>	<p>Atrocity crimes - genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity - are morally unacceptable. They can destabilise regions and the wider world; forcing people to flee their homes, fuelling extremism and organised crime, and disrupting development and trade. From the Holocaust to the latest reports from Myanmar, these tragic events shame us all and should spur us into action.</p> <p>The UK has championed the international community's “responsibility to protect” people from such crimes. It has spoken out about a</p>

		<p>genocide, ethnic cleansing and other atrocities.</p>	<p>actions, particularly with regard to military interventions, have been criticised.</p>	<p>number of issues at the Security Council, and supported actions such as investigations and referrals to the International Criminal Court. It has not used its veto since 1989 and recently pledged never to block action to address atrocities.</p> <p>However, atrocity prevention is not given priority in UK policy. The UK has also been criticised for its response to particular situations. In Libya, Syria and Yemen, for example, the UK is perceived to have put strategic concerns over the protection of civilians.</p> <p>The Foreign Affairs Committee was critical of the “mission creep” that took place in Libya and the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen was critical of the UK’s role in supporting the Saudi-led coalition. The former UN and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria has blamed the failure of peace talks on “political impasse” and remarked that the UK must recognise “that the future of Syria rises and falls on more than the fate of just one man”, a pointed reference to the fact that the UK had prioritised the removal of President Assad over the prevention of atrocity crimes. The UK has also been reluctant to resettle refugees fleeing atrocities.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK’s recommendations</p>
<p>Multilateral nuclear disarmament</p>	<p>RED</p>	<p>The UK is failing in its commitment to work for multilateral disarmament at a time of increasing nuclear threats.</p>	<p>Having made progress on several fronts, UK action to fulfil its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty appears to have stalled. Its decision not to participate in recent negotiations, attended by over 120 states, is one example.</p>	<p>The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is widely considered to have been successful in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. At the heart of the NPT is a bargain: 186 non-nuclear states are prohibited from developing nuclear weapons; in exchange, the five nuclear-armed states (China, France, Russia, the US and UK) recognised under the Treaty are committed to multilateral nuclear disarmament.</p> <p>With little visible appetite for disarmament from nuclear-weapon states, this bargain is beginning to fray. Dissatisfaction with the slow pace of disarmament contributed to a failure of the 2015 NPT Review</p>

				<p>Conference to agree an outcome.</p> <p>If the NPT regime continues to falter, the international community loses a framework which the UK considers the “cornerstone” of international non-proliferation efforts. Looking at the escalating threat posed by North Korea and possible withdrawal of US support for the Iran nuclear deal, now is not the time to undermine the primary forum for inclusive rational action to address nuclear threats.</p> <p>Principled leadership from nuclear-weapon states is sorely needed. By demonstrating its commitment to multilateral disarmament the UK can help restore the health of the NPT framework and international relations on this issue more broadly.</p> <p>UK action need not mean immediately abandoning the UK’s Trident renewal plans. Working with BASIC, UNA-UK has put forward a set of practical steps the UK can take which are compatible with the policy platforms of all major UK political parties and which could facilitate improved international cooperation on nuclear security.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK’s recommendations</p>
Respect for human rights	AMBER	<p>The UK has largely been a positive force on the UN Human Rights Council. But inflammatory rhetoric and disdain for human rights protections have marred its record.</p>	<p>The UK continues to play an important role on the UN Human Rights Council, with recent successes in relation to combating modern slavery and protecting LGBT+ rights.</p> <p>However, its own conduct with regard to UN human rights officials and mechanisms has often fallen short. Worrying statements on the value of</p>	<p>The UK’s record in strengthening international human rights mechanisms is mixed. The country has played a crucial role in the elaboration of human rights norms and laws, with UK nationals involved in the drafting and monitoring of UN treaties. It continues to champion important initiatives at the Human Rights Council, in areas such as combating modern slavery and LGBT+ rights, and has raised human rights issues at the Security Council.</p> <p>However, the UK has often been reluctant to “walk the talk” where its own conduct is concerned. During its last peer review, it supported just 42% of the recommendations generated - the global average is 73%. Explaining this position, the UK stated that it felt the ratification</p>

			<p>human rights have also drawn criticism.</p>	<p>of particular international treaties was unnecessary as these rights were already protected in domestic law.</p> <p>This approach does not take into account the value of UN treaties in helping to raise standards globally, nor the impact that its stance has in encouraging human rights abusers to follow suit. This applies to the reception given to UN human rights experts, who have been subjected to personal abuse by politicians and the media, and to the UK's decision to block a modest proposal on armed drones at the Human Rights Council on procedural grounds.</p> <p>The overwhelmingly negative debate on human rights is also of concern. It has led to dangerous confusion as to what human rights are, as well as to plans to scrap existing human rights protections. For example, the Prime Minister's June 2017 comments that human rights laws should be overturned if they "get in the way" of the fight against terror have been criticised by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK's recommendations</p>
Support for overseas aid	GREEN	The UK is a generous aid donor. Care must be taken to ensure aid goes where it is most needed - including underfunded UN humanitarian programmes.	<p>The UK is the only G7 country to meet the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on overseas aid, which has been enshrined into law. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed has saluted the UK's global leadership on international development.</p> <p>Public support for this important work should be encouraged, alongside efforts to ensure that aid is being spent effectively -</p>	<p>The UK is the only G7 country to meet the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on overseas aid. UNA-UK welcomes the cross-party commitment on this issue and the 2015 legislation enshrining the 0.7% target into national law.</p> <p>Despite criticism by some MPs and large swathes of the UK media, the UK has consistently met the target since 2013 and gained respect for its handling of the aid budget, leading the President of the World Bank in 2015 to describe the UK as "courageous" noting that 'there is no bilateral organisation in the world that does it better than DfID'.</p> <p>UK public attitudes towards the UK's aid spend are less generous. BOND's Aid Attitude Tracker shows that over half of the UK public believe that aid is wasted and that the budget should be cut. In its 2016 report, BOND stated: "To sustain the UK's leadership role on</p>

			<p>including by supporting UN agencies in tackling the world's largest humanitarian crisis since 1945.</p>	<p>global poverty, we need to acknowledge the current trends in public attitudes and behaviour and develop a new approach to building support.”</p> <p>The Government must articulate how aid spending is in the UK national interest while remaining focused on helping those most in need. The International Development Select Committee have warned that poverty reduction must always remain the “primary purpose” of aid spending. Recent indications that UK aid spending may become more closely associated with the UK's immediate military and trade objectives give rise to concern that the direction of travel is moving away from the needs-based approach advocated by the UN and the Committee.</p> <p>UNA-UK believes that multilateral organisations are cost-effective and impact-enhancing channels for UK aid, particularly UN programmes aimed at preventing crises, such as human rights initiatives, as well as those responding to them.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK's publication on the Sustainable Development Goals</p>
Tackling climate change	AMBER	<p>The UK has ratified the Paris Climate Agreement but concerns are growing that the UK has de-prioritised climate action.</p>	<p>The UK played an important role in bringing about the Paris Climate Agreement, which is ratified last year. It has also show leadership through its pledge to phase out coal power stations.</p> <p>However, it has been criticised for unnecessary delays in implementing domestic programmes, and for falling short of its own targets.</p>	<p>By introducing the 2008 Climate Change Act, Britain became a global pioneer as the first country to adopt a legally-binding framework with long-term emissions targets and carbon budgets. More recently the UK has shown leadership in its commitment to phase out coal power stations by 2025 and its effort to secure the Paris Climate Agreement.</p> <p>However, there are growing concerns that the UK has de-prioritised climate action. The Climate Change Committee warned last year that the UK lacks the policies to meet its carbon reduction targets.</p> <p>The decision to close the Department for Energy and Climate Change and have those portfolios subsumed into what is now called the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Department are also perceived to have reduced the emphasis on climate change at cabinet-level - a move interpreted by many as a sign of fading political appetite for this issue.</p> <p>The Select Committee on Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy</p>

			<p>has raised concerns about a lack of focus on climate change policy, pointing to unnecessary delays, including the publication of the Clean Growth Plan, and adding to concerns over the UK's ability to meet its commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement.</p> <p>The UK has also come under criticism for not doing enough to engage the US on its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. An opportunity for European powers to speak as one on this issue was lost when the UK refused to join a European statement condemning the move.</p> <p>Read UNA-UK's publication on climate</p>
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Further resources

- [Scorecard mini-site](#)
- [Mini scorecard for social media](#)
- [1 page scorecard with headline rationale](#)
- [Over to you - interactive scorecard](#)