



# The Guardian

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2021.05.31 - 2021.06.02

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## Vaccines and immunisation

# UK rights watchdog endorses compulsory Covid jabs for care home staff

EHRC says ministers right to make protecting life a priority despite 'departure' from health policy

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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GP staff preparing Covid vaccines for care home residents in Birmingham in January. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

GP staff preparing Covid vaccines for care home residents in Birmingham in January. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

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Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

The prospect of care home workers being required to get vaccinated against Covid-19 has moved a step closer, with a crucial endorsement from the UK's human rights watchdog.

Ministers are considering changing the law to make vaccination a condition of deployment for people in some professions that come into regular close contact with elderly and vulnerable people at high risk from the coronavirus.

In a report to the government seen by the Guardian, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) admitted that making vaccines compulsory for care home staff would be a "significant departure from current public health policy".

But they judged that ministers were "right to prioritise protection of the right to life for residents and staff" and said it would be reasonable for care home workers to need a jab "in order to work directly with older and disabled people, subject to some important safeguards".

[Ministers urged not to 'threaten' NHS staff over mandatory Covid jab](#)  
[Read more](#)

The EHRC is also likely to make a similar recommendation about healthcare workers, after the vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, suggested over the weekend that NHS staff could face [mandatory jabs](#), too, as some patients were "being infected in hospital".

Zahawi said no decisions had been made yet, and stressed there was a precedent: surgeons were required to be vaccinated against hepatitis B. He added: "It would be incumbent on any responsible government to have the debate, to do the thinking about how we go about protecting the most vulnerable by making sure that those who look after them are vaccinated."

A government source said: "We think it would save lives."

There is nervousness in Whitehall about making moves to force anyone to have a coronavirus injection, given the fear that this could make people who

are already vaccine hesitant even more resistant.

However, now that care workers had been eligible for vaccines for months due to their high position on the priority list, the EHRC said some demographic groups that were less likely to get vaccinated were “disproportionately represented in the adult social care sector workforce”.

The EHRC said mandatory vaccination could risk further excluding these groups “from access to employment”, so a proportionate approach with important safeguards was needed.

A similar concern was raised by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine last month in a study that found that health and social care workers who felt under greater pressure from their employers to get a vaccine then became more likely to decline it, causing “damaging effects”.

Sandra Mounier-Jack, one of the lead authors on the study, said social care workers were “already feeling quite vulnerable”. She added: “Increasing the vulnerability of these staff might not be the best way to bring them together with you and [get] a positive uptake of the vaccine that will be sustainable for the long-term so they think it’s positive for them rather than being imposed.”

She added that taking an approach that was less consensual, by mandating the vaccine, would have consequences.

To combat undue discrimination the EHRC said in its advice to the government that people who could not get injections for medical reasons should be exempted and that no one should “face any financial detriment” because of being vaccinated.

The commission raised particular concern that some staff might be reluctant to get jabbed in case they had to take time off work in the rare event of their experiencing severe side-effects.

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Statutory sick pay, capped at £96.35 a week, could be “detering workers from being vaccinated because they cannot afford to take sick leave if they have side-effects”, the EHRC said, adding that with a quarter of the social care workforce on zero-hours contracts, many might not even be eligible for the state financial support.

Strict scrutiny by MPs was also needed with regular reviews, and a sunset clause should be put on any legislation passed by parliament, the watchdog added.

Labour has said “threatening” people over vaccination is “not a good idea”. Thangam Debbonaire, the shadow Commons leader, said: “Given we have got a recruitment crisis in parts of the NHS I think it’s far more important we try and work with staff rather than against them.”

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## Education

# Pupils to be offered 100m hours of tuition in Covid catch-up plan

Government's £1.4bn programme of tutoring courses won't be enough, warns its education recovery tsar



The money will be spent on 6m sets of tutoring courses for disadvantaged pupils and an expansion of help for 16- to 19-year-olds. Photograph: Jon Parker Lee/Alamy

The money will be spent on 6m sets of tutoring courses for disadvantaged pupils and an expansion of help for 16- to 19-year-olds. Photograph: Jon Parker Lee/Alamy

[Peter Walker](#) and [Rachel Hall](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 19.01 EDT

Pupils will be offered an extra 100m hours of tuition under post-pandemic catch-up plans unveiled today – but the government faced immediate criticism of the £1.4bn programme, with its own tsar warning “more will be needed”.

After months of unprecedented school closures, £1.4bn will be spent on up to 6m sets of 15-hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged pupils as well as an expansion of an existing fund for helping 16- to 19-year-olds with subjects such as English and maths, the Department for Education (DfE) said.

There is also provision for extra training and support for teachers, and funding to allow some year-13 students to repeat their final year if it was badly affected by the pandemic.

It gave no immediate verdict on mooted plans to [extend schools days](#) by 30 minutes. This idea, [criticised as misplaced](#) by some teaching unions, will be the subject of a separate review due to report later in the year.

On the new spending plans there was virtual unanimity from unions that the sums committed were insufficient, with the National Education Union calling them “inadequate and incomplete”.

Perhaps even more damaging for ministers, the announced spend is about a tenth of the £15bn total understood to have been recommended by Sir Kevan Collins, who was appointed in February by Downing Street as the education recovery commissioner tasked with leading efforts to make up for the damage done by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly to pupils from more deprived backgrounds.

The official announcement of the new plan carried laudatory quotes from Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, and Boris Johnson, the prime minister, who said it “should give parents confidence” – but the quote released from Collins was more circumspect.

Ensuring all pupils would catch up “will require a sustained and comprehensive programme of support”, Collins said, and while the latest announcement would help many children and teachers, “more will be needed to meet the scale of the challenge”.

Government sources stress that the total announced for all catch-up work over the past 12 months is now closer to £3bn and that ministers have pledged to implement a long-term plan for the process.

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: “Rarely has so much been promised and so little delivered.” The amount promised showed that the government “does not understand, nor does it appreciate, the essential foundation laid by education for the nation’s economic recovery”, she added.

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) called the investment “paltry” when compared with plans in other countries and with the amount spent on supporting businesses.

“After weeks of talking big and building expectation for education recovery, this announcement only confirms the government’s lack of ambition for education. It’s a damp squib,” said Paul Whiteman, the NAHT’s general secretary. “Education recovery cannot be done on the cheap.”

The Association of School and College Leaders condemned what it called “a hugely disappointing announcement which lets down the nation’s children and schools at a time when the government needed to step up and demonstrate its commitment to education”. Ideas for extending the school day could prove controversial if implemented, as reportedly recommended in Collins’s report to ministers. Polling [has shown](#) it is not hugely popular with parents, while unions [have warned](#) about the impact on family time and out-of-school activities.

Of the government’s tutoring plans, an extra £218m will go towards the national tutoring programme, which provides external support, with £222m for tutoring for those aged 16 to 19.

The biggest chunk, £579m, will be for “local tutoring” – in-school services using new or existing staff. This will cover about 75% of the total costs, with schools contributing the rest. In the coming academic years, the proportion paid by schools will rise so that they eventually meet most of the tutoring costs, the DfE statement said.

Labour at the same time unveiled its party plan for educational recovery, pledging an extra £14.7bn over the next two years to ensure pupils catch up and to reduce extra attainment gaps created by the disruption.

Particularly focused on the wellbeing of students following the pandemic, the money would be spent on areas including additional breakfast clubs and activities for children, giving them more time to socialise and better mental health support.

The Labour plan would commit to small-group tutoring for any child requiring it, more support for teachers, an “education recovery premium” to guarantee more spending on children who have faced the greatest disruption, and free school meals extended across all holidays.

The shadow education secretary, Kate Green, contrasted what she called Labour’s “bold plan” with the commitments made by the government.

Speaking of the government’s plan, Green said: “This announcement makes a mockery of the prime minister’s claim that education is a priority. His own education recovery commissioner has all but said this plan is insufficient. Sir Kevan Collins told ministers that 10 times this level of investment was needed to help children recover.”

In a statement released with the plans, Johnson said: “Young people have sacrificed so much over the last year and as we build back from the pandemic, we must make sure that no child is left behind.

“This next step in our long-term catch-up plan should give parents confidence that we will do everything we can to support children who have fallen behind and that every child will have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their potential.”

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## Coronavirus

# No UK Covid deaths announced for first time in 10 months

News raises optimism in No 10 for unlocking despite warnings from scientists over third wave

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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Queue for snacks on Brighton beach, England, during the recent bank holiday. Photograph: Chris Eades/Getty Images

Queue for snacks on Brighton beach, England, during the recent bank holiday. Photograph: Chris Eades/Getty Images

[Ian Sample](#) and [Jessica Elgot](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 16.13 EDT

The UK has reported no deaths from Covid in a day, for the first time in 10 months, raising optimism in Downing Street that England could forge ahead with the final stage of the roadmap despite scientists warning that extra restrictions might be needed to control a third wave.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, hailed the statistic as proof that vaccines were breaking the link between infection and severe illness, though scientists warned against reading too much into the numbers following a bank holiday weekend.

Official figures on Tuesday showed the four nations of the UK recorded no new deaths within 28 days of a positive Covid test, for the first time since July 2020.

Due to delays in recording deaths, however, it will take time before statisticians know for sure whether there were zero deaths from coronavirus on Monday. In January, at the height of the pandemic, 1,820 deaths were recorded on a single day.

Government sources suggested the prime minister, Boris Johnson, was still minded to lift the social restrictions on 21 June, despite warnings from scientific advisers that the UK was embarking on a third wave, with infection rates rising.

No 10 suggested there was not yet conclusive evidence to suggest that the infection rates would lead to a surge in hospitalisations, which might overwhelm the NHS or cause many more deaths.

A Whitehall source said early data this week on the effects of unlocking on 17 May were encouraging, although data over the next few days – a fortnight on from people being allowed to mix indoors – would be the most crucial.

Ministers have also been heartened by hospitalisation rates in Bolton, one of the hotspot areas for the Delta coronavirus variant (first discovered in India), which have remained steady.

The rapid spread of the Delta variant, B.1.617.2, in some parts of Britain has led to calls for the final step in the government roadmap to be delayed on 21 June until more people are vaccinated.

On Tuesday some scientists went further, suggesting there was a need to reverse lockdown easing and return to past restrictions to prevent a third wave running out of control.

Deepti Gurdasani, a clinical epidemiologist and senior lecturer in machine learning at Queen Mary, University of London, said the focus on 21 June distracted from stricter action that needed to be taken immediately.

“We need to roll back step three [brought in 17 May],” she said, adding that more had to be done to curtail transmission in schools, such as reimposing masks, improving ventilation and reducing class or bubble sizes. “We don’t know what is going to contain it, so I think we urgently need to put those measures in place and then observe very closely what happens.”

Mike Tildesley, a member of the outbreak modelling subgroup that feeds into Sage, did not express an opinion on delaying the roadmap but said that a pause would buy time. “Delaying does help ... Younger people still haven’t got the vaccine and quite a lot of people still don’t have their second dose of the vaccine and that’s where it really can help you. At this point, if you delay three to four weeks, that is a lot of people you can get vaccinated.”

Conservative MPs seized on the zero deaths statistic as proof that the government should now commit to lifting all restrictions on 21 June.

Researchers suggested that lockdown and the vaccination campaign pushed down infections, hospitalisations and deaths steeply in the spring, so that rates going into the recent bank holiday weekend were low enough for incomplete reporting to drive down the number of reported deaths to zero.

Nathalie MacDermott, a clinical lecturer at King’s College London, said that while zero daily Covid deaths was “certainly something to be celebrated, we must remember that this follows a three-day bank holiday weekend during which time deaths may not have been formally reported or recorded”.



Official figures record the Covid-19 deaths 28 days after people test positive for the virus. The numbers are displayed by the date of actual death and also by the date the death was formally reported.

The latest figures suggest no Covid deaths occurred on Sunday 30 May, for the first time in a day since March 2020, but the numbers for the past few days will not be complete. No deaths were reported on 1 June for the first time since July 2020.

While starting June with a zero-deaths day will boost ministers' hopes, scientists are concerned that the more transmissible Delta variant is fuelling a third wave in the UK.

"Deaths do seem to be increasing again, though as yet only slowly," said Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at the University of East Anglia. "The apparent dip in today's and yesterday's figures solely represent the impact of a bank holiday on data collection and analysis."

Hancock said it was a moment to celebrate but that it was not the end. "The whole country will be so glad there were no Covid related deaths recorded yesterday. The vaccines are clearly working, protecting you, those around you and your loved ones. But despite this undoubtedly good news we know we haven't beaten this virus yet, and with cases continuing to rise please remember 'hands, face, space' and let in fresh air when indoors, and of course, make sure you get both jabs."

Scientific advisers expect infections, hospitalisations and deaths to rise as England loosens lockdown restrictions, but the hope is that with the majority of older people vaccinated the number of deaths will remain low. However, with the Delta variant potentially 50% more transmissible than the Kent or Alpha variant, B.1.1.7, and partially resistant to vaccines, some fear controlling a third wave will be a huge challenge.

"Measures that were needed to keep the original strain in check were quite marked, and the B.1.1.7 variant needed even greater measures," said Peter Openshaw, a professor and member of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group. "If this one is another gear up in terms of transmission, we are in real trouble trying to control it even with



high vaccination rates. The sort of measures that would be needed are very stringent indeed.”

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## Coronavirus

# UK Covid dashboard showing ‘zero deaths’ but also flashing warning signals

Analysis: vaccine programme could sever link between infections and deaths but there are reasons to be seriously doubtful

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People enter a Covid-19 vaccination centre as the UK government pushes ahead with its fight against the Delta variant that continues to spread across England. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

People enter a Covid-19 vaccination centre as the UK government pushes ahead with its fight against the Delta variant that continues to spread across England. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

[Ian Sample](#)  
[@iansample](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 15.42 EDT

For those who are urging the government to [push ahead with easing of lockdown restrictions](#) later this month, Tuesday's announcement of '[zero deaths](#)' in the UK will be cited as further proof of the necessity to end the delay.

Certainly, the country has come a long way since the new year Covid surge, when the daily number of infections reached a peak of more than 68,000, and the number of people in hospital would later rise to almost 40,000. Daily death tolls of more than 1,000 were common during the bleakest weeks of winter.

The vaccination programme, perhaps the only unqualified success of the entire pandemic, has changed the calculus again.

But we are already seeing echoes from the situation last summer.

The number of Covid patients in hospital plummeted to 700 or so, before an inexorable rise fuelled by an easing of restrictions and the spread of the Alpha variant, first found in Kent.

-

Now it is the Delta variant, first discovered in India, that is seeding itself across the country – and it is spreading fast, at a time when only 50% of the population has received a second jab.

The Covid dashboard may be flashing “zero deaths” today, but it is also flashing warning signals that there may be trouble ahead.

The number of Covid infections is always the first figure to rise. In previous waves, this has been followed by more hospitalisations – and then more deaths. It happens in this order, with weeks between the first signs of trouble, and a rise in fatalities.

Has the rollout of the vaccine programme severed the link between infections and deaths? In theory it could, and that is the hope, once enough people are vaccinated.

[Should lockdown lifting go ahead as concerns swirl over Covid variants?](#)  
[Read more](#)

But with scientists warning of a third wave already, there are reasons to be seriously doubtful.

Even though half of UK adults have received two shots of vaccine, millions are still unvaccinated or protected with only one shot.

As Public Health England found, one shot of Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccine is only about 33% effective against symptomatic disease, compared with about 50% against the Alpha variant.

The protection ramps up considerably after two doses, hence the government's urge to rush more second shots into arms, especially for the older and more vulnerable.

To make matters worse, the Delta variant may be up to 50% more transmissible than the Alpha one. If that number is not revised down as the virus spreads around the country, vaccines alone are unlikely to contain it.

Outbreak specialists advising Sage are re-running their models to get a handle on what happens next. But they have already given their ranging shot.

Modelling released at the start of the month found that *if* the new variant is 40% more transmissible than the Kent one, and *if* it causes no more severe disease, and *if* vaccines work as well against it, which they appear not to, then lifting restrictions in step three of the roadmap could drive hospitalisations up to the grim levels seen in January. Taking step four on 21 June could double that peak.

The lockdown and vaccination programme have had a profound impact on the epidemic, bringing deaths down from the heartbreaking highs of winter.

Now, the sun is out, and a longed for summer appears to be upon us.

With many people desperate to be free of Covid restrictions, and a feeling that we are in sight of a return to some kind of normality, ministers are under pressure to stick to the timetable they set – albeit before the Delta variant became an issue.

The question now is: how big a wave can the health service, and the nation, bear?

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## G7

# G7 nations committing billions more to fossil fuel than green energy

In spite of green rhetoric, money has piled into aviation and car industries since start of pandemic, report finds



G7 countries bailed out companies such as Air France without applying any green caveats. Photograph: Christian Hartmann/Reuters

G7 countries bailed out companies such as Air France without applying any green caveats. Photograph: Christian Hartmann/Reuters

[Sandra Laville](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

The nations that make up the [G7](#) have pumped billions of dollars more into fossil fuels than they have into clean energy since the Covid-19 pandemic, despite their promises of a green recovery.

As the UK prepares to [host the G7 summit](#), new analysis reveals that the countries attending committed \$189bn to support oil, coal and gas between January 2020 and March 2021. In comparison, the same countries – the UK, US, Canada, Italy, France, Germany and Japan – spent \$147bn on clean forms of energy.

The support for fossil fuels from seven of the world's richest nations included measures to remove or downgrade environmental regulations as well as direct funding of oil, gas and coal.

The analysis from the development charity Tearfund, the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Overseas Development Institute showed that the nations missed opportunities to make their response to the pandemic greener. In most cases, money provided for fossil fuel industries was given with no strings attached, rather than with conditions requiring a reduction in emissions or pollution. The analysis found that eight in every 10 dollars spent on non-renewable energy came without conditions.

This included lifelines that were thrown to the aviation and car industries, which received \$115bn from the G7 countries. Of that money, 80% was given with no attempt to force the sectors to cut their emissions in return for the support.

Only one in every 10 dollars committed to the Covid-19 response benefited the “cleanest” energies such as renewables and energy efficiency measures.

The UK prime minister, Boris Johnson, will open the G7 summit in Cornwall on 11 June. He has said he wants to unite the nations to “build back better” from the coronavirus pandemic to create a greener, more prosperous future. As well as the G7, the UK has invited South Africa, Australia, India and South Korea to take part.

The analysis of the actions of the seven major western economies in the last 15 months reveals they are not yet investing at sufficient scale in technologies that support fast decarbonisation of their economies, and they have not created green jobs at scale in response to Covid-19.

Paul Cook, the head of advocacy at Tearfund, which operates in some of the poorest countries in the world most affected by global heating, said: “Every day, we witness the worsening consequences of the climate crisis for communities around the world – farmers’ crops failing; floods and fires engulfing towns and villages; families facing an uncertain future.

“Choices made now by the G7 countries will either accelerate the transition towards a climate-safe future for all, or jeopardise efforts to date to tackle the climate crisis.”

The G7 countries are among the most polluting in the world. They represent a 10th of the world’s population but are responsible for almost a quarter of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

“Their actions can set the scene for success or failure at the UN climate talks being hosted by the UK in November,” Cook said.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, unprecedented amounts of public money were spent by nations; it is estimated that the 50 largest world economies committed at least \$14.6tn to fiscal stimulus measures in 2020. The authors said that well-designed and targeted stimuli could be used as a springboard for launching low-carbon societies.

The report analysed the support the seven nations, plus the four others invited to attend the summit in Cornwall, gave to five energy areas: the cleanest energy, such as wind and solar; clean energy that may still rely on fossil fuel power, such as electric vehicles; fossil fuel energy with conditions; fossil fuel energy without any conditions; and other energy sectors including biofuels and nuclear.

The greatest support given by G7 countries was to transport. Bailouts were given to companies including Air France, British Airways, Ryanair, easyJet, Lufthansa, Japan Airlines, Alitalia, Renault and Honda. The financial support would end up sustaining highly polluting industries for decades to come, with very little pressure to “go green”, the authors said.

Since the bailouts, some G7 countries have increased their commitments to cleaner energy, including rail and electric vehicles. But the report said:



“Investments in the transport sector remain significantly skewed towards fossil fuels and are at odds with G7 commitments to build back better.”

The propping up of the oil and gas sectors was particularly evident in Canada and the US, both major oil and gas producers. As well as direct support, both countries rolled back environmental regulations on fossil fuel companies.

Some G7 nations made positive steps towards halting support for dirty industries. In February, Italy extended a ban until September this year on fossil fuel drilling. [The UK](#) and France brought in policies designed to end international support for fossil fuels. The UK has also announced a ban on new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

“These actions should serve as a precedent for other G7 countries,” the report said.

This month, in the first comprehensive study of the journey to net zero, the International Energy Agency ([IEA](#)) said that pledges by governments, even if fully achieved, fell well short of what was required to bring global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions down to net zero by 2050 and give the world an even chance of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, as the Paris agreement states.

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## [Biodiversity](#)

# Key species at risk if planet heats up by more than 1.5C, report finds

WWF report finds puffins, penguins and many other species will face issues such as habitat loss and food insecurity



Gentoo penguins at the Argentinian research base Esperanza in Antarctica.  
Photograph: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Greenpeace

Gentoo penguins at the Argentinian research base Esperanza in Antarctica.  
Photograph: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Greenpeace

[Fiona Harvey](#) *Environment correspondent*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 19.01 EDT

Corals will bleach, penguins will lose their Antarctic ice floes, [puffins](#) around the UK coast will be unable to feed their young, and the black-headed squirrel monkey of the Amazon could be wiped out if the world fails to limit global heating to [1.5C above pre-industrial levels](#).

Beyond a 1.5C rise, many species will face increasing problems finding food or surviving, according to a report from [WWF](#) on the effects of climate breakdown on 12 key species across the world.

In the UK, [puffins](#) are facing increasing threats from warming seas. Sandeels form a large part of the seabird's diet, and the [sandeels](#) depend on crustaceans called copepods. Now, however, warming seas mean copepods are blooming before the sandeels hatch. As the sandeels miss out on their meals, there are fewer for puffins to catch, and entire colonies can fail as a result. WWF found that between 2000 and 2016, copepods were blooming nearly 20 days earlier than sandeel larvae were hatching, a mismatch likely to widen at higher temperatures.

[The report](#) found that the effects of global heating, which has already reached more than 1C above pre-industrial levels, could already be seen in the UK. For instance, [mountain hares](#) in the Highlands of Scotland grow white coats for camouflage in winter, but the snow is melting earlier, before their coats have returned to brown, leaving them exposed to predators.



Mountain hares grow white coats in winter for camouflage. Photograph: Chanonry/Alamy Stock Photo/Alamy Stock Photo

While warming of 0.5C above current levels may seem small, the report found the effects would be harmful to a wide variety of species, including snow leopards, hippos, monkeys and frogs, sea turtles and coral. [Leatherback turtles](#) are sensitive to even slight changes in temperature, as the sex of the turtle is determined while the egg incubates in the sand – hotter sand means more females and not enough males, and can mean eggs fail to hatch at all.

The report also examined the fate of the black-headed squirrel monkey of the Amazon, which lives in a flood plain, so a single large flooding event – of the kind forecast to become more frequent at 1.5C – could wipe out the whole population.

Commercial interests around the world will also be threatened if temperatures rise above 1.5C, with [coffee plantations vulnerable to rising temperatures](#) – nearly 90% of arabica coffee plantations in South America could become unsuitable for the crop by 2050.



The sex of a leatherback turtle is determined while the egg incubates in sand. Photograph: Graham Eaton/WWF

Mike Barrett, the executive director of science and conservation at WWF, said the climate crisis was adding to a [huge loss of wildlife](#): global wildlife



populations have already plummeted by 68% since 1970. “Nature is our life support system, and its continued destruction is not only devastating local wildlife and communities, but creating a hotter, less stable planet, putting our very survival at risk,” he said. “This isn’t a far-off threat: the impacts of climate change are already being felt and if we don’t act now to keep global warming to 1.5C we will slide faster and faster towards catastrophe.”

WWF also found that protecting vital habitats would be essential to stop warming exceeding 1.5C. The more landscapes are denuded of vegetation and their complex ecologies, the faster the climate crisis is likely to take hold. For instance, degraded and polluted marine environments mean the seas can absorb less carbon, deforestation destroys carbon sinks, and the [drying out of peatlands](#) and wetlands releases more carbon dioxide into the air.



Parched land due to drought in the Sebkhra de Kelbia lagoon in Tunisia. Photograph: Michel Gunther/WWF

Tanya Steele, a chief executive at WWF, said the report showed why governments needed to strengthen their pledges on cutting greenhouse gas emissions before the crunch UN climate talks ([Cop26](#)) to be held in Glasgow this November. Many countries, including the UK and US, as well as the EU, have already promised steep cuts in emissions by 2030, but taken

together, these would [still lead to a rise of 2.4C](#) by the end of this century, according to estimates.

Steele said: “World leaders must seize the chance at Cop26 to build a greener, fairer future – one with nature at its heart. As hosts, the UK government needs to show it can deliver on its ambitious climate targets by publishing a credible action plan without delay, outlining the steps it will take to cut harmful emissions and reach net zero. Ministers must also recognise nature’s vital role in helping to deliver a 1.5C world and urgently scale up efforts to protect and restore nature at home and overseas.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/02/key-species-at-risk-if-planet-heats-up-by-more-than-15c-report-finds>

## [Naomi Osaka](#)

# ‘Courageous’: Japanese athletes and sponsors voice support for Naomi Osaka

Messages flood in after tennis player withdraws from French Open saying press conferences worsen her anxiety and depression



Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open on Monday. Photograph: Lynne Sladky/AP

Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open on Monday. Photograph: Lynne Sladky/AP

[Justin McCurry](#) in Tokyo and [Mike Hytner](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 00.20 EDT

Athletes and sponsors in [Naomi Osaka](#)'s native Japan have joined much of the tennis world in rallying behind the player after she withdrew from the

[French Open](#), citing struggles with anxiety and depression.

The Japanese world No 2 left the grand slam tournament on Monday, days after she had been [fined](#) and threatened with expulsion for refusing to attend press conferences, saying she needed to protect her mental wellbeing.

Messages of support flooded in after Osaka, who is of Japanese and Haitian descent, tweeted a statement describing her [struggle with her mental health](#) since her first grand slam win, a [victory over Serena Williams](#) at the 2018 US Open.

“The first thing to be considered is Ms Osaka’s health. I wish her the earliest possible recovery,” wrote Toshihisa Tsuchihashi, the executive director of the Japan [Tennis](#) Association.

[We’re not the good guys: Osaka shows up problems of press conferences | Jonathan Liew](#)

[Read more](#)

The Japanese government’s top spokesperson, Katsunobu Kato, said that he would “watch over her quietly” when asked to comment by reporters.

There was backing, too, from one of the sponsors that have helped take Osaka’s earnings to \$55.2m over the past 12 months, according to the sports business website Sportico.

Nissin Foods, which makes the Cup Noodle range of instant ramen, said it hoped she would make a speedy recovery. “Above everything else, we wish for Ms Naomi Osaka’s quickest recovery and hope she will continue to perform well.”

Nike praised Osaka’s courage in sharing her experience of depression, while Mastercard said: “Naomi Osaka’s decision reminds us all how important it is to prioritise personal health and wellbeing.” The Japanese carmaker Nissan said it stood in solidarity with its brand ambassador.

Fellow Japanese players had mixed feelings about Osaka’s decision. Misaki Doi said she had been “surprised” by Osaka’s withdrawal. “I can’t imagine



what she's been going through, but I hope she doesn't regret her decision," Doi told reporters after making an early exit in the women's singles.

Doi conceded that attending press conferences after a defeat could be "unpleasant", but added that they helped draw a line under a match and that she considered interacting with reporters part of her job.

"It's sad to see Naomi-chan withdraw," said Yoshihito Nishioka, who won his opening match in the men's singles. "I wanted to see her compete despite the hardships involved."

Reaction in the wider [tennis](#) community has been mixed, but Sloane Stephens, the American former US Open champion and WTA Players' Council member, voiced support for Osaka, saying she should be applauded for speaking out about her struggles.

"Having to take a step back and say, 'Hey, I need to do this for me', we should support her and applaud her, because a lot of people wouldn't do that," Stephens said at Roland Garros on Tuesday.

"A lot of people play through being miserable and being upset and not being able to speak out and say those things. We should be more accepting and allow her to take the time she needs to work on herself and better herself so she can be in a better position to play tennis and be happy and enjoy her tennis.

"But I think there definitely needs to be more open dialogue on what not only her but everyone on tour goes through. I think we don't talk about it enough."

Stephens said she hoped Osaka would take all the time she needed before returning in better shape, a sentiment shared with another American player, Coco Gauff, who said she hoped Osaka can "come out better and stronger".

"It's unfortunate that she's going through what she's going through," said Gauff. "I can only lend out a hand for support. The Tour isn't the easiest. I talk to other players and they have gone through similar things in the past."

After Serena Williams had expressed her sympathy for Osaka, saying she wished she could give her a hug, her sister Venus revealed how she dealt with the pressures of press conferences.

“For me personally how I deal with it was that I know every single person asking me a question can’t play as well as I can and never will,” she said. “So no matter what you say or what you write, you’ll never light a candle to me. That’s how I deal with it. But each person deals with it differently.”

Martina Navratilova, an 18-times grand slam champion, said the situation had made her “so sad”, but added that the issue was about more than attending post-match media calls.

“I truly hope she will be OK,” Navratilova wrote. “As athletes we are taught to take care of our body, and perhaps the mental and emotional aspect gets short shrift. This is about more than doing or not doing a press conference.”

People in Japan, where Osaka’s phenomenal rise has prompted a discussion on [Japanese identity](#), said the tennis star had revealed the unseen psychological toll competing in sport at the highest level can take on athletes.

“I think she’s under a lot of pressure, more than we can imagine,” Tomomi Noguchi, a kimono dresser in Tokyo, said of Osaka, who was 20 when she beat Williams. “She got to the top when she was young so I think we can’t really imagine what she’s going through.”

Vickie Skorji, who manages TELL, a non-profit counselling service in Japan, said society needed to be “more respectful and supportive” of mental health issues.

“Who has asked her how she is doing? She put out a statement and said ‘I need to take care of myself’ and she’s been punished,” Skorji said, referring to the \$15,000 (£10,570) fine imposed on Osaka after she said she would [skip](#) post-match press conferences at Roland Garros. “I think she is courageous and needs support.”

*Agencies contributed to this report*

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jun/02/courageous-japanese-athletes-and-sponsors-voice-support-for-naomi-osaka>

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## China

# Escaped elephants leave 500km trail of destruction in China

Wild herd has wrecked barns and munched its way through fields of crops after absconding from nature reserve in April



The elephants in Yunnan province, south-west China, where they have destroyed crops and farm buildings. Photograph: Hu Chao/AP

The elephants in Yunnan province, south-west China, where they have destroyed crops and farm buildings. Photograph: Hu Chao/AP

*Agence France-Presse*

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.30 EDT

A herd of 15 elephants have caused destruction in south-western [China](#), including eating whole fields of corn and smashing up barns, after escaping from a nature reserve in April.

□ □ □ Measures taken to keep migrating [#elephants](#) away from residential zones in [#Yunnan](#).

□ □ □ [#云南](#) [#野象](#)“旅行团”近日一路北迁，有关部门采取措施全力防范象群迁徙带来的公共安全隐患，确保人象安全。

by 吴歌 via CGTN [pic.twitter.com/DDfH26nY2b](https://pic.twitter.com/DDfH26nY2b)

— CCTV Asia Pacific (@CCTVAsiaPacific) [June 1, 2021](#)

Over the past week, the animals have also drained a water tank and plagued villagers worried about their crops, state broadcaster CCTV said.

It was unclear why the wild Asian elephants, a protected species in China, strayed from the Xishuangbanna national nature reserve in Yunnan province.

[Poacher suspected of killing 70 Bengal tigers captured after 20-year pursuit](#)  
[Read more](#)

But since April, the animals have embarked on a 500km journey, closely monitored by residents and authorities, with hundreds of people mobilised to ensure public safety.

On Tuesday, Yunnan authorities said the herd was [20km from the provincial capital of Kunming](#), home to millions of people.

Since mid-April, the elephants have wrecked around 56 hectares of crops, causing an estimated 6.8m yuan (\$1.07m) in losses, CCTV said.

No casualties have been reported so far, with locals attempting to guide the animals with food and by blocking roads with trucks.

The wild elephant population in Yunnan is around 300, up from 193 in the 1980s, reported Xinhua.

But there have been more reports of such elephants wandering into villages and harming crops in recent years, with the plants they usually eat gradually replaced by non-edible varieties amid forest expansion, said local officials.

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# Wednesday briefing: Covid catch-up plan for students ‘inadequate’

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## Immigration and asylum

# Thousands of asylum seekers go hungry after cash card problems

About a third have struggled with new cards issued by Home Office contractors, says charity



More than 55,000 asylum seekers receive support in the form of debit cards providing £39.63 a week. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

More than 55,000 asylum seekers receive support in the form of debit cards providing £39.63 a week. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

[Diane Taylor](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

Thousands of asylum seekers have faced hunger in the past 10 days because of [problems with new cash cards](#) given to them by Home Office contractors, a charity has said.



The charity Positive Action in Housing [said the Home Office internally estimated](#) on 28 May that about one-third of asylum seekers had experienced problems with the new cards – either not receiving or not being able to activate them.

About 61,000 asylum seekers are receiving [Home Office](#) financial support. More than 55,000 receive support in the form of debit cards known as Aspen cards.

Previously the facilities management company Sodexo had the contract to provide £39.63 a week to asylum seekers via these cards. But on 21 May, Prepaid Financial Services took over.

Asylum seekers and charities across the UK supporting them have reported problems including new cards not arriving, people receiving cards with other people's names on or no money showing up on the new cards once activated.

PFS has previously been criticised by the payment systems regulator. It is one of five companies that the consumer group has [provisionally found](#) to be involved engaging in cartel behaviour for public sector welfare payments.

Chris Hemsley, the managing director of the Payment Systems Regulator, issued a statement this year condemning the companies including PFS.

“By colluding in this way we consider the parties were acting as a cartel. Collusion in payments is absolutely unacceptable. Where we see it happening, we will take action, stop it, and seek to impose significant penalties.”

The Home Office said PFS had been awarded a contract following a competitive tendering process that included due diligence checks on the company, but added that it would take any allegations of wrongdoing seriously.

One asylum seeker said he and his wife, both teachers, accommodated by the Home Office in Glasgow, were only surviving thanks to support from charities such as Positive Action in Housing. He has made a [short video](#) about going hungry as a result of the problems with the new Aspen card.

He said he had been sent three new cards in the past few weeks, all of which had various problems.

“I was distressed – not only by my own situation but by other asylum seekers in the same situation. Every time I tried to contact Migrant Help, the line was busy. Eventually on Monday, after being left to go hungry for more than a week, my housing provider gave me an emergency payment.”

An asylum seeker living in Bradford said: “We have not received our Aspen card and it is more than a week now. We used to live in London and were moved to Bradford on 7 May. We have an eight-month-old baby boy.

“Without a supermarket voucher from West London Welcome, a charity that has been supporting us, we would have had nothing to eat at all. I did a lot of different jobs in my country and would like to work here but we are not allowed so we need that Home Office support just to survive.”

Leyla Williams, the deputy director of West London Welcome, said: “Approaching half of our asylum-seeking members have experienced problems with the new Aspen card. This is a really dangerous situation for the Home Office to have put people in.

“Some of the people we are in touch with who have been dispersed out of accommodation in west London are very vulnerable and most are very isolated in their new accommodation, particularly parents with young children.”

A Home Office spokesperson: “A new service to provide asylum seekers with financial support went live last Monday and we have worked closely to develop customer services processes and plan for a number of eventualities.

“We provided clear advice to asylum seekers that they must activate their new cards prior to the service going live and the vast majority of individuals did so in advance, or have done so since.

“Migrant Help remain available to respond to queries from asylum seekers and anyone experiencing issues can contact the 24/7 hotline.”

PFS has been approached for comment.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/02/thousands-of-asylum-seekers-go-hungry-after-cash-card-problems>

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## Police

# Officers accused of sexual abuse must face investigation, says police chief

Call comes after nearly 150 women made abuse claims against former partners in police force



A demonstrator outside New Scotland Yard in March, protesting against police brutality and for women's rights. Photograph: Bradley Stearn/Alamy

A demonstrator outside New Scotland Yard in March, protesting against police brutality and for women's rights. Photograph: Bradley Stearn/Alamy

[Alexandra Topping](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 02.00 EDT

All serving police officers accused of domestic or sexual abuse should face misconduct hearings as well as criminal investigations, according to the most senior police officer for domestic abuse in England and Wales.

Last month it emerged that nearly 150 women have [come forward](#) with claims of rape, sexual assault and domestic abuse by ex-partners in the police force. Louisa Rolfe, the National Police Chiefs' Council's lead on domestic abuse, said she was "horrificed" by the allegations and "doubly horrified" at reports they had not been properly investigated.

She said forces must ensure there was "no conflict of interest [and] investigators have no connection with the perpetrator" if a report of abuse was made against a serving officer.

Asked if officers should also automatically face an internal investigation, she replied: "Yes, they should, they absolutely should." Unless a criminal investigation had concluded there was no case to answer, officers should be formally internally investigated for misconduct even if there was not strong enough evidence for a criminal trial, she said.

Almost 700 cases of alleged domestic abuse involving police officers and staff were reported during the three years to April 2018, according to freedom of information requests made by the [Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#) (TBIJ). The data, from three-quarters of forces, showed that police employees accused of domestic abuse were a third less likely to be convicted than the general public and less than a quarter of complaints resulted in disciplinary action.

[Revealed: the grim list of sex abuse claims against Metropolitan police](#)  
[Read more](#)

Asked if victims could have confidence that their reports would be dealt with correctly, Rolfe said: "I desperately want that to be the case, and I think many do, but it's clear ... that's not enough and there is work for us to do."

She urged victims to "please, please report" abuse. "If you don't have the confidence to report it to your local police force please seek support from one of the brilliant domestic abuse charities – they will quite appropriately be very demanding on your behalf," she said.

In March last year, the legal charity [Centre for Women's Justice](#) launched a super-complaint, containing the experiences of 19 women, arguing that

reports made against serving officers were dropped, insufficiently investigated or ignored.

Since then 144 more women have come forward, said Nogah Ofer, the CWJ solicitor leading on the super-complaint. “We have been shocked by the scale of it,” she said.

Sue Fish, a former chief constable of Nottinghamshire police, said: “Policing and police leaders need to face up to the fact this isn’t rare. If I hear it described as rare, or an isolated incident, it makes me want to scream, frankly.”

An “incredibly defensive” culture within the police and a reluctance in the CPS to charge officers made investigating allegations problematic, she said.

## **‘The public would be appalled’**

When Sarah was a young recruit in Gwent police she started dating an older, more senior officer, but his behaviour soon turned controlling and abusive, she said.

“His behaviour was crazy, like locking me outside the house if I was 30 seconds late, and physical stuff ... I had bruises,” she said. “The mental torture was the worst. He would tell me if you tell anybody what I’m like, I’m gonna have your job.”

She reported several assaults, including telling police he had pinned her to a wall while holding a knife, but said nothing was done.

Only later did she find out that another recruit, Jodie, had already reported PC Clarke Joslyn for controlling behaviour and stalking two years earlier, but Gwent police had not taken action.

Jodie first made her complaint about Joslyn in 2012, Sarah in 2014. He faced a [disciplinary hearing in 2019](#). The panel concluded that “the public would be appalled that a police officer behaved in the way that Mr Joslyn has”. Joslyn had been suspended on full pay for five years and resigned before his disciplinary hearing, which recommended dismissal.

Sarah and Jodie – not their real names – are [raising funds](#) for a legal challenge against Gwent police over their “protection of a domestic violence perpetrator in their ranks”.

“We want an apology,” said Sarah. “I want them to hold their hands up and say: the way we treated you was wrong, and it won’t happen again to any other women ever again.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/02/officers-accused-of-sexual-abuse-must-face-investigation-says-police-chief>

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## Environment

# Cycling schemes popular with London voters, analysis finds

Parties that back schemes such as low-traffic neighbourhoods outperformed critics in mayoral election

- [The evidence is in: low-traffic neighbourhoods are popular](#)



Votes for parties that support low-traffic neighbourhoods tended to rise in areas where they had been introduced. Photograph: Linda Nylind/the Guardian

Votes for parties that support low-traffic neighbourhoods tended to rise in areas where they had been introduced. Photograph: Linda Nylind/the Guardian

[\*Peter Walker\*](#)

[\*@peterwalker99\*](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 03.00 EDT

Schemes to promote cycling and walking condemned by some critics as controversial and unpopular actually appear to be welcomed by many voters, according to analysis of last month's election results in [London](#).

Examination of the [London mayoral election on 6 May](#) on a ward-level basis showed that votes for parties that support such projects tended to rise in areas where they had been introduced, while parties that opposed them were more likely to shed votes.

The analysis was carried out by Julian Bell, who was the Labour leader of Ealing council in west London for 11 years until being replaced after last month's local elections. Under Bell's leadership, Ealing trialled several so-called low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), one of which has since [been removed](#).

The LTN scheme promotes walking and cycling by using planters or bollards to make some residential streets access-only for motor traffic, while allowing pedestrians and cyclists to use them as normal. While there [is evidence](#) the schemes can, over time, reduce the overall number of shorter car trips, some opponents claim they increase congestion by pushing through motor traffic on to a smaller number of streets.

Bell's analysis showed that in five Ealing wards where LTNs had been created, campaigns against them by the Conservatives and local Liberal Democrats – including a specifically anti-LTN visit by the unsuccessful Tory mayoral hopeful Shaun Bailey – appeared to achieve little.

While the overall Conservative mayoral vote across Ealing rose by 0.64 percentage points compared with the 2016 mayoral election, it fell across the five LTN-focused wards, as did support for the Lib Dems.

Labour was strongly in favour of the schemes, both through the re-elected mayor, Sadiq Khan, and the local council. While the party's vote dropped in the five wards, it fell less than the borough-wide average, and it took the most first-preference votes in all of them.

Across the wards, more than 50% of voters opted for Labour or the Greens, both which back LTNs. This effect was magnified when second-preference

votes were included – the London mayoralty election uses a supplementary vote system, giving people a first and second choice.

According to Bell's analysis, a similar pattern was seen in other areas where Conservatives campaigned against cycling and walking schemes.

Across the west London borough of Hounslow as a whole, the Tory vote rose by 1.2 percentage points against 2016, while Labour's fell by more than 4 points. But in three wards in Chiswick, along the route of the new CS9 segregated track on Chiswick High Road, bitterly opposed by the local Tories and by Bailey personally, the Conservative vote dropped by between 10 and 12 percentage points, while Labour's vote in the wards rose by 4.4 points.

It was a similar picture in Kensington, where the Conservative-run council [removed a separated cycle lane](#) on Kensington High Street just seven weeks after it was installed.

Borough wide, the Conservative vote was down 11 points on 2016, with Labour up 2.2 points. But in the four wards covering Kensington High Street, Tory support dropped by an average of nearly 17 points, while Labour's was up 6.7 points.

Writing for the Guardian about the research, Bell said: "What does seem quite clear is that in a bad year for Labour, cycle schemes saved or won votes for us, not lost them. And that if there was any 'controversy', it worked largely in our favour."

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/02/cycling-schemes-popular-with-london-voters-analysis-finds>

[The Pacific project](#)[US foreign policy](#)

## US secretary of state warns Pacific leaders about ‘coercion’ in veiled swipe at China

Antony Blinken takes a shot at Beijing’s growing influence with rallying call for ‘international rules-based order’



US secretary of state Antony Blinken said Pacific countries should be able to make choices ‘without fear of retribution’. Photograph: Alex Brandon/AFP/Getty Images

US secretary of state Antony Blinken said Pacific countries should be able to make choices ‘without fear of retribution’. Photograph: Alex Brandon/AFP/Getty Images

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Tue 1 Jun 2021 23.10 EDT

The US secretary of state has warned leaders of Pacific countries about “threats to the rules-based international order” and “economic coercion”, in what appears to be a veiled swipe at China’s growing influence in the region.

Antony Blinken was addressing leaders and their delegates from 11 Pacific countries and territories including Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Palau and Marshall Islands as part of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, which is held in Hawaii.

[The \\$3bn bargain: how China dominates Pacific mining, logging and fishing](#)  
[Read more](#)

Blinken reiterated US support for Pacific island nations as they face the “shared challenges that we have to confront together”, including Covid-19 and the climate crisis. He also appeared to make a [criticism of Australia’s](#)

[action on the climate crisis](#), calling for “all countries, particularly the biggest emitters, to swiftly and dramatically reduce emissions.”

But the main focus of his televised address was China’s growing influence in the region.

“Economic coercion across the region is on the rise. The US is all for more development and investment in the islands, but that investment should adhere to international standards for environmentally and socially sustainable development and should be pursued transparently, with public consultation,” he said. “And every country, no matter its size, should always be able to make choices without fear of retribution.”

Jonathan Pryke, director of the Lowy Institute’s Pacific Islands Program in Australia, said it was “pretty obvious” who Blinken had in his sights during the speech.

“There’s only one country that is engaging in the Pacific in a big way in the past few decades that isn’t part of the traditional club and that is China,” he said. “It’s very thinly veiled who he is talking about when he’s talking about economic coercion.”

China has deepened its connections with governments across the Pacific in the last few decades, amid [a soft power push](#) that sees it rivalling the influence of Australia.

China has engaged in significant lending to Pacific countries, as well as paying for massive infrastructure projects. A report in 2018 found that Papua New Guinea, the largest country in the Pacific Islands with a population of roughly nine million, had been [accepting unaffordable Chinese loans](#), and in 2019, [Papua New Guinea asked China to refinance its entire government debt](#), a request that marked a “significant shift” in regional politics, according to Pacific analysts.

[‘They failed us’: how mining and logging devastated a Pacific island in a decade](#)

[Read more](#)

“It’s fully legitimate for China to be operating in the Pacific and there are legitimate concerns about the way China is operating in the Pacific as well,” said Pryke. “I do think we underestimate the agency of Pacific nations and their ability to make decisions ... Pacific islands have wisened up to China.”

Pryke also said that it was “a bit rich” for the US to be warning Pacific nations [about China’s influence](#) given the country’s almost nonexistent diplomatic presence in many Pacific countries.

“They really have such a marginal footprint, it’s one thing to say all these things about ‘be careful, we need to stop this malign influence in your countries’, but what are the alternatives you’re providing?”

Blinken’s address was part of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, and was attended by leaders or delegates from 11 countries or territories, but representatives from a significant number of countries, including Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Samoa did not attend.

By contrast, last week, China held a virtual China-Pacific island discussion which was attended by senior representatives from the governments of most countries, including the prime ministers of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, the president of the Federated States of Micronesia, the premier of Niue and Fiji’s defence minister.

In his address, Blinken also affirmed the United States’ commitment to taking action on the climate crisis, which he said posed a “threat that is existential for the islands”.

“Countries must make and beat ambitious commitments. The US is leading by example on this front. Biden has set out targets to reduce emissions by at least half by 2030,” Blinken said.

Dr Wesley Morgan, research fellow at Griffith Asia Institute, said it was “entirely possible” that Blinken had Canberra in mind when he made these comments.

“They are also taking a swipe at Australia and want to see action on climate,” he said.



“The Pacific has for decades now wanted Australia to take strong action on climate change and now they see an ally in the White House and they also see an ally in Downing Street. The Pacific used to be seen as ‘out there’ in calling for an end to coal, but now it’s Australia that is a long way out there ... the Pacific has all these global allies now and Australia is very isolated on climate.”

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## [Kate Winslet](#)

# Kate Winslet says she refused offer to edit sex scene showing ‘bulgy belly’

Craig Zobel, director of Mare of Easttown, offered to show actor in a more flattering light but Winslet said: ‘Don’t you dare’



Kate Winslet in Mare of Easttown. Photograph: Landmark Media/Alamy

Kate Winslet in Mare of Easttown. Photograph: Landmark Media/Alamy

[Nadeem Badshah](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 18.30 EDT

Kate Winslet has said she refused a director’s offer to edit a sex scene in which she showed a “bulgy bit of belly” for her latest television series.

The actor claimed Craig Zobel, the director of her new HBO series Mare of Easttown, had offered to show her body in a more flattering light.

Winslet, who plays detective and a grandmother Mare Sheehan in a Pennsylvania town in the programme, [the finale of which was broadcast in the UK on Monday](#), said she had refused and told Zobel: “Don’t you dare.”

She also said she twice sent back the promotional poster for the drama because she felt it had been altered too much.

“I’m like: ‘Guys, I know how many lines I have by the side of my eye, please put them all back,’” Winslet, 45, told the New York Times.

“I said to my husband [Edward Abel Smith]: ‘Am I OK with that? Is it all right that I’m playing a middle-aged woman who is a grandmother who does really make a habit of having one-night stands?’ He’s like: ‘Kate, it’s great.’”

The actor added: “Listen, I hope that in playing Mare as a middle-aged woman – I will be 46 in October – I guess that’s why people have connected with this character in the way that they have done because there are clearly no filters.

“She’s a fully functioning, flawed woman with a body and a face that moves in a way that is synonymous with her age and her life and where she comes from. I think we’re starved of that a bit.”

Winslet said, however, that she may not be “comfortable” with doing another nude scene.

[Kate Winslet in Mare of Easttown – style icon of the pandemic](#)  
[Read more](#)

“It’s not even really an age thing, actually,” she said. “There comes a point where people are going to go: ‘Oh, here she goes again.’”

In [an interview with the Guardian in February](#), Winslet said she had been forced to respond to derogatory comments about her weight from a young age.

“In my 20s, people would talk about my weight a lot. And I would be called to comment on my physical self. Well, then I got this label of being ballsy

and outspoken. No, I was just defending myself.”

The actor said she had revisited some newspaper articles written about her in the late 1990s from when she was 19 “and it was almost laughable how shocking, how critical, how straight-up cruel tabloid journalists were to me”.

In January, Keira Knightley said she would [no longer agree to shoot intimate scenes if the film was directed by a man](#).

The actor, who credited the “male gaze” and her own personal vanity with the decision, said: “If I was making a story that was about that journey of motherhood and body acceptance, I feel like, I’m sorry, but that would have to be with a female film-maker.

“I don’t have an absolute ban, but I kind of do with men.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jun/01/kate-winslet-says-she-refused-offer-to-edit-sex-scene-showing-bulgy-belly>.

## 2021.06.02 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: WHO approves Sinovac vaccine for emergency use](#)
- [Scotland Nicola Sturgeon confirms Glasgow restrictions will ease](#)
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# Coronavirus live news: WHO approves Sinovac vaccine for emergency use

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/jun/02/coronavirus-live-news-who-sinovac-vaccine-approved-malaysia-lockdown>

[Nicola Sturgeon](#)

## Nicola Sturgeon confirms Glasgow Covid restrictions will ease

Glasgow moves to level 2 from Saturday with residents able to meet indoors

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

0

'This is a pause not a step backwards': Sturgeon slows easing of Covid restrictions – video

[Libby Brooks](#) *Scotland correspondent*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 11.03 EDT

Nicola Sturgeon has confirmed that Glasgow will move down a level of Covid controls to level 2 from Saturday, with residents able to hug, drink alcohol indoors and meet in each other's homes for the first time in eight months, as she slowed the easing of restrictions elsewhere across central Scotland.

Scotland's largest city had remained in the second-toughest lockdown regime, with an additional travel ban in place, while the rest of the country's restrictions were relaxed, after the rapid spread of the Delta variant in the southside of the city.

Scotland's first minister said that rising infection rates meant that 13 other local authority areas across the central belt – Edinburgh and Midlothian, Dundee, East Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire, all of Ayrshire, North and South Lanarkshire and Clackmannanshire and Stirling – would remain in level 2, rather than the further easing to level 1 that had been anticipated.



Sturgeon said that Tuesday's decisions did not take areas "backwards", but argued that "a slight slowing down of the easing of restrictions, to allow time for more people to be fully vaccinated, will help protect our progress overall".

Her announcement came after the [Office for National Statistics said its random sampling](#) around the UK had shown a sharp rise in Covid cases in Scotland.

Calling for more targeted, local restrictions, the Scottish Conservative leader, Douglas Ross, described the statement as a "disappointing setback" that left half of Scotland "stuck in limbo".

It means that people in Glasgow – as has been the case in most of the rest of Scotland since the middle of May – will be able to meet in homes in groups of up to six, from a maximum of three households. It also means that indoor licensed hospitality can reopen, and that people can travel again between Glasgow and other parts of the country.

"As someone who lives in Glasgow, I know [the change] will make a huge difference to quality of life," Sturgeon told the Holyrood chamber.

Glasgow is planning to host a 3,000-person-capacity Euro 2020 fan zone from 11 June. Sturgeon told MSPs that the situation with the virus would be "continually reviewed in the run-up to the tournament", adding: "We want fans to be able to safely enjoy the Euros ... but public safety continues to be our overriding priority."

The Scottish Labour leader, Anas Sarwar, called on the government to learn from the Glasgow experience: "It is paramount that we design proper protocols for what happens in current and future hotspot areas. Those protocols must include walk-in vaccination centres for everyone aged over 18, the mass rollout of PCR tests, increased support for local businesses and greater access to isolation support grants."

Fifteen other council areas will move to level 1 from Saturday – Highland, Argyll & Bute, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, Moray, Angus, Perth & Kinross, Falkirk, Fife, Inverclyde, East and West Lothian, West

Dunbartonshire, Dumfries & Galloway and the Borders – meaning that limits on meetings in indoor public places increase to eight people from three households; and outdoors to 12 people from 12 households; 100 people as opposed to 50 can attend weddings and funerals; and soft play centres and funfairs can reopen.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jun/01/nicola-sturgeon-confirms-glasgow-covid-restrictions-will-ease>

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## Vaccines and immunisation

# WHO approves China's Sinovac Covid vaccine

Emergency use listing gives countries, funders, procuring agencies and communities assurance it has met international standards

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



A healthcare worker administers a dose of Sinovac's CoronaVac vaccine to a woman in the Philippines. Photograph: Ezra Acayan/Getty Images

A healthcare worker administers a dose of Sinovac's CoronaVac vaccine to a woman in the Philippines. Photograph: Ezra Acayan/Getty Images

*Agence France-Presse*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 20.01 EDT

The World Health Organization has approved the Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use – the second Chinese vaccine to receive the WHO’s green light.

The UN health agency signed off on CoronaVac, a two-dose vaccine developed by the Beijing-based firm which is already being deployed in several countries around the world.

“I’m happy to announce that the Sinovac-CoronaVac vaccine has been given WHO emergency use listing after being found to be safe, effective, and quality-assured,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference on Tuesday.

[China locks down part of Guangzhou amid outbreak of Indian Covid variant](#)  
[Read more](#)

“The easy storage requirements of CoronaVac make it very suitable for low-resource settings,” he added. “It’s now crucial to get these life-saving tools to the people that need them quickly.”

The WHO said the emergency use listing (EUL) gives countries, funders, procuring agencies and communities assurance that the vaccine has met international standards. Last month [Sinopharm became the first Chinese vaccine](#) to be approved by the WHO.

The organisation has also given EUL status to vaccines being made by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and the AstraZeneca jab being produced in India, South Korea and the EU, which it counts separately.

WHO’s listing paves the way for countries worldwide to approve and import a vaccine for distribution quickly, especially those states without an international-standard regulator of their own.

[China forces pace of vaccinations with persuasion ... and some cash](#)  
[Read more](#)

It also opens the door for the jabs to enter the Covax global vaccine-sharing facility, which aims to provide equitable access to doses around the world, particularly in poorer countries. Currently only AstraZeneca and some Pfizer jabs are flowing through the scheme.

“The world desperately needs multiple Covid-19 vaccines to address the huge access inequity across the globe,” said Mariangela Simao, the WHO’s assistant director general for access to health products.

“We urge manufacturers to participate in the Covax facility, share their knowhow and data and contribute to bringing the pandemic under control.”

“WHO recommends the vaccine for use in adults 18 years and older, in a two-dose schedule with a spacing of two to four weeks,” the agency said in a statement.

“Vaccine efficacy results showed that the vaccine prevented symptomatic disease in 51 percent of those vaccinated and prevented severe Covid-19 and hospitalisation in 100 percent of the studied population.”

The Sinovac vaccine contains an inactivated form of coronavirus that cannot cause the disease. It also has a substance that helps strengthen the immune response to the vaccine.

When given the shot, the immune system identifies the inactivated virus as foreign and makes antibodies against it, which will then recognise the active virus and defend the body against it.

Few people aged over 60 took part in the clinical trial of Sinovac’s jab. However, the WHO said there should be no upper age limit on the vaccine as there is “no reason to believe it has a different safety profile” in older generations.

The Sinovac jab is already in use in 22 territories around the world, according to an AFP count. Apart from [China](#), the countries using Sinovac include Chile, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand and Turkey.

Chen Xu, China’s ambassador in Geneva, said CoronaVac’s EUL status expanded the number of global tools to fight the pandemic.

“China will continue to work with the international community to promote the accessibility and affordability of Covid-19 vaccines especially in (the) developing world,” he said in a tweet.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jun/02/who-approves-chinas-sinovac-covid-vaccine>

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## Coronavirus

# Autumn Cambridge University Covid cases linked to one nightclub

Students who attended events during freshers' week and over Halloween were source of biggest infection cluster

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Cases fell dramatically at Cambridge University once the second lockdown was announced. Photograph: eye35.pix/Alamy

Cases fell dramatically at Cambridge University once the second lockdown was announced. Photograph: eye35.pix/Alamy

[Rachel Hall](#)

[@rachela\\_hall](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 11.39 EDT



Nearly three-quarters of coronavirus cases among [University of Cambridge](#) students last autumn have been traced back to a single nightclub, highlighting the risks of reopening venues in the next phase of the UK government's roadmap.

Students who attended socially distanced events during freshers' week and over Halloween were the source of the biggest infection cluster at the university, according to researchers who analysed the effectiveness of Cambridge's coronavirus screening programme, which tested 10,000 students weekly at its peak and was the largest in the UK.

Genomic sequencing showed that the virus [spread rapidly among students](#) who mixed between households and courses on nights out. Cases fell dramatically once the second lockdown was announced, as students complied with the rules and socialised within households of six to 20. Further outbreaks were curtailed by the expansion of a PCR testing programme, which the university estimates reduced the rate of transmission by a third.

[Students in England call for 30% Covid discount on tuition fees](#)  
[Read more](#)

Nicholas Matheson, the researcher at the Cambridge Institute of Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease (CITIID) who designed the screening programme, said the findings could prove instructive for the next phase of the government's reopening plans, under which nightclubs could reopen on 21 June.

"The demographics of the people who might attend nightclubs are also in general terms people who're not yet vaccinated," he said. "Our data is definitely supportive of a role for coronavirus testing in helping to control infections – but we don't think it's a magic bullet, it should be part of a package of measures."

Dinesh Aggarwal, a researcher at Cambridge's medical school, said venues could work in collaboration with researchers to use genomic sequencing to establish how they could open in safer ways, for instance using ventilation

or different forms of social distancing, as well as which activities could be hosted safely.

Cambridge could also serve as a template for other universities, which struggled to contain mass outbreaks on campus at the beginning of the autumn term last year. Young people aged 18-22 are at the end of the vaccine queue, meaning it is uncertain whether most students will have been double-vaccinated before starting university in September.

Matheson advocated that universities take a pragmatic approach to allowing students to socialise, striking a balance between allowing mass events with widespread mixing to go ahead and confining students to small households. “An alternative is to provide facilities for socialising in a way we think may be overall less risky,” he said.

Matheson said that although universities were planning for a number of different scenarios depending on vaccination levels, the situation with new variants and national infection rates, testing would definitely feature across campuses during the next academic year.

“The most favourable end of the spectrum may see a limited role for testing, that might involve PCR testing a fraction of students on a regular basis for surveillance purposes. Less favourable scenarios would require surge testing or regular screening,” he said.

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The Cambridge researchers found most transmission took place within halls of residence and among students on the same course, and that spreading to the local community or between staff and students was limited.

Four-fifths of students at Cambridge agreed to swab their noses and throats weekly. Swabs were then pooled in the same sample tube as other students from their household, making the programme cheaper and more efficient. These were then analysed at the Cambridge Covid-19 testing centre in collaboration with AstraZeneca and Charles River Laboratories.

Nearly half (45%) of the 671 students diagnosed with coronavirus during term time were identified or pre-emptively asked to self-isolate due to the screening programme.

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# ‘Zero’: how the UK papers covered a day without a single reported Covid death

All eyes now turn to whether this makes an easing of England’s Covid measures on 21 June more likely

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



UK newspaper front pages on Wednesday 2 June Composite: Various

UK newspaper front pages on Wednesday 2 June Composite: Various

[Graham Russell](#)

[@G\\_J\\_Russell](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 23.00 EDT

Good news is broadcast across Wednesday's front pages, as editors seize a rare opportunity to report on hope in the battle against the coronavirus.

Many papers suggest that the [first day without a single Covid death](#) for 10 months means the complete easing of lockdown restrictions will go ahead in England as planned on 21 June.

The **Daily Express** says simply “Zero” in large letters, adding that “hopes have been boosted for Freedom Day go-ahead”.

Tomorrow's front page: ZERO - UK records no Covid deaths for first time since pandemic began. [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/A7dk2Op0Nz](https://pic.twitter.com/A7dk2Op0Nz)

— Daily Express (@Daily\_Express) [June 1, 2021](#)

The **Daily Mirror** takes a similar tack with the headline “Zero Covid deaths in the UK” but warns in its story that thousands of fresh daily cases have led to calls to delay the easing of restrictions.

Tomorrow's front page: Zero Covid Deaths In The Uk  
[#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)<https://t.co/xzFDlfdqzw>  
[pic.twitter.com/ZoDakIJMGJ](https://pic.twitter.com/ZoDakIJMGJ)

— The Mirror (@DailyMirror) [June 1, 2021](#)

The **Daily Telegraph** says Boris Johnson is now under pressure to lift restrictions on 21 June. It notes with concern the move by Nicola Sturgeon to [slow an easing of Covid measures in parts of Scotland](#). Leader writer Philip Johnston cites the example of Melbourne to argue against trying to eliminate Covid for fear of creating a “[perpetual to-ing and fro-ing](#)” out of restrictions. (The Australian state of Victoria has been in a week-long lockdown to tackle a fast-spreading outbreak – you can [read more here](#).)

The front page of tomorrow's Daily Telegraph:

'PM under pressure to deliver on June 21' [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)

Sign up for the Front Page newsletter <https://t.co/x8AV4Oomry>  
[pic.twitter.com/6kHipqPNTS](https://t.co/x8AV4Oomry)

— The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [June 1, 2021](#)

The **Guardian** marks the good news across the bottom of its front page, but focuses on concerns the [£1.4bn programme to help children catch up](#) at school post-Covid is not enough.

Guardian front page, Wednesday 2 June 2021: Covid tuition catch-up plan dismissed as 'inadequate' [pic.twitter.com/ynhcHUdCjv](https://t.co/ynhcHUdCjv)

— The Guardian (@guardian) [June 1, 2021](#)

The **Times** also features concerns about the education package but gives the zero deaths story the biggest treatment. “Fresh hope for June 21 as deaths fall to zero” it says, but does note that this may just be a blip as a result of the bank holiday weekend.

TIMES: Fresh hope for June 22 [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/qsZrKSfvks](https://t.co/qsZrKSfvks)

— Neil Henderson (@hendopolis) [June 2, 2021](#)

The **Daily Mail** has a two-part headline: “Zero deaths .. nothing to fear from freedom”. It reports the existence of “an insidious campaign” to delay the easing of restrictions and makes clear to Johnson that he should resist such calls.

Wednesday's [@DailyMailUK](#) [#MailFrontPages](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/aLf1GWjpUr](https://t.co/aLf1GWjpUr)

— Daily Mail U.K. (@DailyMailUK) [June 1, 2021](#)

The **i** carries health secretary Matt Hancock's joy that the vaccination programme appears to be working, and his warning for people to keep following the rules. "Hopes rise for 21 June after zero UK deaths" is the headline. It also includes the line that the UK is to buy an AstraZeneca vaccine adapted to tackle the Beta variant (the one first found in South Africa).

Wednesday's front page: Hopes rise for 21 June after zero UK deaths  
[#TomorrowsPapersToday](#) [pic.twitter.com/nBA70twY6I](https://pic.twitter.com/nBA70twY6I)

— **i** newspaper (@theipaper) [June 1, 2021](#)

**Metro** goes straight with "Not a single Covid death in UK" but reports a doubling of daily cases in the space of a month, and Sturgeon's decision to slow the easing of Covid measures.

Tomorrow's paper tonight ☐

NOT A SINGLE COVID DEATH IN THE UK ☐

☐ The first time since start of pandemic

☐ But scientists urge caution as cases rise

☐ And Scots slow down lockdown easing [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/OzjTj3RNIL](https://pic.twitter.com/OzjTj3RNIL)

— Metro (@MetroUK) [June 1, 2021](#)

In Scotland, the **Daily Record** cannot resist an 80s band reference with "Tiers for beers" as it reports that Glaswegians will be permitted to drink inside from Saturday as part of a move to level 2 restrictions.

RECORD: Tiers for beers [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/Q93RYYZzC5](https://pic.twitter.com/Q93RYYZzC5)

— Neil Henderson (@hendopolis) [June 2, 2021](#)



The **Scotsman** reports on business frustration after Scotland moves “from lockdown to slowdown”, in reference to Sturgeon’s decisions.

SCOTSMAN: Scotland to move ‘from lockdown to slowdown’  
[#TomorrowsPapersToday](#), [pic.twitter.com/7eiTwJOyW3](https://pic.twitter.com/7eiTwJOyW3)

— Neil Henderson (@hendopolis) [June 2, 2021](#)

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## [Ireland holidays](#)

# **Wexford's hotels and attractions prepare for easing of Ireland's Covid lockdown**



Looking beyond lockdown ... Ferrycarrig Hotel, County Wexford, Ireland.  
Photograph: Colin Shanahan

Looking beyond lockdown ... Ferrycarrig Hotel, County Wexford, Ireland.  
Photograph: Colin Shanahan

The shuttering is almost at an end, but as hotels reopen on 2 June, how will the county cope with domestic-only tourism?



[Rory Carroll](#)

[@rorycarroll72](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.30 EDT

Ireland has endured one of Europe's longest lockdowns, so its hotels have been busy blowing away cobwebs, training staff and restocking the kitchen as they prepare to reopen today.

As with other Irish hotels, the Ferrycarrig on its south-eastern tip is hoping this landmark day will signal the beginning of a rebirth of a devastated tourism industry.

[Ireland map, showing Wexford town and Ferrycarrig and surrounding south-east area.](#)

"Customers are itching to get back in to see us. Bookings are chock-a-block," said Derek Coyne, the general manager.

Covid-19 restrictions will mean masks in public spaces, social distancing, sanitising stations, screens, reservations for the restaurant, gym and pool, he said. "The message is that it's a safe place to come."

The four-star [Ferrycarrig](#), which has panoramic views of the River Slaney estuary in County Wexford, is using 17 of its 102 rooms to store personal protective equipment and to quarantine any staff member who falls sick, leaving 85 for guests. Coyne predicts a bumper, extended season – which will be virtually 100% domestic tourists.

Everyone arriving in Ireland from abroad, with the exception of Northern Ireland, must complete a passenger locator form and provide evidence of a negative or “not detected” RT-PCR test result. People from countries deemed high-risk must quarantine in a designated hotel for 14 days. Those from other countries, including [Great Britain](#), are advised to self-isolate for 14 days.



Bedroom at the Ferrycarrig Hotel

Travellers going the other way, from Ireland to Britain, face no such restriction. Ferry companies are urging the Irish government to fully [reinstate the Common Travel Area](#) and open a de facto “bubble” with British travellers.

Meantime, Wexford is relying on natives and foreigners who live in Ireland. At the [Irish National Heritage Park](#), a mile from Ferrycarrig, the costumed tour guides who carry two-metre long spears, have discovered a modern use

for their replica weapons. Tilt them horizontally and, voilà, precision social distancing.

“It’s done for fun but it gets the message across,” said Derek O’Brien, who wears a tunic and directs visitors to pre-historic, early Christian and medieval-style settlements dotted around the park’s large areas of woodland.



Derek O'Brien, a tour guide at the Irish National Heritage Park in Wexford. Photograph: Rory Carroll/The Guardian

It is a bucolic wonder, but even here staff wear face visors, hand-sanitiser pumps are attached to trees and ubiquitous yellow signs remind visitors about coughing etiquette in the era of Covid-19. The park has a section on the “age of invasions” (Vikings, Normans, Anglo-Saxons, English), a quaint concept since foreign travel has dwindled to a trickle. The pandemic’s ramparts are only slowly inching down.

Before Covid-19 the park hosted about 600 people at any one time. Covid rules capped the numbers but the park operated at that capacity last summer. People feel safe because of the outdoor space and protective measures, said Bell, citing the €530 a week spent on sanitisers. Spontaneous visits are not recommended. The advice is to book online, preferably well in advance because with reduced capacity tickets go fast.





View across a lake to Johnstown Castle. Photograph: Alamy

It is a similar story across Wexford. The big buses, babble of languages and brightly coloured anoraks of a normal tourist season have been replaced by carloads of families from across the island. They quickly learn to book in advance – restaurant tables, castle tours, hotel swimming pool slots, strawberry-picking.

Wexford is part of the “sunny south east”, a group of five counties (the others are Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary and Waterford) that boast more sunshine than the rest of Ireland. It is a lovely, largely unsung region. Wexford does not stop the heart like the sublime landscapes of Kerry or west Cork, where jagged peaks sweep to the foaming Atlantic. Wexford is more fields, hills and the Irish Sea. But there is splendour in its rivers, forests and Hook peninsula, allure in towns such as Duncannon and long golden beaches like Curracloe, where the opening sequence of *Saving Private Ryan* was filmed.



Curracloe beach, where scenes from the film Saving Private Ryan were filmed. Photograph: Alamy

The county brims with history, round towers and ruins. Humans have lived here at least since the Neolithic period. Vikings settled Wexford town in the ninth century. Normans landed in 1169, their first Irish conquest, followed by Oliver Cromwell's rampaging troops in 1649. Wexford was the crucible of the 1798 rebellion.

A more prosaic but important draw is the fact that Wexford town is less than two hours' drive from Dublin, a straight shot on an excellent motorway, and that the county hosts Rosslare port, with ferry sailings from Pembroke, Fishguard, Cherbourg, Roscoff and Bilbao.

Tourism usually generates about €200m a year in Wexford, supporting 6,000 jobs. With international tourism on hold, domestic tourists wary and Covid-19 rules and restrictions evolving, the county has had to adapt fast to salvage the season. Places like [Johnstown Castle](#) have it easy – nearly 50 hectares of space means no need to pre-book for gardens where you can stroll around lakes and feed peacocks. “For cocooners it's ideal,” said Brenda Comerford, the manager.



Visitor attraction the Dunbrody Famine Ship at New Ross. Photograph: Danita Delimont/Alamy

In contrast, the [Dunbrody famine ship](#) at New Ross, a replica of an 1840s emigrant vessel, had to cut tour group sizes and pivot from its usual reliance on international visitors. A potentially hard sell: would anyone want to explore the dark belly of a wooden ship that evokes claustrophobia and disease? Actually, yes. Last summer it continued to draw 140 to 150 people daily, just shy of capacity.

“It’s so sad but really interesting,” said Mary-Louise Fellowes, 39, who visited with her husband and two young children. From Northern Ireland, the family considered holidaying in Scotland before plumping for Ireland’s south-east. The trick, said Fellowes, is to research and book in advance. “Some towns have been very quiet with nowhere to eat. We’ve enjoyed it, and felt safe. Things feel much more under control here.”

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## US news

# **‘Our society is totally nuts’: Fauci emails lift lid on life in eye of the Covid storm**

Communications from America’s top infectious diseases expert shed light on panic and confusion in early stages of pandemic



Anthony Fauci told the Washington Post: ‘I have a reputation that I respond to people when they ask for help, even if it takes a long time. And it’s very time consuming, but I do.’ Photograph: Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA

Anthony Fauci told the Washington Post: ‘I have a reputation that I respond to people when they ask for help, even if it takes a long time. And it’s very time consuming, but I do.’ Photograph: Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA

[Richard Luscombe](#) and [Martin Pengelly](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 16.30 EDT

As Anthony Fauci, the US's leading infectious diseases official, grappled with the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic last spring, he was pulled in many directions.

Donald Trump's White House, which was downplaying the dangers, was demanding he portray the outbreak on their terms; the media was hungry for answers; and Fauci's email inbox was constantly full with officials, the public and celebrities offering advice and seeking information about the world's deadliest health crisis for a century.

[Fauci: 'Undeniable effects of racism' have worsened Covid for US minorities](#)

[Read more](#)

Insight into the pressure that was heaped upon Fauci, the head of the national institute for allergy and infectious diseases, comes from thousands of pages of his communication records obtained by the [Washington Post](#) and the [BuzzFeed](#) news site, separately, and published on Tuesday.

The emails offer a window into the chaos, panic and confusion of the time, and of the considerable difficulties Fauci faced as a prominent figure in the White House coronavirus taskforce serving Trump as the Republican US president.

As Fauci, kept on as a leading Covid adviser to Joe Biden, recently told the Post: "I was getting every single kind of question, mostly people who were a little bit confused about the mixed messages that were coming out of the White House and wanted to know what's the real scoop.

"I have a reputation that I respond to people when they ask for help, even if it takes a long time. And it's very time consuming, but I do."

Among the emails obtained by the Post is one in which he speaks of the "crazy people in this world", whom Fauci appeared to blame for politicizing the crisis, and who ultimately led to him receiving a full-time security team amid threats from extremist critics.

Others detail his wrangling with White House officials, including an exchange with Marc Short, an aide for the then vice-president, Mike Pence. The context is unclear, but according to the heavily redacted email Short wrote: “You correctly noticed the symptoms but misdiagnosed the root cause.”

“Thanks for the note. Understood,” is Fauci’s reply.

Others show correspondence with counterparts in other countries, such as a reply to George Gao, director of the Chinese center for disease control and prevention. Gao appeared to be seeking Fauci’s forgiveness for the words “big mistake” that were attributed to him in relation to his American counterpart in an article early on in the crisis about the US not advising the public to wear masks.

“That was [a] journalist’s wording. Hope you understand,” Gao wrote.

“I understand completely. No problem. We will get through this together,” Fauci replied.

US-China tensions have been high throughout the pandemic but the US is now [investigating](#) whether the virus, discovered in Wuhan province, came from animals, as has been the scientific community’s position for some time, or whether there is truth to the theory that the virus was being studied in a laboratory and “escaped”.

Among the most revealing emails are those from wealthy or influential correspondents. In one dated 3 April 2020, Fauci refers to a conversation with the Microsoft founder, Bill Gates, about a “collaborative and hopefully synergistic approach to Covid-19” with Gates’s charitable foundation.

Gates’s foundation director, Emilio Emini, says he is “seriously worried” about the health of Fauci, then 79, given his busy schedule. Fauci thanks Emini for his concern and says: “I will try to engage as much as I can given my current circumstances.”

There are also email exchanges with the Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, about the creation of a coronavirus information hub on social

media, and one with the actor Morgan Freeman who offers to get Covid-19 messaging out to his 100,000 Twitter followers.

Almost every email from Fauci is unfailingly polite and ends with a simple sign-off: “Tony”. And hidden amid the stacks of weighty correspondence are brief moments of humor, such as a 7 April 2020, exchange with an unidentified recipient, forwarding a link to an online news article headlined: “[Cuomo Crush and ‘Fauci Fever – Sexualization of These Men Is a Real Thing on the Internet.’](#)”

“It will blow your mind,” Fauci writes. “Our society is really totally nuts.”

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## Christina Hendricks

# Christina Hendricks: ‘We were critically acclaimed – and everyone wanted to ask me about my bra’



‘I always thought of modelling as freeze-frame acting’ ... Christina Hendricks. Photograph: Rich Fury/Getty Images for LG V40 ThinQ

‘I always thought of modelling as freeze-frame acting’ ... Christina Hendricks. Photograph: Rich Fury/Getty Images for LG V40 ThinQ

The star of *Good Girls* discusses *Mad Men*, sexual harassment and squaring her glamorous reputation with her ‘weird, goofy’ personality



[Zoe Williams](#)

[@zoesqwilliams](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

Christina Hendricks appears on our video call with the most dramatic backdrop. Art deco gold peacocks bedeck a black wall, making her look, as she has so often in her career, a bit too good to be human. Perfectly poised, perfectly framed, perfectly lit, she is more like a dreamy vision of what humans look like. “I, erm, like your wall,” I say, pointlessly. She flashes a smile, as if to say: “Obviously.”

We are here primarily to discuss the comedy-drama series [Good Girls](#), the fourth season of which will resume in the US this month after a midseason break. The elevator pitch would be Breaking Bad for girls: three suburban women, each hovering on the edge of bankruptcy, unite to embark on a life of cack-handed crime, only to discover they are good at it. The ensemble – Hendricks, Mae Whitman, who plays her sister, and Retta, their friend – works strikingly well, their pacey comic rapport instilling a sense of perpetual motion. You just can’t imagine Good Girls ending. Every time a plot line seems to be reaching its climax, something worse – and funnier – happens.



“It’s funny you say that, because originally, when I read the pilot script, I thought: ‘I love this, but I can’t imagine this being more than one episode,’” says Hendricks. “It felt like it finished itself.” She is unsentimental about it. Hendricks wasn’t looking for a new show – “I was happy doing films, taking my time” – but went into it with her eyes open. It is a network drama, for NBC – it is shown on Netflix in the UK – so producers are always aware that “it’s going into every house in the US on a Thursday or a Sunday and a family is watching it. They’re much more careful about numbers and advertisers and people being offended or not getting it. A cable show is much more: ‘We trust this creator – they’re a visionary.’”

It has a conventional tone – however dark the material, it is handled very lightly. Yet you can’t help but notice some hard-boiled social commentary from the off – if it weren’t for the bracingly callous US health system, the generation of wage-stagnation casualties and the patriarchy, none of the characters would have gone anywhere near a supermarket heist. More than *Breaking Bad*, it reminds me of [Roseanne](#) and the golden age of US mainstream comedy, when you could be poor on TV without that being a breach of good taste.



Breaking Bad for women ... Ruby (Retta), Beth (Hendricks) and Annie (Mae Whitman) in *Good Girls*. Photograph: NBC/Getty Images



The 46-year-old has been a household name for almost 15 years, thanks to [Mad Men](#). She was born in Tennessee, where her mother was a psychologist and her father worked for the Forest Service, and educated in Oregon and then Idaho. She didn't have time for formal acting training; by the time she was 18, her modelling career had taken off. Later, when she had a manager, she took acting lessons: "I did that for almost a year and a half and put auditions on ice. Then I was watching a film – I don't even remember what film it was or who was in it – and I thought: 'I'm ready. I can do this.'" She has the most insistent work ethic; as she describes her life's trajectory, she notes diligently the jobs she had while she was at high school, at a hair salon and a menswear shop.

In 2007, she appeared as Joan Holloway in *Mad Men*. She played the role for the next eight years, her character growing around the depth she brought to it, until by season seven she was almost the central part. In the early 2010s, Hendricks was talked about constantly, although she says the original focal points of obsession were the male characters: "Men started dressing like Don Draper and Roger Sterling. Suits came back in, skinny ties came back in. It took three to four seasons and then all of a sudden people wanted us [the female stars] on magazines. We were like: 'This is strange – we've been doing this for a while.'"

Hendricks, along with January Jones, who played Betty Draper, came to represent so much. There was a great deal of rumination on their physicality, Jones as elegant as an afghan hound, Hendricks like the pin-up painted on the side of a bomber. What did it mean, people asked, that in the middle of the 20th century there were multiple ideals of the female form, whereas in the 21st century there was only one? How did that complicate the perception of gender equality as a steady march towards the light? Thousands of column inches went on that question – but, from the actor's perspective, it was an annoying distraction. "There certainly was a time when we were very critically acclaimed, and getting a lot of attention for our very good work and our very hard work, and everyone just wanted to ask me about my bra again. There are only two sentences to say about a bra," she says.



‘I am completely not Joan. Not in any way. I wish I was more like Joan’ ... Hendricks in the first season of Mad Men. Photograph: Everett Collection/Rex

The signal impression the show left was of an ensemble at the peak of its creativity: actors, writers and the creator, [Matthew Weiner](#), working in almost telepathic unison. It won the Emmy for outstanding drama series four times in a row, but the more notable year was 2012, when it was nominated for 17 Emmys (and didn’t win any of them). The take-home was: everyone involved with this is absolutely brilliant.

That harmonious picture was blurred two years after the show ended, when one of the former writers, Kater Gordon, [accused Weiner of sexual harassment](#). Marti Noxon, a consulting producer on Mad Men, concurred that Weiner had created a toxic environment and [said that he was an “emotional terrorist”](#) who will badger, seduce and even tantrum in an attempt to get his needs met”.

Hendricks takes this head on, in a considered, straightforward manner. “My relationship with Matt was in no way toxic,” she says. “I don’t discount anyone’s experience if I wasn’t there to see it, but that wasn’t my experience. Was he a perfectionist, was he tough, did he expect a lot? Yes. And he would say that in a second. We were hard on each other.”

It is impossible, from this distance, to adjudicate on Weiner's character, but Hendricks's response reveals something of hers. The easiest response in this situation, and the one 90% of actors give, is: "No comment." Hendricks is always collected, never evasive, doesn't gabble. She reminds me powerfully of Joan Holloway – and I am sorry to say it, because she insists throughout: "I'm an actress. I am completely not Joan. Not in any way. I wish I was more like Joan."

I wonder if, while we were all fixating on Joan's bras and whether or not, in the asinine words of Lynne Featherstone, the UK's equalities minister in 2010, she represented a "curvy role model", the audience was responding to Joan's deeper life lesson – that self-possession is 9/10ths of the law.

What Hendricks emphatically doesn't do is minimise the existence of sexism and sexual harassment in the industry: "Boy, do you think anyone in the entertainment industry comes out unscathed and not objectified? I don't know one musician or one model or one actor who has escaped that. I have had moments – not on *Mad Men*; on other things – where people have tried to take advantage of me, use my body in a way I wasn't comfortable with, persuade me or coerce me or professionally shame me: 'If you took your work seriously, you would do this ...'

"Maybe it was my modelling background, but I knew to immediately get on the phone and go: 'Uh oh, trouble,'" she says. "That's where it's very much a job. We need to talk to the producers and handle this professionally."

Yet, at the same time, she is defensive of her industry. "It gets a lot of attention because people know who we are. I'm sure there's a casting couch at the bank down the street, I'm sure the same thing happens in management consultancy, but people don't know who the management consultants are."

Boy, do you think anyone in the entertainment industry comes out unscathed and not objectified?

Modelling always sounds like a harsh environment – predatory photographers vying with stringent agents to give everyone a complex about their thighs and stop them eating carbs. But that is not how Hendricks

describes it at all. Her career sounds like one out of an 80s Judy annual: innocent and hearty, good for pin money and travel opportunities. “I think I was lucky – I didn’t start when I was 14. When I was about 18 or 19, I went to Japan for the first time, I went to Italy. We’d be lots of girls, sharing a house, and I sort of became the den mother. I’d make everyone egg salad sandwiches and greek salads, going into this mother hen role.”

That is what they say about being taken hostage: if you want to survive, choose someone to look after. “Oh,” she says, coolly. “I wouldn’t consider being a model as being a hostage.”

She was only ever medium-successful, she insists – an “unusual and quirky” hire, rather than the slam-dunk face of everything. About as far as it went was that she never had to get another job to supplement her income. Probably the most famous image of that era in which she was involved was [the poster for American Beauty](#). Two models were in the frame, so they took a photo of the stomach and the hands of each. In the end, they used Hendricks’s hand on the other model’s stomach. It sounds like a clunky metaphor, but it is true.

During this period, she moved to London with a friend, for the hell of it, living in a flat on Gloucester Road, “surviving on cider and hummus”. It is a glimpse of the oddball she says she was growing up, the outsider as whom she is rarely cast. This has been the story of her CV. “Early on in my career, I would get auditions and I would call my manager and say: ‘I would never cast me in this – she’s a cheerleader, she’s a bimbo. Can I audition for the other one, the weird doctor?’ And they’d be like: ‘No, they saw your picture.’ And I started realising that people didn’t see the weird, goofy me that I saw.”



Branching out ... Hendricks with Philip Seymour Hoffman in 2014's *God's Pocket*, which was directed by her *Mad Men* co-star John Slattery. Photograph: Allstar Picture Library

She made the jump from modelling to acting via adverts, with what looks like fairytale ease. In fact, it was “a lot of pounding the pavement and showing up for auditions and getting rejected – and learning, as a young woman, to not take that personally”. By the late 90s, she was the face of ultimate female confidence, the woman who drinks Johnnie Walker and doesn't need a chauffeur (these are two ads, not one for drink-driving). “I always thought of modelling as freeze-frame acting. It felt like a scene, and I still consider it that way. There are so many technical things that I think people don't notice. They see you playing dress-up.”

From the commercials, she learned “how to hit a mark, how to memorise a line”, but acting wasn't novel. She had been doing community theatre since the age of 10, and grew up expecting an alternative life, supplementing an art-house existence any which way. She never amplifies her creative urges. She is much happier talking about professionalism and graft, but that is strategic more than anything else. “I am incredibly emotional and I take things very personally. But I've learned to be a little bit of a politician and a little bit of a producer along the way. As a female actor, the easy go-to is: ‘She was emotional, she was hysterical.’ It can be a million other people's

fault, but it's easy to point your finger at an emotional artist. So, I realised: if I'm going to be taken seriously, I need to have professional perspective and I can cry about it to my friends later."

Yet she cares deeply about creativity, as is clear when she talks about *Mad Men*. "It may eclipse anything I ever did. And, if it does, it was a good one and I'm proud of it," she says. "I got to bring who I was as a woman. I think I learned some of how to be a woman from Joan. No one would give a shit about me if it wasn't for that show. I'd still be doing good work, but no one would have found me. If that's the best thing I ever do, it was pretty good."

*Season four of Good Girls resumes in the US on NBC on 24 June. Seasons one to three are available in the UK on Netflix*

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## Fashion

# And the bride wore ... a rental gown: is hiring clothes the future of fashion?

This weekend, Carrie Symonds married Boris Johnson in a wedding dress she had rented. She isn't alone. From dresses to shoes to hairbands, clothes hire is growing fast



Carrie and Boris Johnson on their wedding day. Photograph: Downing Street/Getty Images

Carrie and Boris Johnson on their wedding day. Photograph: Downing Street/Getty Images

[Ellie Violet Bramley](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

When Carrie Symonds married Boris Johnson over the bank holiday weekend, it wasn't in a dress handed down by a relative, or a custom-made designer frock destined to take up space in her wardrobe for years to come.



It was in a dress she had rented for a few days from a website called My Wardrobe HQ.

You might not expect a person who [spends tens of thousands redecorating a flat](#) that she will only temporarily live in to be much of an economiser, but it turns out that Symonds – now Johnson – is a frequent renter. “Carrie has always rented from us,” says Sacha Newall, the founder of My Wardrobe HQ, who had no idea that this particular dress was destined for Westminster Cathedral. “As a regular customer, nothing flagged as being unusual about the order.”

The embroidered tulle gown, the work of the Greek luxury designer Christos Costarellos, [reportedly set Symonds back £45, whereas it would have cost £2,870 to buy](#) – about £1,500 [more than the average wedding dress in the UK in 2019](#).

Renting clothes – everything from dresses and shoes to bags and hairbands – has become increasingly popular over the past few years. [With about £140m worth of used clothing being sent to landfill in the UK every year](#), according to the charity Wrap, it is seen as a relatively guilt-free way to partake in fashion.

Even the pandemic didn’t make a dent. “I’m very surprised that we did have rentals,” says Eshita Kabra-Davies, the founder of By Rotation, which is part social network and part rental platform and has more than 60,000 users. “It would be for things like celebrating birthdays with partners or housemates – that dopamine dressing thing.”





‘That dopamine dressing thing’ ... rental clothes at By Rotation.  
Photograph: By Rotation

After about a month of lockdown easing, the market is even more buoyant. By Rotation’s revenues are already up about eightfold on the start of this year and it is a similar picture at My Wardrobe HQ. “It does feel like the moment’s now,” says Newall.

With many people looking to re-enter beer gardens with a bang, there is much speculation that we are in for a summer of statement dressing. If 2020 was a year to forget, Newall believes that 2021 will be a year to remember: “Fashion rental has dovetailed really nicely into that. As part of that memory, you want to wear something incredible – but how many times do you want to wear it?”

It hasn’t hurt the rental market that, during lockdown, people were finding time to sort through their wardrobes and get to grips with what they did and didn’t need. Also, with charity shops closed for much of the year, they were forced to explore other outlets for their unworn garments. “All these spring-cleaning Marie Kondo conversations that people were having were very beneficial for a peer-to-peer marketplace like ours,” says Kabra-Davies.

But what of the practicalities? While different companies operate differently – private lenders and renters with By Rotation clean items themselves before posting them to one another, while My Wardrobe HQ takes care of cleaning and couriering – it is not always as faff-free as some might want.

Caryn Franklin, fashion commentator and activist, doesn't believe this will hold people back, though. "Humans are amazing adapters. I was someone who, really early on, questioned whether selling clothes online at all would work ... I've already been proved completely wrong," she says. "We already have a culture of sending stuff back – people order far more than they're going to keep so they can do a trying-on session."

So, is renting the future for fashion? "Absolutely," says Newall, quoting research for the US firm Rent the Runway that 20% of the retail market will be rental by 2025.

Franklin believes it is one of many creative solutions being offered to fashion's sustainability problem – and won't be right for everyone. "We need a variety of solutions," she says. "I think that we still will choose to make relationships with items of clothing that are ours and ours for ever ... we'll also have a movable feast within our wardrobe, which we will switch." There are, after all, "lots of garments that we'd all like to have a go on – so why not rent?"

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## Architecture

# ‘An architectural fashion show’: Greenwich peninsula’s Design District



Gaudy eyeful: the Greenwich design district under construction, London, May 2021 Photograph: Taran Wilkhu

Gaudy eyeful: the Greenwich design district under construction, London, May 2021 Photograph: Taran Wilkhu

From a rooftop basketball court to a caterpillar-shaped food hall, the souk-like London development is architecture at its trendiest. Can its eye-popping buildings lure young creatives – and bring the buzz?



[Oliver Wainwright](#)

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Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

A mirror-polished silver box stands proudly on a corner of the Greenwich Peninsula, reflecting a curious new world of architectural experiments. To one side wriggles a transparent caterpillar of a building, with clear plastic stretched around a bright yellow frame, forming a space-age chrysalis. Next door stands a veiled stack of raw concrete floors, the bare bones of a building draped with a ghostly shroud of steel netting, giving it the look of a multistorey aviary. Nearby there is a sturdy, low-slung box covered in rusty panels of Cor-ten steel, and a little tower-like block wrapped in a corduroy cloak of slender white tubes. Elsewhere in the menagerie we find a pair of triangular wedges dressed in harlequin costumes of pink and green terrazzo diamonds, and several other creatures whose exotic plumage has yet to emerge from behind the scaffolding.



Souk ... a CGI impression of the Design District. Photograph: Design District

This gaudy eyeful is the new [Design District](#), a planned “creative quarter” at the heart of the Greenwich Peninsula in London. Opening in phases over the coming months, it is intended to provide affordable workspace for around 1,800 people across the fields of fashion, food, tech, craft and more. With eight architects each charged with designing a pair of buildings, it is an eclectic zoo of structures, the self-consciously funky vibe intended to lure creative types across the river from Shoreditch – along with the £5/sq ft rents for the first year.

The Design District is the brainchild of image-conscious developer [Knight Dragon](#), a company backed by Hong Kong billionaire Henry Cheng Kar-shun, which has been leading the £8.4bn development of the peninsula since 2012. It is touted as one of the biggest regeneration projects in Europe, with 17,500 homes and 70,000 square metres of office space across the 80-hectare site, and towers of up to 36 storeys, realising the Millennium project around the former Dome, more than 20 years on.

So far, a history of different masterplans has created a disjointed place where grim glass cliffs of investment flats march down one edge of the peninsula, forming a defensive battery alongside the dome – now the O2 – separated by

a gulf of car parks from the more affordable housing at the other end of the site. Spanish superstar Santiago Calatrava was [shipped in to add a sprinkle of fairy dust in 2017](#), but his £1bn cavorting trio of towers has since been scrapped, deemed to be one costly step too far. A sorry imitation of New York's High Line [opened here in 2019](#) in a vain attempt to bring some more footfall, but so far it seems like another piece of redundant novelty infrastructure, joining [the empty cable car nearby](#).

Given this chequered history, what are we to make of the Design District? Is it a cynical exercise to inject some cultural cachet to this commercial wasteland, and pump up surrounding property values? Or is it a genuine attempt to provide low-cost workspace in a city where [the creative industries are being relentlessly priced out](#)? The answer is a bit of both.

For all the apparent whimsy, the masterplan itself is surprisingly sensible. It eschews the model of towers on podiums found elsewhere on the site, and instead tries to create a place of alleyways and yards, with smaller buildings at odd angles forming the sense of a piece of city that has evolved over time. At some points the passages between buildings are just three metres wide, intended to give a souk-like air.

“Places that people like are generally messy and designed by lots of different hands,” says Matt Dearlove, head of design for the peninsula at Knight Dragon. “We wanted this to be a place with Marmite moments, where you turn a corner and see something you think is amazing” – he looks out at the chaotic jumble of forms – “or you might have the opposite reaction.”





Mirror-polish ... Barozzi Veiga's completed building, with 6a's chequerboard design alongside, and the 'caterpillar' food hall by SelgasCano taking shape left. Photograph: Taran Wilkhu

In a game of architectural consequences, the designers were each given the same brief and asked to work blind, without knowing what their neighbours were plotting. The buildings had a fixed footprint, a maximum overall size, and a three-part structure: a ground floor for workshops and cafes; a first floor for "desk-based creatives"; and a light-flooded top floor suitable for artists or photographers.

We wanted this to be a place full of Marmite moments

"It was an odd way of designing," says Tom Emerson of 6a, architects of the harlequin wedges. "We had no context to work with. It was quite refreshing, because the buildings became about their own internal logic, rather than being endlessly responsive to other things."

The result is 16 mini manifestos, a place that feels like flicking through an architectural magazine of the latest trends, a tiny expo of ideas. While the combined effect might result in indigestion, even the most hard to please should find at least one building they like.

The first to open this month is the mirror-polished box, by exacting Spanish-Italian duo Barozzi Veiga. Home to the new [Institute for Creativity and Technology](#) of Ravensbourne University, it stands as an abstract idea of a warehouse, a shimmering chimera of a factory, with supersized industrial windows distorting the sense of scale. Finished in highly reflective aluminium as changeable as London's skies, it has the air of a piece of precision computer hardware, making a fitting place for Ravensbourne's experiments in the future of tech. The architects' other building will be a black-clad doppelgänger, forming an enigmatic counterpoint at the far end of the site.



‘Raw and open’ ... a CGI impression showing Architecture 00's rooftop basketball court. Photograph: Design District

Across the way stands the veiled stack by [Architecture 00](#). Their diaphanous shroud rises to enclose a rooftop basketball court, with views of Canary Wharf providing an exhilarating backdrop – along with the feeling of playing on a roof with no discernible balustrade. It is the clever result of maximising the net internal area down below, by pushing all the staircases and landings to the outside of the building, winding their way up the facade in a theatrical route behind the mesh. The spare cash from this efficient configuration paid for the rooftop court – which will be open to the public.



“Buildings show their potential when they’re not complete,” says 00’s Lynton Pepper. “So we’ve tried to keep it as raw and open as possible. You can come out at any point and walk around the deck, with no balustrade because of the mesh.” Their second building follows a similar logic, with external decks that expand at different points to allow space for outdoor working. They imagined these as messy places for cutting, painting and drilling, but the building will now be home to laptop nomads of the Bureau co-working club.

In contrast to 00’s gritty concrete and steel comes a full-on PoMo revival from [David Kohn](#). Channelling James Stirling’s 1987 Clore Gallery at Tate Britain, his pair of buildings feature bright green square grids contrasting with red bricks, colonnades of fat columns, and a jaunty rooftop sign. Taking inspiration from historic guildhalls, Kohn persuaded Knight Dragon to include plinths and niches for figurative sculpture on the facade, which will hopefully be added over the coming months to reflect the range of tenants and what they produce. “Throughout the history of architecture there have always been many hands involved,” says Kohn. “I’m interested to see what happens when you relinquish control.”



PoMo revival ... David Kohn Architects’ design. Photograph: Design District

After years of working on subtle renovations of historic structures, 6a Architects are also clearly enjoying a neo-PoMo moment. In a similar vein to their recent [Milton Keynes gallery](#), their contribution here brings a loud graphic pop, with supersized terrazzo diamonds running across the facades like jazzy wrapping paper.

“We were really interested in the flatness of commercial construction,” says Emerson, whose work has mainly comprised projects for artists and galleries until recently. “Everything is made up of these flat layers, so you end up with a very smooth world – which can be awful. But we wanted to see what we could get out of it if we really went for it.” Inspired by the super-flat Formica sculptures of American artist [Richard Artschwager](#), they have played with the banality of proprietary systems, with oversized spiral ductwork and big cowls forming canopies over the doorways. Inside, pink fireproof plasterboard has been left exposed, and breezeblock walls simply painted to match the red and pink facades.

There are other intriguing things in the making by Mole, Adam Khan, HNNA (who also did the masterplan) and Spanish firm SelgasCano, architects of [the 2015 Serpentine Pavilion](#), whose writhing plastic caterpillar will soon be a food hall, with market stalls operating among lush greenhouse of tropical trees sprouting from a mezzanine level.

The architectural fashion show is entertaining, but its true success will come down to assembling the right mix of tenants, ensuring this is indeed a place of making and not just more acres of co-working space. People must be allowed to make a mess. The district’s director, Helen Arvanitakis, says the idea is to create a “self-sustaining ecosystem”, where a fashion designer hires the photographer next door to shoot their collection, and the start-up sauce company works with the graphics studio to design its packaging, with mock-ups printed by the repro house downstairs. Confirmed tenants so far range from sneaker design studio [Concept Kicks](#) and music PR firm [Brace Yourself](#), to LGBTQ+ art space [Queercircle](#) and [Love Welcomes](#), a social enterprise using craft to help refugee women. <sup>SEP</sup>



Intriguing ... work under way at Greenwich. Photograph: Taran Wilkhu

Arvanitakis says bigger businesses are also being targeted, such as advertising firms “who will pay top dollar to be around the young creatives”, with a “blended” rent model that will see the fat cats cross-subsidise the fledglings. She says the intention is for the district to be affordable “in perpetuity”, although the deal with the Greater London Authority, which owns the land, mandates a 10-year period, after which [the affordable area can be reduced to 25%](#).

Whatever its long-term fate, the district is shaping up to be a welcome effort to go beyond business as usual, hiring the kind of architects who might not otherwise get to work on hard-nosed commercial projects. We can only hope that the sense of ingenuity and fun they have brought spreads to the sprawling hectares of the rest of the site – and that this doesn’t end up being an elaborate marketing exercise surrounded by the usual bloated luxury towers.

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## [TV review](#)[Television & radio](#)

# Anne Boleyn review – spoiler alert: she won't make it out alive!

Jodie Turner-Smith flashes fire and fury in Channel 5's oh-so-serious Tudor drama, complete with a silly surplus of metaphors – and a weirdly wimpy Henry VIII. Wolf Hall it is not



You don't doubt that she came to power ... Jodie Turner-Smith as Anne Boleyn with Paapa Essiedu as her brother George. Photograph: Channel 5

You don't doubt that she came to power ... Jodie Turner-Smith as Anne Boleyn with Paapa Essiedu as her brother George. Photograph: Channel 5



[Lucy Mangan](#)

[@LucyMangan](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 17.00 EDT

If it's pigs heads on platters, it must be Tudors. And so it is. 1536, to be precise. Opening captions for the new Channel 5 drama Anne Boleyn, stripped across three nights, inform us that Anne has been queen for two and half years, has provided Henry VIII with one daughter, had two miscarriages and is now pregnant again. She is the most powerful woman in England, and she has just five months to live. Dum-dum-DAH!

I added the dum-dum-DAH! Anne Boleyn (the drama) takes itself too seriously for that. This is not The Tudors, this is Proper History and it delivers on all the basics. The caprice of Henry (Mark Stanley). The claustrophobia of court. The power of a misplaced word or a deliberate strike. The power struggles between Cromwell (Barry Ward) and Anne (Jodie Turner-Smith). The quiet progress of the "little mouse" Jane Seymour (Lola Petticrew). The importance of an heir. The horse-trading between countries to secure alliances, and the seven-dimensional chess being played behind the scenes.



Look, it's not [Wolf Hall](#). Nothing will ever be Wolf Hall again and although its shadow looms large, it looms unfairly and should be banished. On its own terms, Anne Boleyn works well enough. There is too much speaking in extended metaphor ("Even the dearest of lapdogs can bite if left unschooled," says Anne during anti-Cromwell pillow talk with Henry; Jane Seymour holding the winning hand in a ladies-in-waiting round of cards "doesn't understand the game". "Then you really mustn't play," says Anne). And dramatic irony is laid on with a trowel. Anne watches, aghast – aghast, I tell you – when grooms slaughter the horse that threw the king at a joust. They cut its throat with a sword and blood spills over the ground. Rather like it would/does when you decapitate a woman who has failed to provide you with a son and heir, you see? In case you don't, Henry spells it out when she chides him for ordering the death. "She was a fine creature." "I've no use for an animal that won't obey me." In case you still don't, she dreams about the horse later and wakes up in gasping horror at the memory of the blood.

In publicity interviews, series creators Fable Pictures have made it clear that their interpretation of Boleyn is of a strong woman destroyed by a small cabal of men, rather than the unfortunate victim of a swirl of political forces beyond her or any one individual's control. You could argue that – for a supposed feminist retelling of Anne's story – screen time is oddly weighted in favour of showing Anne's sexual hold over Henry (here a mild masochist who has found his gentle sadist) rather than her intelligence, wit or any of the less throttling-based attributes that drew him to her. But the five-months-in-three-parts structure keeps things moving at a clip without sacrificing either detail or comprehension. And holding it together they have a superb Anne in Turner-Smith, every inch the embattled queen, unshakeably regal even as she flashes fire and fury in the wake of Henry's latest betrayal. You don't doubt that she came to power. The only real difficulty with her performance is that, especially in the face of an underpowered Henry, you can't quite believe any of them would have dared to kill her in the end.

Actually, there has been another difficulty with the performance. Turner-Smith's casting caused a stir because she is of Jamaican descent. If you are someone who is bothered by that, well then you are probably the kind of person who is always going to be bothered by that and we need not detain you here. For what it's worth, I am aware that Anne Boleyn wasn't black, but I'm also aware that she wasn't Claire Foy, Merle Oberon, Helena

Bonham Carter or any of the other women who have played her over the years, and my brain is not unduly upset by any of it. What having a person of colour in the role does do, perhaps, is give us a way in to understanding the marginalisation of the Boleyns (Paapa Essiedu, a British actor of Ghanian heritage, plays her ill-fated brother George) at the time. The class, sex and religious prejudices held against them by various factions, and that we have largely lost to time, can be mapped on to the racial prejudice that endures. History repeats itself, but this is television that finds a new way to warn us of that truth.

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[Bike blog](#)[Transport policy](#).

## The evidence is in: low-traffic neighbourhoods are popular

[Julian Bell](#)

The London election proves that measures to make streets safer are a vote-winner, says a former Labour leader of Ealing council

- [Cycling schemes popular with London voters, finds analysis](#)



A low-traffic neighbourhood in Hackney, east London. LTN schemes were a major issue in the mayoral election last month. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

A low-traffic neighbourhood in Hackney, east London. LTN schemes were a major issue in the mayoral election last month. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

Wed 2 Jun 2021 03.00 EDT

Are measures to make streets safe for walking and cycling unpopular? Are they vote-losers? Have we failed to take communities with us – and will we, as local politicians, pay the price?

As a former Labour leader of Ealing council in west London, I was at the heart of this debate. The low-traffic neighbourhood schemes we installed in my borough, using cameras to stop rat-running in more than a hundred streets, caused a row noisy even by the standards of cycling scheme rows. Demonstrators marched to the council offices with “Julian Bell – end this hell” placards. The “Bell” and the “end” were placed together to make a further well-loved phrase.

The infrastructure was vandalised. I was accused of not consulting or listening to people’s views – though the schemes, as trials, were themselves consultations. The schemes were often labelled “unpopular” and “controversial” in the local press.

Now, we’ve had the biggest imaginable consultation on these LTNs: we’ve had an election. At the London mayoral election last month, the cycle schemes were by far the biggest issue in the five main wards of Ealing they covered – Acton Central, Ealing Common, Elthorne, Northfield and Walpole. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats blitzed the area, telling people that a vote for them would stop the LTNs. The Tory candidate, Shaun Bailey, paid a special visit to campaign against them.



A vandalised LTN in Ealing, with oil poured on the road to create danger for cyclists. Photograph: [@MarkEccleston1/Twitter](#)

But it turns out they're not "unpopular" at all. Not even really all that "controversial", and certainly not the vote magnet our opponents hoped. In Ealing as a whole, the Tory vote did go up compared with the previous election, by 0.64 percentage points. But in the five Ealing LTN wards as a whole, the Tories went down. The Lib Dems fell, too.

Labour, whose mayor and council implemented the schemes, comfortably won all five of the wards – including one, Ealing Common, that the Tories took last time. The Tory vote in that ward dropped by more than 5 percentage points.

Labour's vote did fall across the five wards, but by less than the Ealing average. Only in Elthorne and Acton Central did the Conservatives do better, and Labour worse, than their borough averages. In both wards, however, and across the five LTN wards as a whole, more than 50% of the electorate voted for parties, Labour and the Greens, which supported the LTNs.

This analysis relates only to first-preference votes. When second preferences are included, the support for LTNs grows even further.

Similar, but even more marked, Tory underperformance occurred in many other parts of London where the Conservatives campaigned against contested cycling and walking schemes. In the borough of Hounslow, for instance, local Tories fought hard against the new CS9 segregated track on Chiswick High Road, and Bailey made a Facebook video attacking the scheme. Again, it was the main issue in the campaign locally.

At the election, the Tory vote in the three Chiswick wards along CS9 fell by between 10 and 12 percentage points on 2016, in a borough where the party's overall vote went up by 1.2 points. The Lib Dems rose, but only fractionally. Labour fell by more than 4 points in Hounslow as a whole – but in the CS9 wards, its vote went up by 4.4 points.

It was Kensington, scene of the biggest cycling scheme row, that recorded the biggest Tory collapse. In the borough as a whole, the Tory mayoral vote fell by 11 points. In the four wards covering Kensington High Street – where the Conservative council [ripped out a cycle track on dubious grounds](#) after only a few weeks – the Tory vote dropped by an average of nearly 17 points. Labour, meanwhile, was up 6.7 points in the High Street Kensington wards, against a 2.2 point rise in the borough as a whole.

In contested cycle scheme wards of Manchester, Oxford, West Sussex, and Cambridgeshire, similar patterns of Tory underperformance were seen. Clearly, bike schemes were not the only factor in any of these results. There were also a few exceptions to the rule – a pro-LTN councillor lost in Newcastle, for instance.

But what does seem quite clear is that in a bad year for Labour, cycle schemes saved or won votes for us, not lost them. And that if there was any “controversy”, it worked largely in our favour.

Opponents of the LTNs might say it is the vote for Ealing as a whole we should look at, given the supposed traffic problems they cause for the wider area. In fact, evidence from other schemes shows that traffic displacement is temporary – because as cycling and walking become safer and more pleasant, people switch from cars to cycling and walking.

But even if we do look at my borough as a whole, a rise of less than one point in the anti-LTN vote is not, in my view, reason to back away. If we can now only do things that cause no opposition at all, and lose no votes whatsoever, then we can never do anything worthwhile again. I am reminded of the furious early pushback at policies which no one now dreams of reversing – the NHS, drink-drive limits, or indeed the first-generation LTN schemes which have existed in their hundreds across London for years. We should all be grateful that the authors of those policies rode out the initial storms.

Lyndon Johnson's dictum of politics says that you must be able to count. But the problem, I think, is that enormous numbers of people – journalists, councillors, MPs – don't look at the numbers. They listen only to the noise. They seem to believe that on LTNs, the social media clamour, the demos and the shouting of a passionate minority (many of whom live nowhere near the schemes they attack) represent the view of the people we serve.

This misconception has already been proved wrong by repeated opinion polling – and now, conclusively, by a democratic election. It's not surprising. Why would you want streets that were peaceful, quiet and safe to once again become traffic jams for motorists, and rat-runs for speeding cars?

But I'm worried that some may still be taking the wrong message. Not least my own council, which has taken out one of our LTNs since the election. The council seems set to remove the others too. There will be some sort of consultation, but it'll probably be dominated by the usual loud voices. We've already had the best consultation we're going to get: a secret ballot with a high turnout where everybody got one vote.

We on the council still have time to change our minds, champion LTNs and unequivocally commit to promoting active travel. We still have time to avoid handing these seats to the Greens at the borough election next year. We still have time to prove we mean it on net zero, on reducing pollution, on tackling child obesity – and on listening to all our residents, not just the ones who shout loudest.

Reimposing road danger, noise and pollution on people who voted for the opposite? That would be an Ealing tragedy, not an Ealing comedy.

- Julian Bell is councillor for Greenford Broadway ward, and was leader of Ealing council for 11 years

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## [Human rights](#)

### Interview

# Ethiopia's human rights chief as war rages in Tigray: 'we get accused by all ethnic groups'

Our correspondent in Addis Ababa

Former political prisoner Daniel Bekele has made the commission more autonomous but critics claim he is biased on current conflict



Daniel Bekele, former political prisoner and Africa director at New York-based Human Rights Watch, now heading the government's human rights commission. Photograph: Giulia Paravicini/Reuters

Daniel Bekele, former political prisoner and Africa director at New York-based Human Rights Watch, now heading the government's human rights commission. Photograph: Giulia Paravicini/Reuters

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[About this content](#)

Wed 2 Jun 2021 02.30 EDT

There was a time when a report by Ethiopia’s human rights commission was a staid affair, its findings offering window-dressing for hand-wringing donors and legal cover to the government.

Between 2013 and 2017 the commission systematically “whitewashed human rights violations through compromised methodologies, dismissing credible allegations”, according to a 2019 Amnesty International [study](#) that accused it of “brazen bias against victims”.

But no more. In May the commission published the latest in a string of important investigations into human rights abuses in different parts of the country, focused on [detention conditions](#) in police stations across Oromia, Ethiopia’s largest region and home of its [Nobel prize-winning prime minister, Abiy Ahmed](#).

Officials responded with two press conferences in which they denounced the commission for what they called “[biased and unbalanced](#)” statements, and threatened to obstruct its work in future.

It was the latest salvo towards the commission's new boss, Daniel Bekele, who returned to Ethiopia in 2019 from New York, where he had worked for Amnesty and later led the [Africa](#) Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Over the past two years Daniel has beefed up the commission's investigative capacity, enhanced its legal autonomy and helped turn it into something approaching a proper watchdog.

It has won the support of international donors and – significantly though [controversially](#) – teamed up with [the UN's top human rights body](#) for a joint investigation into alleged atrocities and crimes against humanity in Ethiopia's [war-ravaged Tigray region](#).

“The commission is increasingly being perceived as a genuinely independent national human rights institution,” said Daniel, in an interview with the Guardian.

He points to a number of achievements since he took the reins. Formally, at least, the body has more independence from the ruling party in the way that commissioners are selected, as well as in the hiring and firing of staff. Previously, almost all commissioners were ruling party members, but this is no longer the case. Daniel says practical autonomy – seen, for instance, in the commission's freedom to make unannounced prison visits – has improved, helping to secure more access for [political prisoners](#) to lawyers and relatives last year.

“The operational space for the commission to begin its work in a fairly independent manner [has grown] in the sense that even with the limited capacity we've been able to build over the past year we've been able to do independent investigations and documentation and reporting, some of which is very critical of government offices or security officers,” he said.

Perhaps most importantly, the commission released a [statement](#) on 26 February, which endorsed the [findings by Amnesty](#) on a massacre of civilians in the Tigrayan town of Axum, which happened shortly after the war between Abiy's government and the region's ruling party, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), [began](#) in November. The statement confirmed the [presence of allied Eritrean troops in Tigray](#) – then still

officially denied by Ethiopian authorities – and blamed them for the killings in the city.

[‘Bodies are being eaten by hyenas; girls of eight raped’: inside the Tigray conflict](#)

[Read more](#)

The full report published in March provoked outcry among Ethiopian and Eritrean government supporters, who had long rejected any criticism of their forces’ conduct in Tigray. On 10 May, a [statement](#) from the attorney general’s office contradicted the commission’s findings by claiming that those killed in Axum were in fact TPLF combatants in irregular fatigues. (A [subsequent statement](#) conceded that at least 40 of those killed were indeed civilians.)

“There are a good number of officials which have responded positively to our recommendations but unfortunately some officials have been very dismissive,” said the commissioner. “It’s always very difficult when you work in a highly politically polarised environment: you cannot avoid the perception that you are paying attention to one situation rather than another. We get accused by all different ethnic groups.”

Especially damaging has been the growing perception among Tigrayans, about 6% of Ethiopia’s population, that the commission is partial towards the federal government and hostile to the TPLF. Comments by the commissioner early on in the war [significantly downplayed](#) its humanitarian impact, but the perception is also due to his personal background: in 2005 Daniel was [arrested and imprisoned](#) for more than two years after he denounced elections as rigged. At that time the TPLF spearheaded the federal government as part of a repressive multi-ethnic coalition called the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Critics claim this has coloured his perspective on the war in Tigray, a charge he dismisses: “I personally know that nothing in my experience would affect my independence – if anything, it makes me more committed to human rights work and gives me better insight into the nature of human rights challenges in Ethiopia.”



An ID card found in a mass grave of victims allegedly killed in the Mai Kadra massacre in Tigray on 9 November 2020. Photograph: Eduardo Soteras/AFP/Getty

Yet a [report](#) alleging that at least 600 mostly Amhara civilians were killed in the town of Mai Kadra by a TPLF-aligned militia in November continues to dog the commission. Critics note that the report – rushed out within days and seized on by the Ethiopian government – relied almost exclusively on the testimony of Amhara witnesses in a place where both Amhara and Tigrayan people had lived. Tigrayan refugees who fled to camps in Sudan [told reporters](#) and aid workers of attacks on Tigrayans at the same time.

Daniel had expressed scepticism of such accounts, suggesting some of the refugees may have been perpetrators of the massacre and [advising](#) caution toward “some of the narratives emerging”. But, after the commission’s own interviews with Tigrayans, he concedes the report may “come across [as] one-sided”.

“It is true there were also reprisal attacks but at the time we did not have enough information to document and report on that,” he said. “The problem in a polarised political environment is that the different political actors tend to pick and choose which of your reports they want to use to advance their political message.”

For now, though, such concerns are secondary. The joint UN investigation – which includes probing the events in Mai Kadra among others – will be a litmus test for the commission’s independence as well as the Ethiopian government’s commitment to full accountability. But the challenges are daunting: many Tigrayans in Ethiopia and abroad have outright [rejected](#) the commission’s participation.

“The Ethiopian government has repeatedly failed to hold perpetrators of abuses and violent crimes across the country to account,” said Laetitia Bader, Horn of Africa director for HRW. “In Tigray, given ample evidence of atrocity crimes by warring parties, the complexity of the crimes that need to be investigated, and the importance of ensuring that the investigations and their outcome are seen as credible, an impartial, international investigation is key.”

By contrast, the commissioner is adamant that local participation will aid the investigation and help win consent for an international investigation at a time of [rising hostility](#) in Ethiopia towards what is seen as foreign meddling.

“I understand people not having confidence in state institutions in Ethiopia, because state institutions in Ethiopia have a history of not being independent or impartial,” Daniel said. “But on the other hand we have started a process of trying to build independent institutions and I believe the Ethiopian human rights commission is one of them.

“It is right that an Ethiopian human rights violation should be addressed by an Ethiopian human rights institution, in partnership with our friends and partners.”

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## Crime

# UK knife crime: deaths in Birmingham 'beyond gang violence'

Community activists say months of school closures could lead to young people falling through the cracks



Derlarno Samuels, 17, who died after suffering stab injuries in Smethwick, on 1 May. Photograph: West Midlands Police/PA

Derlarno Samuels, 17, who died after suffering stab injuries in Smethwick, on 1 May. Photograph: West Midlands Police/PA

[\*Jessica Murray\*](#) Midlands correspondent

Wed 2 Jun 2021 02.00 EDT

Residents in north Birmingham are reeling after the [killing of a 14-year-old boy](#) on a main road during the day last Monday. The teenager is one of a number of young people to have lost their lives to knife crime this year, as police try to tackle a spate of violence in the West Midlands.



On 1 May Derlarno Samuels, 17, died of stab injuries in Smethwick, Sandwell, and there were gunshots fired at a vigil for him. Jack Barry, 19, was found stabbed to death in Hamstead, in March, and 15-year-old Keon Lincoln died after he was stabbed and shot in Handsworth, in January. A number of teenagers aged 14 and over were charged with Lincoln's murder.

Desmond Jaddoo, a Birmingham community activist, said: "We need to claim these streets back as a matter of urgency. Are we going to end up living in a state of anarchy and terror? And I don't think I'm being overdramatic in saying that. Our youngsters have their lives ahead of them and our elders should not be burying their children.

"It is time there is cohesive working between the authorities and the community. This is far worse than it's ever been. It's not as simple as gang violence any more."

Jack Dromey, the Labour MP for Erdington Birmingham, said there needed to be renewed focus on the growing problem of knife crime in the city. "We are losing too many lives to violent crime and we must ensure those responsible are brought to justice."

Not much is known about the circumstances of the killing on Monday, but experts fear months of school closures could lead to many young people falling through the cracks and turning to crime in the coming months.

"Young people have been out of school, so they have been more susceptible to issues around exploitation, joining gangs, issues around boredom with nothing to do and not wanting to stay in their households. So then you end up with mass groups of young people on the streets," said Craig Pinkney, founder of [Solve: The Centre for Youth Violence and Conflict](#).

Covid had exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and the root causes of violence still needed to be tackled, Pinkney said. "Any time there are issues around austerity, lack of education, poor housing, high levels of trauma, you're always going to find high levels of violence.

"All we focus on is the punishment, thinking giving harsher sentences is going to solve the problem. What the kids have been saying in the research



is they're scared. We don't address the fear, we only address the consequences of their actions.”

Pinkney also said more discussion was needed about how resources were distributed in society and whether they were being directed at the communities that needed them. “Communities of people of colour are always seen as both victims and perpetrators, but the moment a white child gets stabbed or shot, we have a national conversation about how to respond. It makes people feel locally their children's lives don't matter as much as other lives.”

The new police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands, Simon Foster, ran for his role on a pledge to restore 450 community police officers to the region after years of cuts, as well as to improve youth services.

Foster said: “The West Midlands was disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of cuts to youth services – local authority funding for youth services has fallen by 82% since 2010. Those services were really decimated and research has established a very strong association between areas that had suffered the greatest cuts to youth services and those that suffered the highest rates in knife crime.”

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## [TerrawatchScience](#)

# Terrawatch: a saltmine and a sinking city in Brazil

More than 6,000 buildings in Maceió condemned and research suggests more subsidence to come



Jose Rinaldo Januario photographs damage to his home in Maceió.  
Photograph: Amanda Perobelli/Reuters

Jose Rinaldo Januario photographs damage to his home in Maceió.  
Photograph: Amanda Perobelli/Reuters

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Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

It was early 2018 when residents of the Brazilian city of Maceió first spotted cracks appearing in buildings and roads. Heavy rainfall in mid February, followed by a small earthquake at the beginning of March, appeared to

trigger the fractures. The situation in the neighbourhood of Pinheiro was so serious that 6,356 buildings were placed under demolition orders and 25,000 residents had to be moved out.

Recent [research published in Scientific Reports](#) shows that events were set in train long before the rain arrived. Using satellite measurements to assess land movement between 2004 and 2020, Mahdi Motagh and colleagues at the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam discovered that the surface subsidence began in 2004 and was sinking by up to 27cm a year by 2017.

Using geological modelling tools they show that saltmining occurring up to a kilometre underground is the most likely cause. Weak brine-filled cavities left behind when the salt has been extracted eventually collapse and, like dominoes, the rock layers above topple into the void below. Mining stopped in 2019, but the model shows that the ground still has a lot of settling out to do, and some neighbourhoods remain at high risk.

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## 2021.06.02 - Opinion

- China's new three-child policy won't fix its economy – but it could change lives
- Instead of believing my reports of pain, experts told me to have a baby or see a psychiatrist
- 'Black fungus' is creating a whole other health emergency for Covid-stricken India
- What did the Friends reunion teach me? That global fame is the opposite of happiness
- The real Keir Starmer – tears, blokey bonding and no politics
- Australia is in a race against Covid-19. I'm waiting to hear the starting gun

## [OpinionChina](#)

# China's new three-child policy won't fix its economy – but it could change lives

Stuart Gietel-Basten

The government hopes the shift will tackle a rapidly ageing population. It won't, but it will give people more choice



‘What is almost comical is the idea that having more babies will fix China’s demographic challenges in the short term.’ Photograph: Roman Pilipey/EPA

‘What is almost comical is the idea that having more babies will fix China’s demographic challenges in the short term.’ Photograph: Roman Pilipey/EPA

Wed 2 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

A number of unsurprising things have recently happened in the country with the most famous population policies in the world. Firstly, the Chinese census in May showed that the country was ageing rapidly, its overall population growth was at its [most sluggish](#) in generations, and that its fertility rate had

plunged to 1.3 children per woman – a level even lower than Japan, a country already in a state of population decline and very rapid ageing.

Of course, we have known this for many years. A more notable development was the media's reaction to the census data. China's apparent demographic travails were narrated as an existential threat to the country's economic and geopolitical future. This led to panicked claims by commentators inside and outside China that it was experiencing a "demographic crisis". Then came the suggestion from a high-profile former McKinsey consultant that the solution was to ["go all out on pro-birth policies"](#) by taking a "carrot and stick" approach, which included limiting access to better education to couples bearing two children – coercive ideas that arguably show a [lack of regard](#) for human dignity.

[China announces three-child limit in major policy shift](#)

[Read more](#)

At the end of May, the government announced that the two-child policy would be [further adjusted](#) to allow all Chinese couples to have three children. In some ways, this was unsurprising. After the census results were announced, speculation increased about the scrapping of *all* birth control restrictions, as they appeared to be inconsistent with widespread concerns about population-ageing and stagnation.

Most observers (myself included) don't think that the shift to a three-child policy will have a significant impact on the age of China's population or the size of its labour force. Survey data suggests that only a relatively small number of people really wish to have a third child. In common with people elsewhere in east Asia, parents (and prospective parents) in [China](#) are very concerned about the costs of bringing up children (especially extracurricular education), accessing decent and affordable childcare, the impact on women's careers, and so on. Without other support in place such as high-quality, affordable childcare, it is hard to see how the policy will directly stimulate a visible change in overall fertility rates.

The announcement is just the latest in a series of adjustments to the family planning policy which have occurred piecemeal over the past three decades. Of course, this begs the question of why China is keeping any restrictions at

all. To completely abandon the birth restriction policy would be a remarkable U-turn that would be perceived as an implicit statement about the wisdom and efficacy of China's original one-child policy. More practically, completely restructuring the family planning programme around the country and [redeploying the local family planning officials who remain](#) is a huge administrative task which requires both time and tact.

What is almost comical, however, is the idea voiced by many observers that having more babies will fix China's demographic challenges in the short term. Lest we forget, babies don't go to work. In today's world, newborns are unlikely to enter the labour force until after 2040. Given that the urban pension fund alone is [projected by the Chinese Academy of Social Science](#) to become insolvent by the early 2030s, babies hardly seem the most helpful solution. [Increasing the retirement age](#) is an easy (if unpopular fix), but one which will only have limited impact – and may even have unintended consequences such as reducing the childcare provided by grandparents which could, ironically, put further downward pressure on fertility rates.

More comprehensive changes will be needed to confront the new demographic reality of low fertility, rapid population-ageing and slow population growth (or even decline). China will need to continue adjusting to the seismic shift away from the decades-long era of *renkou hongli*, or “demographic dividend”, when cheap labour was abundant and both the younger and older non-working population was small relative to the labour force.

[The world needs babies. So we'd better rethink what we expect from mothers | Sonia Sodha](#)

[Read more](#)

By realising the potential of an increasingly skilled, more mature population, China could reap a *rencai hongli*, or “talent dividend”, sustaining both productivity growth and healthy, successful ageing. It can also learn from the mistakes of other countries that have already aged, and build ever-more resilient social and economic institutions to support elderly people. Together, such changes can set China on a sustainable path to respond to the challenges of population-ageing and, eventually, decline.



This does not mean, however, that the shift to a three-child policy is unimportant. [Reports of](#) working-class couples with excess births being fined or charged “social maintenance” fees they struggled to pay have long been common. In some localities, these social maintenance fees were used to [prop up local government budgets](#) which, in turn, led to overzealous implementation – a practice [far from unique](#) to China. Numerous families have lost their income as a result of having out-of-quota births. The new three-child policy will inevitably reduce parents’ exposure to the risk of arbitrary or capricious penalties, which will be good for everyone.

Any change in the population policies of the world’s most populous country is bound to be a big deal. But we should never forget that populations are made up of people. Most importantly, for individuals the new policy means more people have more choice than ever before to decide how many children they have. The change will inevitably allow many thousands of families to have three children at their own wish. While these numbers may not make a major impression on a spreadsheet, the impact of the change in policy on such households should not be underestimated.

- Stuart Gietel-Basten is a professor of social science and public policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

## Opinion Women's health

# Instead of believing my reports of pain, experts told me to have a baby or see a psychiatrist

Katherine Stanley

Continuing to ignore pain as a central issue leaves women suffering, not believed and silenced



Ninety-two per cent of adolescent girls will have period pain and a third miss work and school because of it. Photograph: Pornchai Soda/Alamy Stock Photo

Ninety-two per cent of adolescent girls will have period pain and a third miss work and school because of it. Photograph: Pornchai Soda/Alamy Stock Photo

Tue 1 Jun 2021 20.14 EDT

I can't begin to tell you the utter heartbreak I feel some days as I watch my children playing on the monkey bars. Statistics flash through my brain and I plead with the universe: please don't let my kids be one of them.

[Ninety-two per cent](#)\* of adolescent girls will have period pain and a third miss work and school because of it.

[One in nine](#) women will have endometriosis and will suffer an average of 6.2 years before being diagnosed.

[Why don't doctors trust women? Because they don't know much about us | Gabrielle Jackson](#)  
[Read more](#)

They will be more likely to suffer from a myriad of pain conditions just because of their gender.

Their pain won't be believed or treated in the same way that it would be if they were boys.

They will only earn 87 cents to the dollar of the boys when they grow up.

The statistics make me sick to the stomach. Every one of them is directly related to pain and is a risk factor for developing chronic pain. Despite this, women's pain is not considered a national health priority in Australia.

Last Thursday the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists held a women's health summit with the theme Time to Act. And looking at those stats, how can it not be? The summit was an incredible opportunity filled with passionate professionals all wanting to make a difference for women across Australia.

The day was divided into panels based on the five priorities of the national women's health strategy. I am angry that pain is not a key priority of the national women's health strategy and thus was not a panel discussion at the summit. Nearly 2 million women have chronic pain conditions in Australia. All these conditions are underfunded, under-recognised and alarmingly

underrepresented in both a national strategy and critical discussions calling on urgent action for women.

If we drill down to pelvic pain alone, we know that it affects one in five women and it is [costing the Australian economy \\$7.4bn annually](#), including direct healthcare costs, lost productivity and the value in decline of quality of life. It is associated with myriad problems, including distress and disability for the individual and their family, and substantial healthcare costs.

Women with persistent pelvic pain face huge issues with the lack of gender equity in our medical system, often enduring years of not being believed and treated like they are hysterical. They are more likely to suffer from infertility, miscarriages and complicated births. They live with the stigma associated with painful sex, and the complication of how to address this in a medical system that treats them like they are overreacting.

Women suffer chronic pain at an alarmingly high rate and we know that once you have one chronic condition you are much more likely to develop other overlapping pain conditions. They are far more likely to live in poverty and not have enough retirement savings to age securely. Women are more likely to suffer from mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. One in four women will experience physical or sexual violence by their current or former intimate partner. We know, anecdotally, that the financial instability associated with chronic ill health and its impact on work makes it much harder for them to flee violence.

I know first-hand that those facts don't fully portray the way that persistent pain rips through your life.

['I'm not a hypochondriac. I have a disease. All these things that are wrong with me are real, they are endometriosis'](#)

[Read more](#)

I still remember my first really painful period. I was 15 and literally thought I was dying. The GP told me it was just retrograde menstruation and sent me home. It was the beginning of 17 years of being fobbed off, not heard, not understood. I was told that maybe the pain wasn't that bad, I was told to

have a baby (which does not cure endometriosis). I was told that maybe I should see a psychiatrist because I was being hysterical.

I became conditioned to think that daily pain and not leaving the house due to haemorrhaging instead of bleeding was a normal part of my life. I thought there was something wrong with me that I wasn't able to work full-time. I finally received my diagnosis when I was struggling with infertility and my gynaecologist asked me if I happened to have painful periods. I remember my reply: "Yes, but nothing out of the ordinary, I just can't work for most of the week I have my period."

Pain needs to be a priority area in any women's health strategy. It needs to be a key conversation in all women's health summits. It needs to be prioritised and acknowledged as the huge health burden it is for both the individuals suffering and society as a whole. I represent a large group of women experiencing ongoing pain that have had enough of not being heard. Continuing to ignore pain leaves women suffering, not believed and silenced.

The summit concluded that this is just the beginning of discussion and collaboration. We must use it as a springboard to finally put pain on the map so that every girl swinging on the monkey bars doesn't become another painful statistic.

\* In this article I use statistics that refer to cis women as they have been the participants in most of the research to date on pelvic pain and women's health. I acknowledge that gender-diverse people are underrepresented across all research into women's health.

Katherine Stanley is the director of Endo Help Foundation and facilitator of Talking Endo support group

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## [Opinion](#)**Coronavirus**

# **‘Black fungus’ is creating a whole other health emergency for Covid-stricken India**

[Ilan Schwartz](#) and [Arunaloke Chakrabarti](#)

Rates of mucormycosis were high even before the pandemic, and now the country is running out of antifungal drugs



‘Mucormycosis is rapidly fatal without prompt diagnosis.’ A nurse treats a patient suffering from mucormycosis in Jaipur, India. Photograph: Rebecca Conway/Getty Images

‘Mucormycosis is rapidly fatal without prompt diagnosis.’ A nurse treats a patient suffering from mucormycosis in Jaipur, India. Photograph: Rebecca Conway/Getty Images

Wed 2 Jun 2021 02.00 EDT

Covid-19 has killed millions around the world, but for some who are lucky enough to survive the infection, the nightmare is not over: adding insult to injury are deadly fungal infections that follow in the wake of the virus. Making matters worse, inequities that long predated the pandemic have left some countries without the capacity to combat these serious infections.

In India, a [fungal infection called mucormycosis](#) has emerged in patients with Covid-19. This infection is caused by a group of fungi that are everywhere on the planet. In fact, all of us are probably inhaling spores of these fungi every day, but these are rapidly controlled by our immune systems. Rarely, our defences are breached, and the fungus takes hold, with devastating consequences. After establishing itself in the nose and sinuses, it begins to invade the tissue of the face, the jaw, the eyes and brain, blocking blood flow and causing tissue death. It is the black discoloration of dead tissue that conferred upon this mould its fearsome moniker in the Indian media: “the black fungus”.

[India's suffering isn't just the fault of a new Covid variant | Rukmini S](#)  
[Read more](#)

Although the fungi are ubiquitous, mucormycosis is usually rare, and most specialists around the world will see fewer than a dozen cases in their entire careers. Even before the pandemic, rates of mucormycosis in India were estimated to be [about 70 times higher](#) than in the rest of the world. Even so, the tsunami of cases occurring in the wake of Covid-19 is of an unimaginable scale. [More than 11,700 people](#) were reported by a government minister to be receiving care for mucormycosis on 25 May. Two states, Maharashtra and Gujarat, have confirmed more than 5,500 cases. Whereas a large referral hospital in London might see three or four cases a year, some Indian hospitals are caring for more than 500 patients with mucormycosis right now.

Mucormycosis cases in Covid-19 patients have also been linked to poorly controlled diabetes and therapeutic steroids, a triad of risk factors some have dubbed “the unholy trinity”. Although steroids can be lifesaving in Covid-19 patients needing supplemental oxygen, they are a double-edged sword: they weaken the immune system that normally keeps fungi we inhale at bay. Undisciplined prescribing is likely to be playing a major role in driving the



epidemic: one study at 16 Indian hospitals found that nearly two in three steroid prescriptions for Covid-19 patients were inappropriate (they were either used in patients who weren't sick enough to warrant them, or the dose was too high). Lack of access to oxygen may have resulted in doctors overcompensating by prescribing higher-than-recommended doses.

Additionally, rates of diabetes have been increasing in [India](#), and high blood sugars further weaken the immune system and increase the growth of fungi in the body. High blood sugars are also a well-known side-effect of steroids, particularly in diabetic or prediabetic patients, and overstretched healthcare workers have been unable to adequately monitor blood sugar levels of Covid-19 patients on crowded wards. The confluence of these risk factors, plus higher-than-average background rates of mucormycosis, high numbers of spores in both indoor and outdoor environments, and the lack of hospital infection-control resources (like efficient air particle filters in ICU rooms, standard in resource-rich settings to filter out airborne spores) have allowed the fungus to run amok.

Mucormycosis is rapidly fatal without prompt diagnosis, administration of antifungal medicines and – most importantly – emergency surgery to cut out the dead and infected tissue. This lifesaving surgery can be extremely disfiguring and lead to irreversible loss of one or both eyes. Even with surgery, half of those infected won't survive. Most cases develop in the second or third week following a Covid-19 diagnosis, when many patients are no longer in hospital. The partial closure of outpatient clinics and the shortage of specialised doctors have meant that affected patients present to hospital later in the disease, when the odds of survival are lower.

The mucormycosis epidemic has been accompanied by a rush for antifungal treatments that have left India's medicine cabinet empty. The nation's supply of amphotericin B, the best antifungal to treat the infection, is nearly depleted and it is difficult to procure. The government has pledged to increase importation and ramp up domestic production of the drug, but this will take several weeks to months. There are only two other medications that can be used for this infection: posaconazole, now generic in India; and isavuconazole, patented and expensive. Both are in critically scarce supply.

Unsurprisingly, the epidemic has led to fear and rumours. Some have suggested that oxygen supplies may be contaminated, but the fungus cannot tolerate high oxygen concentrations, and there has not been any empirical evidence to support this assertion. Mucormycosis is not contagious, and infected individuals do not need to be isolated.

India's mucormycosis epidemic is a reminder of two cruel realities that Covid-19 has laid bare: 1) our universal vulnerability to the capricious whims of nature; and 2) the stark inequities in the distribution of resources to weather the storm. We cannot solve global inequities overnight, but there are some concrete steps that governments around the world can take to help India through this horror. Drug manufacturers must prioritise getting antifungal therapies into India as quickly as possible, and governments in wealthy nations need to hold these corporations to task. In the longer term, investment must be increased for researching fungal diseases, especially those that disproportionately affect the world's poor. Ultimately, the best way to end this nightmare is to end the pandemic as soon as possible, and this is best achieved through vaccination; this fungal epidemic makes the equitable redistribution of global vaccine caches that is needed to minimise human suffering from this virus even more urgent.

- Ilan Schwartz is an infectious diseases doctor at the University of Alberta, Canada. Prof Arunaloake Chakrabarti is the president of the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology, and a global expert on mucormycosis.

## [OpinionFriends](#)

# What did the Friends reunion teach me? That global fame is the opposite of happiness

[Deborah Frances-White](#)

For some of the Friends cast, the answer to Joey's favourite question 'How you doin'?' seems to be 'just about hanging in there'



Friends Reunited ... David Schwimmer, Courtney Cox, Matt Le Blanc and Jennifer Aniston. Photograph: Terence Patrick/AP

Friends Reunited ... David Schwimmer, Courtney Cox, Matt Le Blanc and Jennifer Aniston. Photograph: Terence Patrick/AP

Wed 2 Jun 2021 02.00 EDT

At a time when the whole world is stuck in second gear and it hasn't been our day, our week, our month or especially our year, [the Friends reunion felt](#)

[unavoidable](#). I may have been the only one who *didn't* want a new episode. I don't need to see Ross shouting "Hashtag not all men!" across Central Perk. I think we need to be honest and admit he and Rachel are divorced now and she has finally realised that no one is ever going to love her more than tech billionaire Gunther, who has created an app to identify the closest coffee shop with a big empty sofa.

Fortunately, we weren't forced to see that dramatised. Instead we got what I wanted – the gang wandering round the set of their spectacularly well-paid youth, choking back tears and watching bloopers. I really wasn't expecting to feel for them so deeply. The whole thing seemed to be blinding evidence that global fame is diametrically opposed to happiness. Matthew Perry, Jennifer Aniston and co spent a formative decade gasping for connection because they had no choice but to live in the bodies of everyone's favourite fictitious characters.

In season two, when their loner neighbour Mr Heckles dies, Chandler spins out that he's going to end up just like him. "Our trains are on the same track ... The stops are all the same. Bittertown. Aloneville. Hermit Junction!" In the reunion we watched Perry faced with that same ghost of sitcom past, in the form of 80-year-old actor Larry Hankin, who has ironically aged better than anyone – or at least doesn't look like his own Spitting Image puppet.

Meanwhile, Perry has publicly lived Chandler's prophecy. It was a stark reminder that good looks, a million bucks an episode and everyone wanting to be you and/or shag you can make contentment a joke, [get you addicted to pills and booze](#) and leave your love life DOA. The answer to Joey's favourite question – "How you doin'?" seems to be for some of them: "Just hanging in there."

We see it and yet the unbelievable thing is, we truly believe if we had their opportunities, we would be different. We would be The One That Finds Happiness in Fame and Glamour.



[The politics sketch](#) **Keir Starmer**

# The real Keir Starmer – tears, blokey bonding and no politics

[John Crace](#)



Piers Morgan's interview offered a few insights into the Labour leader but not the state of the party



Keir Starmer on Piers Morgan's Life Stories. What would he like to say to Boris? 'I'd say: 'Move over,'" Starmer said tamely. Photograph: ITV/Rex/Shutterstock

Keir Starmer on Piers Morgan's Life Stories. What would he like to say to Boris? 'I'd say: 'Move over,'" Starmer said tamely. Photograph: ITV/Rex/Shutterstock

Tue 1 Jun 2021 13.32 EDT

"Why are you doing this?" asked [Piers Morgan](#). A good question. Why does anyone agree to do Piers Morgan's Life Stories (ITV) unless they have an ulterior motive? Why put yourself through the ordeal of an ersatz This is Your Life therapy session with an interviewer whose eyes are firmly fixed on ratings fodder and has little concern for your mental wellbeing? So best to get the elephant out of the room first.

Keir Starmer smiled nervously and joked about this being the first time he had had an opportunity to talk to a live audience since becoming leader of the Labour party. But we all knew that was only a half-truth. The real reasons he was there were the opinion polls that showed Labour consistently behind the Tories, the recent disastrous local election results and voters saying they didn't know much about what made Starmer tick.



So this was Keir's chance to try to connect with a few million people. To show them the real him. And by and large it made for worthwhile viewing, with both men getting pretty much what they wanted out of the show, along with some blokey bonding over their shared passion for Arsenal. Morgan got a few nice insights – not to mention the money shot of a few tears – while Starmer came across as a thoroughly decent man with the occasional good line in self-deprecation.

The opening exchanges, though, were fairly lame, the highlights of which were Starmer admitting he didn't like his middle name of Rodney – he even got it written out of his marriage certificate – and that he used face moisturiser. Hardly groundbreaking stuff. But things picked up when Morgan turned shrink and moved on to his relationship with his parents.

Keir's mum, a nurse named Jo, suffered from Still's disease and was in and out of hospital throughout his life as her condition deteriorated. By the time she died in 2015, just before Starmer was first elected as an MP, she had had both legs amputated, had lost the use of her hands and couldn't speak. Starmer's voice cracked as he expressed his regret that his own children never got to know her properly. And there were tears in his eyes when he said that the one conversation that he would like to have had with her was one in which he told her: "I love you."

His toolmaker father, Rodney – hence Keir's middle name – was an altogether more complex man and Starmer admitted that his relationship with him had been difficult and distant. The only time his dad told him he was proud of him was when he passed his 11-plus. You couldn't help feeling that Starmer's long history of overachievement – a first from Leeds, a master's from Oxford, a stellar career in the law which led to him becoming director of public prosecutions and then a [Labour](#) MP – was in part driven by a need for his father's approval. Though even if Rodney had lived to see Keir become leader of the [Labour](#) party, you got the feeling he probably would have still withheld his sense of pride.

There was little doubt that Starmer's was an unusual childhood. His parents only got a black-and-white TV when his mother signed up to an Open University course in the 70s and Keir had to fight to watch Match of the Day on a Saturday night. He also formed his own "gang of four", the East Surrey

Socialists, with three of his mates and they would spend their weekends trying to find events where they could heckle their local MP, Geoffrey Howe. Imagine. Shades of Citizen Smith.

It was left to various friends – in pre-recorded film clips – to make the case for Keir as “a party animal” and the “life and soul” of any gathering. Almost as if they were trying to fill in the crucial, human gaps. To provide a glimpse of the Interesting Keir that Starmer might not be able to access for himself. The man whose true passions could only be observed close up in 90 minutes of football.

Morgan pounced. His one slightly tricky question in an otherwise soft interview. So had he ever had a cheeky spliff or taken any other drugs? Time and again, Starmer refused to give a straight answer. “I haven’t said no,” he mumbled eventually. It was all so pointless, as a simple yes would have done. After all, no one really gives a toss about a politician’s previous any more. If they did, then Boris Johnson would struggle to explain away a phone call to Darius Guppy.

After that there were more tears with the deaths of his father, father-in-law and the family dog – there was a lot of death in the 45-minute interview – along with a surreal aside about a real-life Keir Starmer impersonator who had conned a couple of women from the Sunday Times lonely hearts column, and some touching words about his wife. What there wasn’t was any politics.

Not that Morgan didn’t ask about the current state of the Labour party, more that he appeared to have no real interest in hearing any answers. No sooner had Starmer lapsed into standard political generalisations about talking to the country and his three priorities being education, the economy and social care, than Piers interrupted. Would he raise taxes? No scrub that, what would he say to Boris?

“I’d say: ‘Move over,’” Starmer said tamely. And if he was on a football pitch, he’d knock him over. If only. The Labour benches long for Keir to stop being so polite and pick up a yellow card for a studs-up professional foul on Boris at prime minister’s questions. And that was that. There was only so much catharsis both men could take for one day.

Join John Crace and Marina Hyde in conversation with Anushka Asthana as part of our [digital festival](#) on Tuesday 8 June. [Book tickets here](#)

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## OpinionCoronavirus

# Australia is in a race against Covid-19. I'm waiting to hear the starting gun

Michael Toole

There must be a greater effort to vaccinate aged and disability care workers.  
This has to happen with desperate urgency



As Melbourne moves into a second week of lockdown, it's worth asking why we're back in this all too familiar situation of lockdown. Photograph: Daniel Pockett/Getty Images

As Melbourne moves into a second week of lockdown, it's worth asking why we're back in this all too familiar situation of lockdown. Photograph: Daniel Pockett/Getty Images

Wed 2 Jun 2021 03.01 EDT

Just two weeks ago, Australians were living in a Covid-19-free environment that was unthinkable this time last year. Even in Melbourne, people were

once again meeting family and friends at cafes, pubs and cinemas. Football games were played in front of packed stadiums.

But that came to an abrupt halt when a new cluster of cases was identified in Melbourne early last week. This outbreak has now grown to 60 known cases across the greater metropolitan area, including several aged care workers and two residents. Genomic sequencing links all these cases to a man who was infected while staying in an Adelaide quarantine hotel.

[Victoria Covid update: Melbourne lockdown extended as state seeks federal payments for workers](#)

[Read more](#)

As Melbourne moves into a second week of lockdown, it's worth asking why we're back in this all too familiar situation. Two issues that loom the largest in explaining how we got here are a hotel quarantine system that clearly doesn't work as well as it could, and a more concerning virus variant that seems to have taken full advantage of the time it circulated undetected from the Wollert man to case number five – the key piece of rotten luck in this outbreak. Add to that a painfully slow rollout of vaccines and, deeply worryingly, the related lack of attention to the safety of aged care home residents and staff.

If we include the most recent leak between adjacent rooms in a Perth hotel, there have been 18 breaches of hotel quarantine since last November. That equates on average to a breach every 11 days. At this rate, there will be 19 further leaks by Christmas and more lockdowns.

The slow pace of the vaccine rollout has resulted from problems with both supply and demand. Australia was slow to secure adequate supplies of imported vaccines to complement the two that were planned – wisely – to be manufactured in Australia. Unfortunately, one of those vaccines was abandoned, leaving us heavily reliant on the AstraZeneca vaccine – a good vaccine but with challenges (that were both real and perceived) that left us exposed.

Of course, the rare but serious adverse effects associated with this vaccine could not have been anticipated, but it does reveal the current paucity of

choices. We've been told that we will receive large supplies of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines (and possibly a new vaccine, Novavax) in the fourth quarter of this year, but that's a long time to wait given the repeated reintroduction of the virus into the community.

A combination of fears about the side-effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine and a sense of complacency induced by the lack of community transmission has led to widespread hesitancy and a lacklustre uptake of the vaccines. We shouldn't have to wait for an outbreak to jolt us into getting the jab because once there's an outbreak of an infectious variant, it's too late to be protected by the vaccine in the short term.

Once again, the aged care sector has been neglected. While no exact figure is available, best estimates are that less than 12% of aged care workers have been fully vaccinated. This is unacceptable. After quarantine workers, aged care staff are the frontline to protect our most vulnerable citizens. With an unvaccinated workforce, the prospect of another lethal outbreak is very real.

## **What should happen now?**

The urgent priority is to control this outbreak through the measures introduced by the Victorian government, but we need to take action to prevent it happening again.

[Victorians are right to be dismayed by the federal government's failures in pandemic policies | Bill Bowtell](#)  
[Read more](#)

First, urgent action is needed to fix the quarantine system. When a traveller returns uninfected from India only to get infected in what should be a safe haven, there's something very wrong with the system. It should be obvious by now that what's needed are fit-for-purpose facilities like Howards Springs in every state. Even if that happens, we still need to fix the hotel quarantine systems.

Instead of the current scattergun approach by different jurisdictions, we need a national code of practice that prevents, or at least minimises, airborne transmission, the cause of most recent breaches. This must include rigorous

ventilation audits followed by remedial action and the provision of effective N95 respiratory masks. It's well beyond time for federal and state medical advisers to take a hard look at the evidence and come out forcefully with measures to prevent airborne transmission.

Second, the vaccination program has to be rolled out more rapidly through clearer communications to various demographic groups in Australia about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines. And there must be a greater effort to vaccinate residential aged and disability care workers. This has to happen with desperate urgency.

Decisive action needs to be taken to win this race against new variants and the seemingly endless series of breaches in quarantine – a race to effectively protect our most vulnerable. I'm waiting to hear the starting gun.

Michael Toole is a professor of international health at the Burnet Institute in Melbourne

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## [Israel](#)

# Israeli opposition parties face midnight deadline to form government

Yair Lapid's 28-day mandate to forge majority and end Netanyahu's time as PM ends on Wednesday



Chairman of the Yesh Atid party, Yair Lapid, delivering a statement to the press in the Knesset on Monday. Photograph: Debbie Hill/AP

Chairman of the Yesh Atid party, Yair Lapid, delivering a statement to the press in the Knesset on Monday. Photograph: Debbie Hill/AP

[Oliver Holmes](#) in Jerusalem

Tue 1 Jun 2021 22.00 EDT

Israeli opposition politicians have until midnight on Wednesday to hash out final negotiations to build a coalition government that would end Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year run as prime minister.

Under the country's election laws, opposition leader Yair Lapid's [28-day mandate to forge a majority](#) by allying with rival parties ends on Wednesday. By this time, he should have informed the president he has succeeded.

If he fails, Netanyahu may be granted a political lifeline in the form of a snap election.

Lapid and other party chiefs met near Tel Aviv on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the last agreements for a "government of change", amid reports of a handful of disagreements over control of ministries and committees.

Under [the proposed deal](#), Lapid will not immediately become prime minister. Instead, his [political rival and far-right politician, Naftali Bennett](#), whose support is seen as vital to the coalition's success, will become Israel's leader for likely two years of a four-year term.

Netanyahu and his ruling Likud party were desperately attempting to find defectors and scupper the plan, appealing especially to politicians on the religious hard right not to join Lapid, who has described himself as a secular centrist.

Lapid needs a 61-seat majority in the 120-seat Knesset, Israel's parliament, so losing one or two seats could end the attempt.

On Tuesday, Likud lawmaker and speaker of the Knesset, Yariv Levin, said politicians should not abandon their ideology.

"When you face a moment like this, you tell yourself: 'I must go with my truth, with my conscience, with what I've believed in for so many years, now is when I go with the public that supported me and to which I am committed. Now is when I act for the sake of the land of Israel. It is not too late,'" he told the public broadcaster, Kan.

Lawyers for Likud tried to stop the emerging coalition by stating Bennett's right to serve first as prime minister was illegal. However, Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, knocked down the challenge on Tuesday.

If Lapid tells Rivlin that he believes he can form a government, it does not immediately end Netanyahu's historic stretch in power or conclude a

political deadlock that has [brought four snap elections since 2019](#).

Before that happens, lawmakers will need to vote on the deal, which is expected in the next few days. Then there will be a swearing-in, likely next week.

Bennett, a religious nationalist, is a strong advocate for the settler movement in the [Palestinian territories](#) and has ruled out a Palestinian state. He will join with an unlikely assortment of parties, including the establishment Labor and anti-occupation Meretz. The group will also include the hawkish New Hope party of Netanyahu's former ally Gideon Sa'ar and Yisrael Beiteinu, a hardline secular party led by a Moldova-born settler, Avigdor Lieberman.

Crucially, Lapid has also sought to secure backing from Arab Islamist members of parliament, who set aside ideological differences for the shared aim of dethroning "King Bibi", as Netanyahu is known.

To avoid breaking apart in a row, his fragile government would be expected to focus on the economy and the pandemic while avoiding addressing the big issue of millions of Palestinians living under Israeli rule. Still, Bennett will have executive powers as the prime minister to effect change, or entrench the status quo.

Netanyahu, who has been in high office for 15 years since 1996, is facing political danger and potential threats to his freedom.

The 71-year-old, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, is currently fighting three corruption cases – on fraud, bribery and breach of trust charges, which he denies. If he were to go into opposition, he may be denied parliamentary immunity, and the new government could pass legislation to bar him from office in the future.

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## [Hong Kong](#)

# **‘No political story allowed’: Hong Kong broadcaster falls silent on sensitive subjects**



People gather at Hong Kong's Victoria Park in 2020 to mark the Tiananmen Square protests. This year, media coverage will look very different. Photograph: Vincent Yu/AP

People gather at Hong Kong's Victoria Park in 2020 to mark the Tiananmen Square protests. This year, media coverage will look very different. Photograph: Vincent Yu/AP

Employees at public broadcaster RTHK voice fears for future amid gradual erosion of media freedoms



[Helen Davidson](#) in Taipei

[@heldavidson](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 19.14 EDT

Normally at this time of year [Hong Kong](#) media are bustling to prepare coverage of Friday's anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre which, before Covid restrictions hit, usually included a huge vigil in Victoria Park. The event is illegal in China but had been proudly held in [Hong Kong](#) for decades.

But this year journalists at the respected public broadcaster RTHK say they've been told to stand down.

"We were informed that no political story is allowed," says Emily\*, an RTHK employee who, along with others interviewed for this article, asked for anonymity to speak freely. "We think it's kind of funny because what isn't a political story now?"

[Hong Kong police tighten control on media with new accreditation rules](#)  
[Read more](#)

After mass pro-democracy protests in 2019, the Hong Kong government's worsening crackdown on dissent over the past two years has also targeted press freedom. Once ranked 18th in the world press freedom index, Hong Kong now sits at 80th.

RTHK is bearing the brunt, and many in the industry fear those in power intend to turn it into a propaganda department. Chris Yeung, head of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, says the patience the government and pro-establishment camp once had for RTHK's editorial freedom has run out.

"They can no longer tolerate a government department giving critical and at times embarrassing coverage in their editorial content," Yeung says, adding the government wants to "rectify" the broadcaster.

Its fate is a warning to the rest of the industry, says Emily. "If RTHK becomes propaganda, it's also the death of Hong Kong media."

## **'No room for proper journalism'**

Established in 1928, RTHK is an award-winning, public broadcaster. But over recent months it has been accused of bias, being too independent, and taking the side of pro-democracy protesters instead of upholding charter obligations to promote "one country two systems".

RTHK has been publicly criticised by officials and attacked in Chinese state media. Journalists have been [suspended](#), doxed, and [harassed](#) into resignation over their questioning. A producer has been prosecuted over an act of journalistic research, and new rules announced last week will require all non-civil service government employees, including RTHK staff, to pledge allegiance to the government.

After a highly critical government review found RTHK to have deficiencies in editorial management and accountability in February, the then director, Leung Ka-wing, left before the end of his contract, farewelled without thanks. A least five other senior staff have also resigned. Leung was replaced by former deputy home affairs secretary Patrick Li, a career bureaucrat with no journalism experience, [who told legislators](#) he intends to



be hands on with the broadcaster, with plans for programs promoting government policies, and mainland media collaborations.

One of Li's first acts was to establish vetting and approval processes for all story pitches, including proposed interviewees, which is what Emily says meant the Tiananmen coverage was rejected.

Another RTHK employee, Ann\* says the system is “destructive” to the editorial team. “We don't know what to do or what story can be aired ... There is no room for proper journalism.”

Based on the panel's guidelines, RTHK has cut back or cancelled at least 10 programs – including an already-aired segment about the Tiananmen anniversary last week – and deleted entire online archives.

Free airtime is now being filled by Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, in a daily program [reportedly](#) discussing the government's overhaul of the electoral system.

[The heavy hand of this national security law is crushing Hong Kong's press | Wai Kong Fung](#)  
[Read more](#)

“The charter states that RTHK is editorially independent. It does not say that an individual programme production unit is editorially independent,” Li told Legco in March.

The changes, which Emily describes as an “earthquake”, appear concentrated in RTHK's public affairs division, home to more historically “rebellious” programs, such as the canned satirical show Headliner, and current affairs program Hong Kong Connection.

In a statement, RTHK management said three episodes of Hong Kong Connection, Hong Kong Stories, and LegCo Review “were not impartial, unbiased and accurate”, and were cancelled because they had been made before the vetting system was in place, and “could not be rectified before production”.

Hong Kong Connection has won multiple awards this year, including for an episode investigating police involvement in the notorious Yuen Long subway attacks.

The morning after the show won one of the awards, a producer, Bao Choy, was [convicted and fined](#) for accessing a publicly available database as part of her investigative work for the episode.



Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) reporter Bao Choy arrives at the West Kowloon court in April. Photograph: Jérôme Favre/EPA

The pervasive assumption is that Apple Daily, the pro-democracy tabloid owned by jailed media tycoon and government critic Jimmy Lai, is next in line. Apple Daily's editor in chief, Ryan Law, told Agence France-Presse recently he was facing “the greatest crisis since I took up the post over three years ago”.

As well as the prosecution of Lai, freezing of his assets, and raids on the newsroom, Hong Kong's police commissioner has accused Apple Daily of creating hatred and dividing society, while pro-Beijing media has called for it to be shut down.

['The press has to go on': Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai defies Beijing](#)

[Read more](#)

An Apple Daily employee, Andy\*, says: “There’ve been ... rumours we might be shut down before July, some say maybe before the election in September or the end of the year. We simply don’t know what to believe.”

Lai recently [wrote to his staff from prison](#), telling them to stay strong but to also take care – journalism was now a far more dangerous job.

“It definitely affects the morale here,” Andy says. “Not many of us have a personal relationship with Mr Lai but we all know he’s the icon of Apple Daily.”

## **‘Correcting’ the media**

Government powers over the media are increasing, with the national security law (NSL) imposed last year, and a vaguely defined proposed law against “fake news”, which critics say government and police will be allowed to define.

“I think we’re at the early stage of their move to so-called correct the media scene,” he says. “Also Carrie Lam has promised to improve the media system – that implies there are other things, in say regulating the media.”

Lam and her government maintain they respect press freedom and that Hong Kong’s press will not be targeted if they don’t break the law, but the lack of clearly defined offences in the NSL, and police raids on Apple Daily and Stand News have created a well-documented chilling effect.

“Beijing and the Hong Kong government hold all the cards,” says Apple Daily’s Andy. “They have the legal means, the financial resources, to take over the scene of media.

“Those they can control they control, those they can’t control they use brute force or put fear into.”

[Reverberate, episode 1: Hong Kong's accidental pop star – podcast](#)  
[Read more](#)

In response to questions, RTHK denied there was a ban on Tiananmen anniversary coverage, and said there was no intention to have the broadcaster do the same work as the government information office, and that all editorial decisions were in the hands of the broadcaster's director, Li.

“According to the charter, RTHK is editorially independent and is immune from commercial, political and/or other influences. The producers' guidelines stipulates that ‘there can never be editorial autonomy without responsibility, freedom without restraint’,” a spokesperson said.

A government spokesperson did not answer questions about how “fake news” would be defined, instead saying any law enforcement actions taken are based on evidence and according to the law, with no relation to someone's political stance, background or occupation.

“It would be contrary to the rule of law to suggest that people or entities of certain sectors or professions could be above the law.”

For Emily at RTHK, her eyes are on this week. On Thursday last week the government banned the vigil for the second year – ostensibly because of the pandemic, but it's likely people will mark it anyway, and media will try to cover it, because that's their job.

“I think June 4 is the point where we'll see the death of the media: if no one can go to the memorial or if those who report will be arrested or punished, then we'll understand the freedom is gone.”

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[Business live](#)

[Business](#)

# UK to begin accession process to join trans-Pacific trade bloc – business live

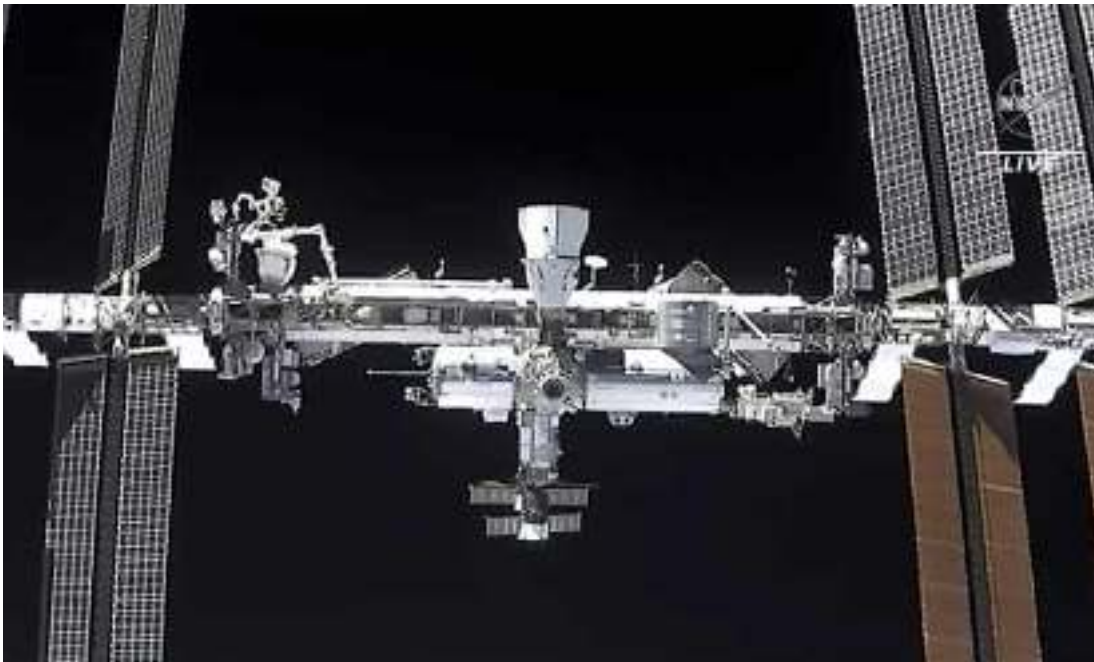
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## International Space Station

# ‘Scary stuff’: International Space Station robotic arm struck by space junk

- ‘Lucky strike’ did not endanger seven astronauts on board
- Not known what debris struck station or when it occurred



The ISS last month. Space junk is classified as any kind of machinery or debris left by humans in space, and can include anything from flecks of paint to the remnants of China's biggest rocket. Photograph: AP

The ISS last month. Space junk is classified as any kind of machinery or debris left by humans in space, and can include anything from flecks of paint to the remnants of China's biggest rocket. Photograph: AP

[Richard Luscombe](#) in Miami

[@richlusc](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 13.49 EDT

The sudden appearance of a small hole in a robotic arm aboard the international space station (ISS) has brought renewed attention to the danger posed by space junk.

[Chinese cargo craft docks with future space station in orbit](#)  
[Read more](#)

Mission managers discovered the puncture during an inspection of the exterior of the spacecraft on 12 May. The Canadian space agency (CSA), which operates the arm, described it as a “[lucky strike](#)” that did not affect operations or endanger the seven astronauts in orbit aboard the station.

It is not known what kind of object struck the space station or when it happened. But analysts say the incident is a reminder of the proliferating amount of junk circling Earth and the risk that poses as launches and satellites in orbit increase.

“There’s a lot of stuff out there traveling at over 17,500mph and obviously it can do a lot of damage,” [John Crassidis](#), SUNY distinguished professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at the University of Buffalo, told the Guardian.

“This one didn’t do any real damage, it went through some insulation and we don’t even know if it hit part of the arm. [But] it’s some pretty scary stuff. The biggest thing we worry about is the astronauts, they’re very exposed out there, and some day it’s going to be a question of when, not if.”

The object that struck the space station would have been too small to be tracked, Crassidis said. Larger pieces of debris are monitored. Nasa says there are currently [more than 27,000](#) larger than an average-sized cellphone in lower Earth orbit.

08:42

No TV, no sat nav, no internet: how to fix space's junk problem – video

[Space junk](#) is classified as any kind of machinery or debris left by humans in space, and can include anything from flecks of paint to the remnants of China’s biggest rocket, which [crashed](#) into the Indian Ocean last month.



According to [Nasa](#), “millimeter-sized orbital debris represents the highest mission-ending risk to most robotic spacecraft operating in low Earth orbit”. The agency notes that several windows in its now-retired space shuttle fleet had to be replaced after collisions with paint flecks.

The ISS, and most satellites in orbit, have [hypervelocity impact protection](#) such as Whipple shield technology, which was introduced in the 1940s. But the shields are only truly effective against smaller objects.

In 2009, a defunct Russian spacecraft collided with and destroyed a US commercial satellite, adding 2,300 pieces of large, trackable debris and many more smaller debris to the inventory of space junk, Nasa says.

“It’s estimated that between 1cm and 10cm there’s about 990,000 objects, and from 1mm to 1cm there could be upwards to about 120m,” Crassidis said.

Last year Nasa, in partnership with private contractor SpaceX, resumed human spaceflight from US soil after a decade. Elon Musk’s company has [embarked on an intense schedule of launches](#) to place thousands of Starlink broadband internet satellites in orbit.

With Russia, India, China and the European [Space](#) Agency possessing their own ambitious programs, the potential for more pieces of rockets, spacecraft casings and other objects to enter orbit as space debris has never been higher.

“It sounds easy, don’t put more space junk up there, but not everybody follows it,” Crassidis said, noting that the [most recent global agreement on space debris mitigation](#) came from the United Nations in 2010.

“Obviously the more stuff you put up there the bigger the problem becomes.”



## Bird flu

# China confirms first human case of H10N3 bird flu strain

Man, 41, in Jiangsu, diagnosed on 28 May but risk of avian virus spread is low, says state health agency



Chicken carcasses at a wholesale poultry market in Shanghai. Many strains of avian flu are present in China and some sporadically infect people. Photograph: AP

Chicken carcasses at a wholesale poultry market in Shanghai. Many strains of avian flu are present in China and some sporadically infect people. Photograph: AP

*Reuters in Beijing*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 13.48 EDT

A 41-year-old man in China's eastern province of Jiangsu has been confirmed as the first human case of infection with the H10N3 strain of bird

flu, although health officials in [China](#) said the risk of large-scale spread remained low.

The man, a resident of the city of Zhenjiang, went to hospital on 28 April after developing a fever and other symptoms, China's national health commission said.

He was diagnosed as having the [H10N3](#) avian influenza virus on 28 May, the commission said though it did not give details about how the man had been infected with the virus. The man was stable and ready to be discharged from hospital. Medical observation of his close contacts had not found any other cases.

H10N3 is a low pathogenic, or relatively less severe, strain of the virus found in poultry, and the risk of it spreading on a large scale is very low, the commission added.

The strain was "not a very common virus", said Filip Claes, regional laboratory coordinator of the Food and Agriculture Organization's [Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases](#), at the Asia and Pacific regional office. Only about 160 isolates of the virus were reported in the 40 years to 2018, mostly in wild birds or waterfowl in Asia and in some limited areas of North America, and none had been detected in chickens so far, Claes said.

Analysing the genetic data of the virus would be necessary to determine whether it resembled older viruses or if it was a novel mix of different viruses, he added.

Many different strains of avian influenza are present in China and some sporadically infect people, usually those working with poultry. There have been no significant numbers of human infections with bird flu since [the H7N9 strain](#) killed about 300 people during 2016-2017.

No other cases of human infection with H10N3 have previously been reported globally, the commission said.

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## Ethiopia

# Eritrean soldiers killed 19 civilians in latest Tigray atrocity, locals claim

Killings took place near Ethiopia's Abuna Yemata church on 8 May, according to multiple testimonies



The alleged attack took place in a small rural settlement on steep slopes below the fifth-century stone church of Abuna Yemata in Tigray. Photograph: Sergi Reboredo/Alamy

The alleged attack took place in a small rural settlement on steep slopes below the fifth-century stone church of Abuna Yemata in Tigray. Photograph: Sergi Reboredo/Alamy

[Jason Burke](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 12.40 EDT

Eritrean soldiers killed 19 civilians in a village at the foot of an internationally celebrated rock-hewn church in Tigray three weeks ago,

witnesses, relatives and local residents have claimed, the latest alleged atrocity in the war-torn Ethiopian region.

Most of the victims in the alleged attack were women and young children.

The killings were perpetrated by Eritrean soldiers in a small rural settlement on steep slopes below the fifth-century stone church of Abuna Yemata on 8 May, according to multiple testimonies viewed by the Guardian.

Troops from Eritrea are fighting in Tigray on the side of Ethiopian government forces, in defiance of international calls for their withdrawal.

[The alleged atrocities in Tigray risk tearing Ethiopia apart | William Davison](#)  
[Read more](#)

The soldiers were scouts from an Eritrean military unit whose task was to track down fighters loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the region's former ruling party.

The reported massacre is the latest in a series of alleged atrocities since the Ethiopian prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, winner of the 2019 Nobel peace prize, launched a military offensive in November to "restore the rule of law" by ousting the TPLF, after a surprise attack on a federal army base.

Though he vowed the conflict would be brief, more than six months later fighting continues and reports of atrocities are proliferating, amid warnings of an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe.

Several thousand people are feared to have died in such killings, which have been accompanied by a wave of sexual violence and the displacement of up to 2 million people.

This new report of what appears to have been the cold-blooded killing of unarmed civilians, including young children, will add to international pressure on Ethiopian authorities for a ceasefire to stem such abuses and allow humanitarian aid into Tigray.

All actors in the conflict have been accused of human rights abuses but Eritrean troops appear to have been responsible for a high proportion.



The description of the behaviour of the Eritrean troops at Abuna Yemata seen by the Guardian fits with previous reports of other such incidents in Tigray.

The testimony comes primarily from three individuals but is difficult to confirm in all its aspects. One source heard details from a woman who survived some hours after the attack, while the others gathered accounts from close friends, including a man whose wife was killed.

According to the accounts, the casualties were from three families who had spent the night in their homes before setting out to hide with the men from the village during the day.

The scouts came at 8am to the small hamlet, which comprises only a handful of homesteads, and were suspicious of an unusually large store of edible crops, according to the testimony. The foodstuff was the produce of several households that had been gathered for safekeeping.

The soldiers accused the villagers of being supporters of the TPLF insurgents and gathered them together in a field near a small river. One shot the two men in the group, aged 45 and 78, then others opened fire on the remainder. There are different reports of the number of attackers.

A larger group of Eritrean soldiers who arrived after the shootings reprimanded the scouts responsible for the killings, according to one account.

When the male residents of the village returned after some hours in hiding, they found the dead and injured. An infant was among the dead and nine members of one family were killed, a list of the names suggests.

The testimony matches accounts given by relatives of two children, aged six and four, who were injured in the attack but survived. Both were transported to a hospital in Mekelle, a journey that took a week due to road closures and the remote location of the alleged massacre.

The testimony also refers to a series of fierce clashes between TPLF and Eritrean forces in the area of the alleged massacre. Independent observers

consulted by the Guardian have confirmed that these occurred at the locations indicated. Civilians were killed in shelling in the town of Hawzen, less than 5km from the scene of the alleged massacre, a day before it occurred.

Eritrean and Ethiopian forces are thought to have suffered significant casualties in the clashes in and around Hawzen and villages near the Abuna Yemata church in early May, though exact totals are unknown. Atrocities have frequently been committed in the aftermath of fighting as troops seek to establish control over populations or strategic landmarks and seek revenge.

In April the Guardian reported that [almost 2,000 people had been killed in more than 150 massacres](#) in Tigray, according to researchers. The oldest victims were in their 90s and the youngest were infants.

The worst perpetrators were Eritrean troops fighting alongside Ethiopian forces, though all armed actors are accused of committing atrocities.

Multiple witnesses, survivors of rape, officials and aid workers have said Eritrean soldiers have been seen throughout Tigray, sometimes clad in faded Ethiopian army fatigues.

Eritrean troops entered Tigray from its neighbouring state at the beginning of the offensive last year to reinforce the federal government's forces. It is unclear whether they have remained with the consent of Addis Ababa.

Unicef said on Tuesday that children were [paying "a terrible price" in the conflict](#).

"The magnitude and gravity of child rights violations taking place across Tigray show no sign of abating, nearly seven months since fighting broke out in northern Ethiopia," the UN agency said.

[In a speech to the UN security council last week](#), Sonia Farrey, the UK political coordinator at the UN, described a growing risk of famine, in part due to the conduct of hostilities.

“Armed parties continue to routinely prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Aid which is delivered is often being taken from those in need to feed soldiers. Agricultural production is being targeted. Imports of vital communications equipment are being delayed. This is not a matter of interfering in sovereign internal affairs, but about observing the binding obligations on all states under international humanitarian law,” she said.

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## [Amazon](#)

# Amazon US customers have one week to opt out of mass wireless sharing

Critics raise transparency fears over plan to turn all smart home devices into 'mesh network'



Amazon's Ring security cameras will become part of the Sidewalk network, as will Echo speakers. Photograph: Ross D Franklin/AP

Amazon's Ring security cameras will become part of the Sidewalk network, as will Echo speakers. Photograph: Ross D Franklin/AP

[Alex Hern](#) *Technology editor*

[@alexhern](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 10.55 EDT

Amazon customers have one week to opt out of a plan that would turn every Echo speaker and Ring security camera in the US into a shared wireless

network, as part of the company's plan to fix connection problems for its smart home devices.

The proposal, called Amazon Sidewalk, involves the company's devices being used as a springboard to build city-wide "mesh networks" that help simplify the process of setting up new devices, keep them online even if they're out of range of home wifi, and extend the range of tracking devices such as those made by Tile.

But Sidewalk has come under fire for the apparent lack of transparency with which Amazon has rolled out the feature, as well as the limited time available for users to complete the tricky process required to opt out. Other critics have expressed concerns that failing to turn the setting off could leave customers in breach of their internet service provider's terms and conditions.

"Amazon Sidewalk is a shared network that helps devices work better," the company said in [a Q&A document for users](#). "In the future, Sidewalk will support a range of experiences from using Sidewalk-enabled devices, such as smart security and lighting and diagnostics for appliances and tools."

The feature works by creating a low-bandwidth network using smart home devices such as Amazon Echoes and Ring security cameras. At its simplest, it means that a new Echo can set itself up using a neighbour's wifi, or a security camera can continue to send motion alerts even if its connection to the internet is disrupted, by piggybacking on the connection of another camera across the street. Other devices that don't need a high-bandwidth connection, such as smart lights, pet locators or smart locks, can use Sidewalk all the time.

But the company's plans have caused alarm among observers. Ashkan Soltani, a former chief technology officer of the US Federal Trade Commission, [told the tech site Ars Technica](#): "In addition to capturing everyone's shopping habits (from amazon.com) and their internet activity (as AWS is one of the most dominant web hosting services) ... now they are also effectively becoming a global ISP with a flick of a switch, all without even having to lay a single foot of fiber". The feature may also break the terms and conditions of users' internet connections, which do not allow such resharing, [warned Lydia Leong, an analyst at Gartner](#).

Users can disable Sidewalk in the settings section of the Alexa or Ring apps, but have until 8 June to do so. After that, if they have taken no action, the network will be turned on and their devices will become “Sidewalk Bridges”.

Amazon is not the first company to look to create such a network. Apple has taken a similar approach with the company’s range of [AirTag item trackers](#), which can connect to the internet through any compatible iPhone they come into contact with, not simply their owner’s. And BT, through a long-term partnership with Fon, ran a service from 2007 until 2020 that allowed broadband customers to share spare bandwidth in a public wifi network.

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## [South China Sea](#)

# Malaysia protests ‘suspicious’ Chinese air force activity over South China Sea

Ambassador to be summoned after 16 Chinese planes allegedly flew into Malaysian air space off Borneo



A Chinese Xian Y-20 aircraft that Malaysian authorities said flew in its air space off Sarawak on Borneo. Photograph: Royal Malaysian Air Force/AFP/Getty Images

A Chinese Xian Y-20 aircraft that Malaysian authorities said flew in its air space off Sarawak on Borneo. Photograph: Royal Malaysian Air Force/AFP/Getty Images

*Reuters*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 20.52 EDT

The foreign ministry of Malaysia has said it would summon China’s envoy to explain an “intrusion” by 16 air force planes into its airspace, after the



south-east Asian country's military detected "suspicious" activity over the [South China Sea](#).

Malaysia's air force said it scrambled jets on Monday after the planes flew within 60 nautical miles off Sarawak state of Malaysian Borneo. It described the incident as a "serious threat to national sovereignty and flight safety".

The Chinese planes did not contact regional air traffic control despite being instructed to do so several times, the air force said.

[South China Sea: alarm in Philippines as 200 Chinese vessels gather at disputed reef](#)  
[Read more](#)

Hishammuddin Hussein, Malaysia's foreign minister, said he would issue a note of diplomatic protest and ask China's ambassador to explain the "breach of airspace and sovereignty".

"Malaysia's stand is clear – having friendly diplomatic relations with any countries does not mean that we will compromise on our national security," Hishammuddin said in a statement.

China's embassy earlier said the planes conducted routine flight training and "strictly abided by" international law without violating airspace of other countries.

"China and Malaysia are friendly neighbours, and China is willing to continue bilateral friendly consultations with Malaysia to jointly maintain regional peace and stability," a spokesperson said.

China has been pushing an [expansive claim](#) over the South China Sea, through which about \$3tn worth of ship-borne trade passes annually. It has also built military facilities on manmade islands.

[Australian military to continue patrolling South China Sea as Beijing warns Taiwan independence 'means war'](#)  
[Read more](#)

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims to various islands and features in the area and China's coastguard routinely warns foreign boats and aircraft to leave what it calls its territory.

Malaysia's air force said the planes, comprising Ilyushin il-76 and Xian Y-20 strategic transporters, had traveled in an "in-trail" tactical formation at between 23,000 and 27,000 feet.

Last year, a Chinese survey ship held a month-long standoff with a Malaysian oil exploration vessel within Malaysia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Malaysia's move follows months of diplomatic protests by the Philippines over the presence of hundreds of Chinese fishing boats in its EEZ, which it says are manned by militia. China has largely ignored the complaints.

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## Texas

# Texas governor threatens to defund state legislature after Democrats block voting bill

Greg Abbott excoriated for bizarre threat after Democrats thwart 11th-hour attempt to pass bill that would have made voting harder



The Texas governor, Greg Abbott. Photograph: Eric Gay/AP

The Texas governor, Greg Abbott. Photograph: Eric Gay/AP

[Alexandra Villarreal](#) in Austin

Tue 1 Jun 2021 16.53 EDT

Voting rights advocates on Tuesday excoriated [Texas](#) governor Greg Abbott's bizarre threat to defund the state legislature after Democratic lawmakers thwarted an 11th-hour attempt to pass his priority bill that would have made it even harder for the public to cast a ballot in elections.

“At the end of the day, it’s so embarrassing that our governor can’t take a setback without throwing a tantrum about it,” Emily Eby, staff attorney at the Texas Civil Rights Project, told the Guardian.

In Texas and across the United States, [Republicans](#) have tried to roll back access to the polls after last year’s election, when their rightwing supporters bought into unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud.

Texas’s Senate Bill 7 would have [imposed felonies](#) on public officials for certain activities related to boosting mail-in voting, banned 24-hour and drive-thru voting, emboldened partisan poll-watchers and made it easier to overturn election results, among other provisions.

The legislation went through a dizzying rash of iterations and revisions to reconcile both chambers’ priorities, even as advocates and experts warned that its bedrock proposals could disproportionately disenfranchise communities of color, city dwellers, voters with disabilities and elderly people.

But even after pervasive condemnation of what critics dubbed “Jim Crow 2.0”, SB7 seemed primed to clear the state legislature just before the session’s end – until Texas [Democrats walked off](#) the House floor Sunday night.

“No pay for those who abandon their responsibilities,” Abbott [tweeted Monday](#). “Stay tuned.”

As Texas’s chief executive, Abbott can [veto individual line items](#) in the budget, and he said he intended to do away with Article X funding the legislature, [including lawmakers, staff and adjacent agencies](#).

But the [budget](#) he’s considering won’t go into effect until September, [the Texas Tribune reported](#), rendering his retributive plan largely ineffective while potentially hurting future legislators.

“This might be one of the dumbest things I’ve ever heard a politician suggest,” said Wesley Story, communications manager for Progress Texas.

“But there is pretty stiff competition in that department when it comes to Texas Republicans.”

For pundits and lawmakers alike, a giant question mark loomed over Abbott’s incendiary wielding of power as he tried to exercise the authority to punish a whole government branch.

“He didn’t get his voter suppression bill so he’s withholding pay from not only the entire legislature, but the staff and aides who rely on it to survive,” [political commentator Brian Tyler Cohen](#) wrote online. “To their core, Republicans despise democracy.”

“This would eliminate the branch of government that represents the people and basically create a monarchy,” tweeted [state representative Donna Howard](#).

Meanwhile, Abbott said he’s also planning to [call a special session](#) – what amounts to legislative overtime – in part to address the specious talking point of “election integrity”, which he still considers an emergency despite the legislature’s failure to pass SB7.

When that rapid-fire round will take place remains unclear, though Republican leaders are already presenting it as an inevitability.

“We will be back – when, I don’t know, but we will be back,” [Texas house speaker Dade Phelan](#) told his colleagues. “There’s a lot of work to be done, but I look forward to doing it with every single one of you.”

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## Belarus

# Belarusian activist stabs himself in court

Stsiapan Latypau carried out unconscious after claiming he was pressured to plead guilty



Police officers and paramedics carry Stsiapan Latypau into an ambulance in Minsk on Tuesday. Photograph: AP

Police officers and paramedics carry Stsiapan Latypau into an ambulance in Minsk on Tuesday. Photograph: AP

[Andrew Roth](#) in Moscow

Tue 1 Jun 2021 11.06 EDT

A Belarusian opposition activist stabbed himself in the throat with a pen during a court hearing after claiming investigators had pressured him to plead guilty or face his family and friends being arrested.

Footage from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty showed Stsiapan Latypau, who has organised protests against the country's authoritarian leader, [Alexander Lukashenko](#), lying inside a defendant's cage as witnesses screamed in a courtroom in Minsk.

The apparent suicide attempt on Tuesday is the latest evidence of the extraordinary pressure being put on activists during Lukashenko's year-long [crackdown on the opposition and media](#). In just the last week, an opposition politician died under mysterious circumstances in prison and a teenager under investigation for protesting died after throwing himself from a 16-storey building.

[‘Persecuted, jailed, destroyed’: Belarus seeks to stifle dissent](#)  
[Read more](#)

Nasha Niva, an independent Belarusian media outlet, reported that Latypau had stabbed himself in the throat with a pen he took from a stack of court papers during a break in a hearing. He has been held since September 2020 on fraud and other charges that he has called politically motivated.

Before stabbing himself, Latypau climbed up on a courtroom bench and claimed investigators had said “if I don't plead guilty, they will open criminal cases against my family and neighbours”. Other reports said police had threatened his family with violence.

Latypau was carried unconscious from the courtroom with bloodstains visible on his neck and chest. He has also claimed he was held for nearly two months in a prison cell where inmates are subjected to violence and torture.

“This is the result of state terror, repressions, torture in Belarus,” wrote Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, an opposition leader. “We must stop it immediately!”

Lukashenko drew international condemnation last month by [diverting a Ryanair flight carrying](#) Raman Pratasevich, a Belarusian activist who had fled the country in 2019 and had since lived in exile. He and his girlfriend, Sofia Sapega, have been arrested.



In response, European countries blocked flights by Belavia, the Belarusian state air carrier, and also banned their own planes from flying in Belarusian airspace.

The government has enacted rules to prevent ordinary Belarusians from leaving the country. As of this week, Belarusians must have a permanent residency in a foreign country in order to leave Belarus, a measure that the state border committee claims is due to the coronavirus epidemic. However, activists say they believe it is to prevent Belarusians from fleeing the country amid the violent crackdown on dissent.

Lukashenko met the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, late last week to shore up support from his government's key foreign ally. On Tuesday, he announced Belarus would soon open direct flights with Crimea, a step toward recognition of Russia's annexation of the peninsula from Ukraine.

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## Headlines tuesday 1 june 2021

- [Coronavirus UK facing ‘perilous moment’ as India variant spreads](#)
- [Live UK Covid: PM will need to use data to make decision, says former chief scientific adviser](#)
- [Exclusive Duty to help vaccinate the world, MPs tell PM](#)
- [Analysis If India variant triggers third wave, rules may have to stay](#)

## [Coronavirus](#)

# Boris Johnson says no evidence to delay England reopening

Scientists say UK faces ‘perilous moment’ as Delta Covid variant now makes up 75% of cases

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



People enjoy the sun by the lake in Regent's Park in London on Monday.  
Photograph: Jo Hale/Getty Images

People enjoy the sun by the lake in Regent's Park in London on Monday.  
Photograph: Jo Hale/Getty Images

[Jessica Elgot](#) and [Caroline Davies](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 09.49 EDT

Downing Street believes early data shows England can forge ahead with the 21 June unlocking despite a chorus of warnings from scientists about rising case rates linked to the Delta variant first identified in India.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, said there were encouraging signs vaccines were breaking the link between infections and hospitalisations as Public Health England announced [zero daily reported Covid deaths](#) for the first time since last summer.

Boris Johnson is understood to be optimistic about the current data but a No 10 source said the next few days would be crucial to assess the impact of the unlocking that took place from 17 May – though early data did not show significant cause for alarm.

“There is obviously concern about case numbers but we still need to see if that is translating to hospitalisations and deaths or if the vaccine is breaking that link,” the source said. “At the moment we do not have evidence that definitively suggests we should delay.”

The business minister Paul Scully also expressed “cautious optimism”. He told Times Radio the government did not want to have to roll back restrictions again. “One thing that we saw last year, before Christmas, was the stop-start nature just didn’t work for businesses and cost them more. So we’ve got to get it absolutely right. People’s jobs and livelihoods depend on it.”

However, the government’s former chief scientific adviser, Prof Sir Mark Walport, said on Tuesday it was “not impossible” that the country was in the foothills of a new wave as the Delta variant takes over, accounting for three-quarters of new cases. “It is a quite perilous moment, but we’ve just got to keep our fingers crossed that the measures work,” he said. A series of other scientists have echoed his concerns.

A number of Conservative MPs opposed to further restrictions fired warning shots at the suggestion the roadmap be delayed. The former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith said the prime minister must resist “an organised push by a group of scientists to stop 21 June”.

“There is no actual fact that says we shouldn’t unlock on the 21st,” he said. “We were always told that the most important feature of all of this is to protect the most vulnerable. We have now double-dosed pretty near 50% of the population and that encompasses all the most vulnerable.”

Mark Harper, chair of the Covid Recovery Group (CRG) of lockdown-sceptic Tory MPs, said there should be no reason not to “open up fully” on 21 June if vaccinations worked as well as had been reported.

Tory MPs are set to ramp up pressure this week for the government to commit to ditching social distancing rules in hospitality venues, or at least relax rules requiring table service. Several told the Guardian they believed the party could “live with” extended rules on mask-wearing or work-from-home guidance, even until the autumn when furlough support ends.

### [UK coronavirus cases](#)

MPs say they have been led to believe Johnson is minded to forge ahead with the reopening. “He does not want to delay,” an ally of Johnson said. “But three weeks is an ice age in politics.”

Former minister David Jones, a member of the CRG, said: “I personally cannot see the justification for delay. The important issue is that of hospitalisations and deaths. Despite the spread of this variant it does not seem to be putting more people in hospital. We have had zero deaths today.

“We ought to reopen unless something horrendous happens and there is no reason to think it will. The hospitality business is finding it very difficult to operate in these conditions.”

Bob Blackman, a member of the 1922 Committee executive, whose Harrow East constituency has seen surge testing for the new variant, said: “21 June is the ideal but if we have data showing that it is not the right thing to do, then prove it to us. Life is a risk, we have people queueing up at the hospitals for treatment for other issues. But if the evidence is there that we need to delay for a month, then so be it.”

A number of MPs agreed a delay of a few weeks would be tolerated. “If it was four more weeks, to get more jabs in arms, people would put up with it,” a CRG member said.

Blackman said that the extension of the furlough scheme until the autumn meant many people were anticipating some delay. “Ideally we should be out of all restrictions by 21 June but if we are rolling back another three weeks, I think most people will accept it.”

However, some MPs said they were worried about a public backlash about delaying any further unlocking, a move that could harm Johnson’s opinion ratings.

“Most colleagues do believe we have to crack on now,” a moderate Tory MP said. “The effects of this variant do not appear to be as dire as first thought. We are stuck with the virus endemic in this country. At some point we have to take the plunge and reopen and hope that given the levels of vaccinations the consequences are not too serious.”

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## [Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)

### [Coronavirus](#)

# UK Covid: zero deaths reported today but daily cases above 3,000 – as it happened

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2021/jun/01/uk-covid-live-news-coronavirus-third-wave-indian-variant-boris-johnson>



## Vaccines and immunisation

# MPs tell Johnson: you have a duty to help vaccinate the world

Exclusive: group urges prime minister to tackle ‘desperate shortage’ in developing nations

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Dr Dan Poulter, one of the signatories of a letter to the prime minister, says the government should ‘help vaccinate the world’. Photograph: YouTube

Dr Dan Poulter, one of the signatories of a letter to the prime minister, says the government should ‘help vaccinate the world’. Photograph: YouTube

[Aubrey Allegretti](#) *Political correspondent*  
[@breeallegretti](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 17.00 EDT

Boris Johnson has a “moral duty” to immediately start matching each vaccine administered at home with a donated dose to poorer countries across the world, a cross-party group of MPs and peers has said.

Several Tory backbenchers joined the call, which puts further pressure on the prime minister to boost supplies given to developing nations facing a “desperate shortage” of jabs.

In a letter to Downing Street seen by the Guardian, the group says this will help to save lives at home, adding that the spread across the UK of the variant first found in India had proven that all countries need equitable access to injections.

“The longer we wait to act, the more likely it is that dangerous variants could emerge that can evade the protections offered by current vaccines,” says the group, which includes the Conservative backbenchers Sir Peter Bottomley – the longest-serving MP – and the former hospital doctor Dan Poulter.

Ministers have rightly committed to funding Covax, the international partnership supplying vaccines to developing countries, the group says. However, the group suggests that, given the UK is a net importer of jabs, donations should be stepped up to meet the “urgent demand” faced by many low-income countries, and calls on Johnson to “show leadership on this critical issue”.

The letter also calls for domestic vaccine production to be accelerated so that the UK can become a net exporter of vaccines. It urges the government to support an [intellectual property waiver](#) at the World Trade Organization that would ramp up vaccine manufacturing abroad.

With the G7 due to be hosted in Cornwall next week, the 116 parliamentarians from seven different parties – as well as crossbench peers and a bishop – said Johnson should “lead the way in promoting more equitable global access to Covid-19 vaccines”.

Poulter, the vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on coronavirus, said ministers should “use the same resolve” that helped to

boost the UK's vaccine rollout to "help vaccinate the world".

He added: "This is no time for complacency. The public will not be truly safe as long as the pandemic continues to surge overseas. Until we match the success of the UK vaccination programme across the world, we will continue to be at the mercy of new Covid variants here at home."

Layla Moran, the chair of the same group, also urged the government not to "turn its back on the humanitarian disaster unfolding around the globe".

Meanwhile on Tuesday, the heads of the World [Health](#) Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and World Trade Organization made a similar plea in newspapers around the world – including the Telegraph, Der Spiegel, la Repubblica, Le Monde and The Washington Post – urging rich countries to give more vaccines to poorer nations or risk new variants emerging and further lockdowns.

They call for \$50bn (£35bn) in new spending commitments, much of which would be grants to help developing nations with vaccination schemes, and suggest the target of vaccinating 30% of the world's population by the end of 2021 should rise to 40%, and 60% by the first half of 2022.

The pleas come after Prof Andrew Pollard, the director of the Oxford vaccine group, warned in evidence to the APPG's inquiry that "many millions could die between now and September" unless more vaccine doses were provided to lower and middle-income countries through Covax.

He also said it would be "morally wrong" to vaccinate younger people and children in richer nations ahead of high-risk populations in lower and middle-income ones.

Dr Gavin Yamey, of Duke University in the US, has also said that richer nations have an estimated 200m spare doses of the vaccine that could be donated straight away, with a further 1.5bn doses procured by wealthier countries for future use.

A government spokesperson said: "The UK is proud to be playing a leading role in the global effort to create and distribute coronavirus vaccines.

“We are one of the largest donors to Covax, providing £548m to fund over a billion vaccines to lower-middle income countries this year. This funding has so far helped to provide vaccines to more than 120 countries and territories, including 38 across Africa.

“The UK will share the majority of any future surplus vaccines from our supply with the Covax pool when these are available.”

Johnson has previously said he asked Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK’s chief scientific adviser, to work with international organisations, industry and scientific experts, to advise the G7 on speeding up the process for developing vaccines, treatments and tests for common pathogens.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/may/31/mps-boris-johnson-donate-vaccines-poorer-countries>

## Coronavirus

# If India variant starts a third wave, England's Covid rules may have to stay

Analysis: hopes of restrictions ending on 21 June are dwindling as highly transmissible variant spreads

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



University Hospital Coventry. Vaccines are less effective against the India variant, raising fears that it could cause hospital numbers to rise significantly. Photograph: Lynsey Addario/Getty Images

University Hospital Coventry. Vaccines are less effective against the India variant, raising fears that it could cause hospital numbers to rise significantly. Photograph: Lynsey Addario/Getty Images

[\*Nicola Davis\*](#)

[@NicolaKSDavis](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 13.03 EDT

Heralded as “freedom day”, 21 June has been a date circled in the diary by businesses, families and communities alike – a moment when coronavirus restrictions in [England](#) are expected to finally end, hopefully in a blaze of summer sunshine.

But new data has revealed that the variant of concern first detected in India, known as B.1.617.2, [has continued to spread across England](#), with samples containing the variant now found from Cornwall to Canterbury, Bury to Bromley.

Believed to be both more transmissible than the variant first detected in Kent, and with Covid vaccines showing some reduced effectiveness against it, [particularly after one dose](#), B.1.617.2 has worried scientists, some of whom have warned that a third wave of Covid [may already be under way](#). At present, [up to three-quarters of new Covid cases in the UK](#) are thought to be caused by this variant.

While the vaccination programme means the link between cases and hospitalisations and deaths has been weakened, experts have [warned that the relationship has not been completely broken](#). That is because at present more than half of UK adults are not yet fully vaccinated, while even after both doses not everyone will have enough protection against severe disease.

Without B.1.617.2, experts predicted there would still be a third wave over the summer as restrictions are eased and individuals increased their contacts – albeit with far lower numbers of hospitalisations and deaths compared with previous waves, thanks to the vaccines.

The growth of B.1.617.2 has raised concerns once more. According to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), it is “a realistic possibility” that the variant could be up to 50% more transmissible than the Kent variant that previously predominated. Should that be the case, modelling from [the University of Warwick](#) suggested there could be a third wave of Covid with a peak of 10,000 hospitalisations per day, assuming no

changes are made to the roadmap. There have already been some signs of a slight rise in hospitalisations in some parts of the country.

There are also concerns that a rise in infections could lead to many more cases of [long Covid](#), and put pressure on NHS services, [potentially worsening the surgery backlog](#), among other knock-on effects.

### [UK coronavirus cases](#)

While B.1.617.2 remains concentrated in certain regions – particularly north-west England – the geographical dispersal shown in the new data will be closely watched. Instances of the variant in many areas is currently low, but the pressing question is whether they will expand – as has occurred in Bolton and other hotspots – and whether any outbreaks can be quickly quashed, [as occurred in Sefton](#).

Another key consideration is what effect the easing of restrictions on 17 May has had. That is only now beginning to emerge in case data, [and it may be another week or two](#) before the impact on hospitalisations can be seen.

However, business and hospitality venues that have remained closed to date are concerned about any further shifting over the easing of lockdown, with industry bodies warning of further devastation for the sector if they are unable to reopen fully.

Greg Parmley, chief executive of live music trade association Live, said the government's series of trial events had shown that "music events can be held safely, with almost no Covid impact, so there is no reason to keep us closed any longer".

The effectiveness of Covid vaccines against the variant is under scrutiny, and the exact degree to which it may be more transmissible than that which emerged in Kent.

Despite the uncertainties, many experts have backed a delay in the easing of restrictions in England on 21 June – allowing time for vaccine rollout and immunity levels in the population to rise.



Any delay to the easing of restrictions is likely to cause widespread disappointment and, of course, difficulties for businesses that have banked on the change. But, with the big day just three weeks away, ministers will need to decide whether taking one step forward will land England two steps back.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/31/if-india-variant-starts-a-third-wave-englands-covid-rules-may-have-to-stay>.

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## 2021.06.01 - Coronavirus

- [No more 'India variant' Covid strains to be given Greek alphabet names](#)
- [Australia Trial allowing vaccinated people to travel overseas could start in six weeks](#)
- [Peru Country has world's worst per capita Covid toll after death data revised](#)
- [European Union Plan to lift Covid quarantine rules for vaccinated from 1 July](#)

## [Coronavirus](#)

# Covid-19 variants to be given Greek alphabet names to avoid stigma

WHO unveils new names for variants of concern to replace ones linked to where they were discovered

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



The Greek alphabet naming system begins with Alpha for the Kent coronavirus variant, which was the first to be discovered. Photograph: Olivier Le Moal/Getty Images/iStockphoto

The Greek alphabet naming system begins with Alpha for the Kent coronavirus variant, which was the first to be discovered. Photograph: Olivier Le Moal/Getty Images/iStockphoto

[Edna Mohamed](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 19.03 EDT

Coronavirus variants are to be named after letters of the Greek alphabet instead of their place of first discovery, the [World Health Organization](#) has announced, in a move to avoid stigma.

The WHO has named four variants of concern, known to the public as the UK/Kent (B.1.1.7), South Africa (B.1.351), Brazil (P.1) and [India](#) (B.1.617.2) variants. They will now be given the letters Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta respectively, to reflect their order of detection, with any new variants following the pattern down the Greek alphabet.

The [decision to go for this naming system](#) came after months of deliberations with experts considering a range of other possibilities such as Greek Gods, according to bacteriologist Mark Pallen who was involved in the talks.

The organisation said the labels do not replace existing scientific names involving numbers, Roman letters and full stops, which convey important scientific information and will continue to be used in research.

The WHO said: “While they have their advantages, these scientific names can be difficult to say and recall and are prone to misreporting ... As a result, people often resort to calling variants by the places where they are detected, which is stigmatising and discriminatory.

“To avoid this and to simplify public communications, [the] WHO encourages national authorities, media outlets and others to adopt these new labels.”

Historically, diseases have frequently been named after the locations they were thought to have developed, such as the Ebola virus, which takes its name from the Congolese river. However, such associations can be damaging for those places and are often inaccurate, as is the case with the “Spanish flu” of 1918, whose origins are unknown.

Earlier this month, the Indian government ordered social media platforms to take down content that referred to the “Indian variant”. The government

order was cited as an example of its sensitivity to accusations that it had mishandled the latest outbreak.

Anti-Asian hate crime has risen as a result of the pandemic and associations between Covid and the site of its first outbreak in Wuhan, China.

US anti-extremist groups said a rise in attacks on Asian-Americans was partly down to Donald Trump, who referred to Covid-19 as the “China virus”. Trump’s successor as president, Joe Biden, signed a hate crimes law this month to protect those who have suffered a surge in attacks during the pandemic.

With US anti-extremist groups saying that the rise in hate crimes was partly due to former president Donald Trump who referred to Covid-19 as the “China virus”.

The WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove said of adopting new variant names: “No country should be stigmatised for detecting and reporting variants.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/01/covid-19-variants-to-be-given-greek-alphabet-names-to-avoid-stigma>

## Health

# **Trial allowing vaccinated Australians to travel overseas could start in six weeks**

Pilot program for immunised people to leave and return under relaxed restrictions could begin soon, Greg Hunt tells colleagues



The federal government is facing increasing pressure to provide incentives for Australians to get vaccinated and to ease the travel ban that has separated families. Photograph: Darrian Traynor/Getty Images

The federal government is facing increasing pressure to provide incentives for Australians to get vaccinated and to ease the travel ban that has separated families. Photograph: Darrian Traynor/Getty Images

[Paul Karp](#)

[@Paul\\_Karp](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 05.44 EDT

Australians who have been vaccinated against Covid would be able to leave the country and return with less strict quarantine requirements under a plan that could be trialled within six weeks.

The federal health minister, [Greg Hunt](#), revealed the proposal in the Coalition party room on Tuesday following a question from Liberal MP Jason Falinski, who had asked whether vaccination could see people exempted from outbound and inbound travel restrictions.

[Federal court rejects challenge to Australia's outbound travel ban](#)  
[Read more](#)

Australia [shut its borders in March 2020](#) in response to the coronavirus pandemic imposing [two weeks hotel quarantine](#) on those arriving into the country.

Outbound travel is also banned – [which was upheld by the full federal court on Tuesday](#) – although more than 140,000 Australian citizens and residents have travelled overseas for critical business, on compassionate grounds or for other exempted reasons.

With Australia struggling to vaccinate its population by the end of 2021, there is pressure on the federal government to provide incentives to get the jab and to ease the travel ban that has separated families.

About 40,000 Australians remain stranded overseas due to flight caps imposed as a result of limited hotel quarantine beds.

Hunt told the [Coalition](#) party room that two weeks ago the government had set up a taskforce to examine how vaccination could interact with Australia's travel rules.

Modelling began on Monday and a pilot program could begin in six to eight weeks' time, the health minister said.

Exemptions would be extended to people vaccinated in Australia or in countries where vaccination status can be reliably verified – such as the UK, US, Canada and Singapore.



Australians are already able to travel to New Zealand and back without going into hotel quarantine. It's [the only country currently categorised as a "green zone"](#) via the trans-Tasman travel bubble.

Guardian Australia understands the government will consider introducing other gradings, such as amber, based on the risk of bringing coronavirus back to Australia, with different quarantine rules to be applied.

For example, fully vaccinated passengers returning from less risky countries could be allowed to take a rapid antigen test, and then a full Covid test, and leave quarantine after negative results.

A spokesman for Hunt told Guardian Australia "the minister had previously stated on a number of occasions that vaccination may bring forward the capacity of vaccinated people to travel".

"Today's advice [to the party room] was consistent with that," he said. "No advice has been received."

[How to reopen Australia: experts explain what's needed for post-Covid international travel sooner than mid-2022](#)

[Read more](#)

In October, the prime minister, Scott Morrison, asked experts to [develop "innovative" alternatives](#) to hotel quarantine, including quarantine in-home, on-farm or on-campus, but [the options were rejected in November](#) on the basis they were not considered safe.

In January, Jane Halton, who conducted a [national review](#) into the system in October, told Guardian Australia hotel quarantine would be needed "until we have a significant proportion of our population vaccinated".

But once vulnerable populations had been vaccinated in Australia "the conversation will change [and] there will come a point we ask ourselves: do we continue to close ourselves off to rest of world?" she said at the time.

Halton made the comments in response to [a call from Liberal MP Andrew Laming to allow home isolation](#), halved timeframes for quarantine, or

quarantine in resort facilities.

In May, Morrison proposed that Australians who had been vaccinated could be exempted from domestic restrictions, such as border bans and lockdowns imposed by the states in response to outbreaks.

The plan met resistance from states such as Queensland and Victoria that wanted to preserve their ability to set restrictions, and from members of the government such as George Christensen who objected on the basis it rendered unvaccinated people second-class citizens.

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## Peru

# Peru has world's worst per capita Covid toll after death data revised

Updated figures give country a per capita death toll of 500 per 100,000 people – double that of Brazil

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



A worker digs a grave in the San Juan Bautista cemetery in Iquitos, Peru, in March. A lack of testing made it difficult to confirm whether a person had died due to the virus or another cause. Photograph: Rodrigo Abd/AP

A worker digs a grave in the San Juan Bautista cemetery in Iquitos, Peru, in March. A lack of testing made it difficult to confirm whether a person had died due to the virus or another cause. Photograph: Rodrigo Abd/AP

*Reuters and Associated Press in Lima*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 02.46 EDT

Peru has almost tripled its official Covid-19 death toll to 180,764, after a government review, making it the country with the highest death rate per capita, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

Peru has been among the hardest hit Latin American countries during the pandemic, with its hospitals overcrowded and demand for oxygen outstripping availability.

The government said it would update its death count, which was 69,342 as of Sunday, in part because of a lack of testing that made it difficult to confirm whether a person had died due to the virus or some other cause.

### [Peru has the world's highest confirmed death rate from Covid-19](#)

According to [Johns Hopkins data](#), Hungary had the highest number of Covid-19 deaths per capita, at about 300 per 100,000 people. With its updated death toll, Peru stands at more than 500 Covid-19 deaths per 100,000 people.

“We think it is our duty to make public this updated information,” said the Peruvian prime minister, Violeta Bermúdez, at a news conference announcing the result of the review.

“What is being said is that a significant number of deaths were not classified as caused by Covid-19,” the health minister, Óscar Ugarte, said. Ugarte said that previously only those who had received a positive diagnostic test were considered to have died from the virus, but other criteria have since been incorporated.

### [Peru coronavirus cases](#)

Questions about Peru's death toll surfaced soon after the pandemic struck. Scenes of cemeteries filling up with new burials and hospitals buying refrigerated containers to act as makeshift morgues suggested the situation was far worse than the official data showed.

In Latin America, Brazil has the highest total Covid-19 death toll with more than 450,000 lives lost because of the pandemic. Based on population,

however, Peru's per capita death toll is more than double that of Brazil, according to the data.

Peru's updated numbers are in line with so-called excess death figures, which researchers have used in Peru and other countries to measure possible undercounting during the pandemic.

Excess deaths data measures the total number of deaths over a period of time and compares it with the same period pre-pandemic.

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## [European Union](#)

# EU plans to lift Covid quarantine rules for vaccinated from 1 July

Deadline set for all 27 EU countries to accept digital passport in time to enjoy a ‘safe and relaxing summer’

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Passengers arriving at Roissy Charles de Gaulle airport near Paris in April. From Tuesday, a system will be ready to allow member states to issue a digital Covid passport to citizens proving their status and freeing them up to travel. Photograph: Ian Langsdon/AFP/Getty Images

Passengers arriving at Roissy Charles de Gaulle airport near Paris in April. From Tuesday, a system will be ready to allow member states to issue a digital Covid passport to citizens proving their status and freeing them up to travel. Photograph: Ian Langsdon/AFP/Getty Images

*[Daniel Boffey](#) in Brussels*

Mon 31 May 2021 10.02 EDT

The starting pistol has been fired on a “relaxing” summer holiday season for people living in the EU from 1 July, as Brussels proposed lifting all quarantine obligations on those who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

From Tuesday, a system will be ready to allow member states to issue a digital Covid passport to citizens proving their status and freeing them up to travel.

With infection rates on a downward trajectory across the bloc, a deadline has been set for 1 July for all 27 EU countries to accept the documentation as sufficient proof of vaccination for restrictions to be lifted.

A negative test or proof of having recovered from infection will confer the same rights on the holder of a certificate. The European Commission has proposed a standard validity period for tests: 72 hours before travel for PCR tests and 48 hours for rapid antigen tests.

The children of those who are fully vaccinated will also be exempt from quarantine under the proposal and as a minimum no one under six years of age will need to take a test. Many countries are likely to set a higher age threshold for the testing of minors.

The intention is that fully vaccinated UK travellers will benefit from the Covid passport system but, in light of the emerging variant first identified in India, EU governments may still impose restrictions on people arriving from the UK including testing and quarantine obligations.

[From Monday, entry to France has been limited](#) to EU nationals, French residents, and those travelling for essential purposes. People arriving from the UK must have tested negative and quarantine for seven days.

While a sudden deterioration in the Covid infection rates in the EU could lead to the use of an “emergency brake” on the lifting of restrictions within the bloc, the intention is to reintroduce free movement as the summer tourism season begins.



Ursula von der Leyen, the commission president, tweeted: “Europeans should enjoy a safe and relaxing summer. As vaccination progresses, we propose to gradually ease travel measures in a coordinated way with our common tool: the EU digital covid certificate. It will bring clarity and predictability as we resume free travel in the EU”.

In addition to the lifting of quarantine on the fully vaccinated from 1 July, the commission has proposed that anyone coming from a “green” region of the EU, such as west Finland, where less than 25 cases per 100,000 people have been recorded during the previous 14 days, should be entirely freed from restrictions.

Those who are not fully vaccinated coming from an “orange” area, with a 14-day cumulative Covid-19 case notification rate of 75, will need to take a pre-departure test.

Didier Reynders, the European commissioner for justice, said: “The last weeks have brought a continuous downward trend in infection numbers, showing the success of the vaccination campaigns across the EU.

“In parallel, we are also encouraging affordable and widely available testing possibilities. In this context, member states are now slowly lifting Covid-19 restrictions both domestically and regarding travel.”

The UK is yet to be added to a “white list” of non-EU countries from where the EU recommends that unvaccinated travellers may safely be permitted to enter the bloc for non-essential reasons. Despite the delay, countries including [Portugal](#) have opened their doors to British tourists.

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## 2021.06.01 - Spotlight

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- [Disaster patriarchy How the pandemic has unleashed a war on women](#)
- ['They had soul' Anton Corbijn on 40 years shooting Depeche Mode](#)
- [New Zealand World's only alpine parrot may have moved to the mountains to avoid people](#)

# Why every single statue should come down

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## Women

# Disaster patriarchy: how the pandemic has unleashed a war on women



In disaster patriarchy, women lose their safety, their economic power, their autonomy, their education, and they are pushed on to the frontlines, unprotected, to be sacrificed. Illustration: Hanna Barczyk/Purple Rain/The Guardian

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As Covid-19 has swept the world there has been an explosion of violence against women, and a full-blown assault on their rights. It's time to fight back against a system that allows women to be sacrificed, erased and violated

[V \(formerly Eve Ensler\)](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

Covid has unleashed the most severe setback to women's liberation in my lifetime. While watching this happen, I have started to think we are witnessing an outbreak of disaster patriarchy.

Naomi Klein was [the first to identify “disaster capitalism”](#), when capitalists use a disaster to impose measures they couldn't possibly get away with in normal times, generating more profit for themselves. Disaster patriarchy is a parallel and complementary process, where men exploit a crisis to reassert control and dominance, and rapidly erase hard-earned women's rights. All over the world, patriarchy has taken full advantage of the virus to reclaim power – on the one hand, escalating the danger and violence to women, and on the other, stepping in as their supposed controller and protector.

I have spent months interviewing activists and grassroots leaders around the world, from Kenya to France to India, to find out how this process is affecting them, and how they are fighting back. In very different contexts, five key factors come up again and again. In disaster patriarchy, women lose their safety, their economic power, their autonomy, their education, and they are pushed on to the frontlines, unprotected, to be sacrificed.

Part of me hesitates to use the word “patriarchy”, because some people feel confused by it, and others feel it's archaic. I have tried to imagine a newer, more contemporary phrase for it, but I have watched how we keep changing language, updating and modernising our descriptions in an attempt to meet the horror of the moment. I think, for example, of all the names we have given to the act of women being beaten by their partner. First, it was battery, then domestic violence, then intimate partner violence, and most recently intimate terrorism. We are forever doing the painstaking work of refining and illuminating, rather than insisting the patriarchs work harder to deepen their understanding of a system that is eviscerating the planet. So, I'm sticking with the word.

In this devastating time of Covid we have seen [an explosion of violence towards women](#), whether they are cisgender or gender-diverse. Intimate terrorism in lockdown has turned the home into a [kind of torture chamber for millions of women](#). We have seen the spread of revenge porn as lockdown has pushed the world online; such digital sexual abuse is now

central to domestic violence as intimate partners threaten to share sexually explicit images without victims' consent.

The conditions of lockdown – confinement, economic insecurity, fear of illness, excess of alcohol – [were a perfect storm for abuse](#). It is hard to determine what is more disturbing: the fact that in 2021 thousands of men still feel willing and entitled to control, torture and beat their wives, girlfriends and children, or that no government appears to have thought about this in their planning for lockdown.

In Peru, hundreds of women and girls have gone missing since lockdown was imposed, and are feared dead. [According to official figures reported by Al Jazeera](#), 606 girls and 309 women went missing between 16 March and 30 June last year. Worldwide, the closure of schools has increased the likelihood of various forms of violence. The US [Rape Abuse and Incest National Network](#) says its helpline for survivors of sexual assault has never been in such demand in its 26-year history, as children are locked in with abusers with no ability to alert their teachers or friends. In Italy, calls to the national anti-violence toll-free number increased by 73% between 1 March and 16 April 2020, according to the activist Luisa Rizzitelli. In Mexico, emergency call handlers received the highest number of calls in the country's history, and the number of women who sought domestic violence shelters quadrupled.

To add outrage to outrage, many governments reduced funding for these shelters at the exact moment they were most needed. This seems to be true throughout Europe. In the UK, providers told Human Rights Watch that the Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated a lack of access to services for migrant and Black, Asian and minority ethnic women. The organisations working with these communities say that [persistent inequality](#) leads to additional difficulties in accessing services such as education, healthcare and disaster relief remotely.

In the US, more than 5 million women's jobs were lost between the start of the pandemic and November 2020. Because much of women's work requires physical contact with the public – restaurants, stores, childcare, healthcare settings – theirs were some of the first to go. Those who were able to keep their jobs were often frontline workers whose positions have put them in

great danger; some 77% of hospital workers and 74% percent of school staff are women. Even then, the lack of childcare options left many women unable to return to their jobs. Having children does not have this effect for men. The rate of unemployment for Black and Latina women was higher before the virus, and now it is even worse.

The situation is more severe for women in other parts of the world. Shabnam Hashmi, a leading women's activist from India, tells me that by April 2020 a staggering 39.5% of women there had lost their jobs. "Work from home is very taxing on women as their personal space has disappeared, and workload increased threefold," Hashmi says. In Italy, existing inequalities have been amplified by the health emergency. Rizzitelli points out that women already face lower employment, poorer salaries and more precarious contracts, and are rarely employed in "safe" corporate roles; they have been the first to suffer the effects of the crisis. "Pre-existing economic, social, racial and gender inequalities have been accentuated, and all of this risks having longer-term consequences than the virus itself," Rizzitelli says.

When women are put under greater financial pressure, their rights rapidly erode. With the economic crisis created by Covid, sex- and labour-trafficking are again on the rise. Young women who struggle to pay their rent are being [preyed on by landlords](#), in a process known as "sextortion".

I don't think we can overstate the level of exhaustion, anxiety and fear that women are suffering from taking care of families, with no break or time for themselves. It's a subtle form of madness. As women take care of the sick, the needy and the dying, who takes care of them? Colani Hlatjwako, an activist leader from the Kingdom of Eswatini, sums it up: "Social norms that put a heavy caregiving burden on women and girls remain likely to make their physical and mental health suffer." These structures also impede access to education, damage livelihoods, and strip away sources of support.

Unesco [estimates](#) that upward of 11 million girls may not return to school once the Covid pandemic subsides. The Malala Fund estimates an even bigger number: 20 million. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, from UN Women, says her organisation has been fighting for girls' education since the Beijing UN women's summit in 1995. "Girls make up the majority of the schoolchildren who are not going back," she says. "We had been making



progress – not perfect, but we were keeping them at school for longer. And now, to have these girls just dropping out in one year, is quite devastating.”

Of all these setbacks, this will be the most significant. When girls are educated, they know their rights, and what to demand. They have the possibility of getting jobs and taking care of their families. When they can’t access education, they become a financial strain to their families and are often forced into early marriages.

This has particular implications for [female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#). Often, fathers will accept not subjecting their daughters to this process because their daughters can become breadwinners through being educated. If there is no education, then the traditional practices resume, so that daughters can be sold for dowries. As Agnes Pareyio, chairwoman of the [Kenyan Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Board](#), tells me: “Covid closed our schools and brought our girls back home. No one knew what was going on in the houses. We know that if you educate a girl, FGM will not happen. And now, sadly the reverse is true.”

In the early months of the pandemic, I had a front-row seat to the situation of nurses in the US, most of whom are women. I worked with National Nurses United, the biggest and most radical nurses’ union, and interviewed many nurses working on the frontline. I watched as for months they worked gruelling 12-hour shifts filled with agonising choices and trauma, acting as midwives to death. On their short lunch breaks, they had to protest over their own lack of personal protective equipment, which put them in even greater danger. In the same way that no one thought what it would mean to lock women and children in houses with abusers, no one thought what it would be like to send nurses into an extremely contagious pandemic without proper PPE. In some US hospitals, [nurses were wearing garbage bags instead of gowns](#), and reusing single-use masks many times. They were being forced to stay on the job even if they had fevers.



We live with two incompatible ideas when it comes to women: that they are essential to every aspect of life; and that they can easily be violated, sacrificed and erased. Illustration: Hanna Barczyk/Purple Rain/The Guardian

The treatment of nurses who were risking their lives to save ours was a shocking kind of violence and disrespect. But there are many other areas of work where women have been left unprotected, from the warehouse workers who are packing and shipping our goods, to women who work in poultry and meat plants who are crammed together in dangerous proximity and forced to stay on the job even when they are sick. One of the more stunning developments has been with “tipped” restaurant workers in the US, already allowed to be paid the [shockingly low wage of \\$2.13 \(£1.50\) an hour](#), which has remained the same for the past 22 years. Not only has work declined, tips have also declined greatly for those women, and now a new degradation called “maskular harassment” has emerged, where [male customers insist waitresses take off their masks](#) so they can determine if and how much to tip them based on their looks.

Women farm workers in the US have seen their protections diminished while no one was looking. Mily Treviño-Sauceda, executive director of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, tells me how pressures have increased on *campesinas*, or female farm workers: “There have been more incidents of pesticides poisonings, sexual abuse and heat stress issues, and there is less

monitoring from governmental agencies or law enforcement due to Covid-19.”

Covid has revealed the fact that we live with two incompatible ideas when it comes to women. The first is that women are essential to every aspect of life and our survival as a species. The second is that women can easily be violated, sacrificed and erased. This is the duality that patriarchy has slashed into the fabric of existence, and that Covid has laid bare. If we are to continue as a species, this contradiction needs to be healed and made whole.

To be clear, the problem is not the lockdowns, but what the lockdowns, and the pandemic that required them, have made clear. Covid has revealed that patriarchy is alive and well; that it will reassert itself in times of crisis because it has never been truly deconstructed, and like an untreated virus it will return with a vengeance when the conditions are ripe.

The truth is that unless the culture changes, unless patriarchy is dismantled, we will forever be spinning our wheels. Coming out of Covid, we need to be bold, daring, outrageous and to imagine a more radical way of existing on the Earth. We need to continue to build and spread activist movements. We need progressive grassroots women and women of colour in positions of power. We need a global initiative on the scale of a Marshall Plan or larger, to deconstruct and exorcise patriarchy – [which is the root of so many other forms of oppression](#), from imperialism to racism, from transphobia to the denigration of the Earth.

There would first be a public acknowledgment, and education, about the nature of patriarchy and an understanding that it is driving us to our end. There would be ongoing education, public forums and processes studying how patriarchy leads to various forms of oppression. Art would help expunge trauma, grief, aggression, sorrow and anger in the culture and help heal and make people whole. We would understand that a culture that has diabolical amnesia and refuses to address its past can only repeat its misfortunes and abuses. Community and religious centres would help members deal with trauma. We would study the high arts of listening and empathy. Reparations and apologies would be done in public forums and in private meetings. Learning the art of apology would be as important as prayer

The feminist author Gerda Lerner wrote in 1986: “The system of patriarchy in a historic construct has a beginning and it will have an end. Its time seems to have nearly run its course. It no longer serves the needs of men and women, and its intractable linkage to militarism, hierarchy and racism has threatened the very existence of life on Earth.”

As powerful as patriarchy is, it’s just a story. As the post-pandemic era unfolds, can we imagine another system, one that is not based on hierarchy, violence, domination, colonialisation and occupation? Do we see the connection between the devaluing, harming and oppression of all women and the destruction of the Earth itself? What if we lived as if we were kin? What if we treated each person as sacred and essential to the unfolding story of humanity?

What if rather than exploiting, dominating and hurting women and girls during a crisis, we designed a world that valued them, educated them, paid them, listened to them, cared for them and centred them?

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## [Music](#)

### Interview

# **‘They had soul’: Anton Corbijn on 40 years shooting Depeche Mode**

[Alexis Petridis](#)



‘I felt they had soul’ ... Dave Gahan in Denmark, 1987. Photograph: All images © 2020 Anton Corbijn

‘I felt they had soul’ ... Dave Gahan in Denmark, 1987. Photograph: All images © 2020 Anton Corbijn

He thought they were pop lightweights – then turned them into moody megastars. The photographer recalls his adventures with the band, from desert trips to drug-induced near-death experiences



Tue 1 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

By his own cheerful admission, [Anton Corbijn](#)'s relationship with Depeche Mode did not get off to a flying start. It was 1981 and Corbijn was the NME's new star photographer, having previously been lured to the UK from his native Netherlands by the sound of British post-punk, particularly Joy Division. His black and white portraits became iconic images of that band's brief career, and Corbijn had gone on to take equally celebrated shots of everyone from Captain Beefheart to David Bowie.



‘I felt they had soul’ ... Anton Corbijn in 2018. Photograph: Laura Lezza/Getty Images

[Depeche Mode](#), on the other hand, were a synthpop band from Basildon, Essex, whose career already appeared to be in trouble after only two hit singles. Ominously, Vince Clarke, the band’s chief songwriter, failed to turn up for one of Corbijn’s shoots, and would announce his departure a couple of months later.

Not that Corbijn was bothered: he didn’t like [Depeche Mode](#), preferring “more guitar-oriented stuff”. He had already seen them live, but they left so little impression he forgot. When the band – reassembled with Alan Wilder replacing Clarke and Martin Gore installed as songwriter – asked to work with him again, he repeatedly declined: “It’s just more pleasing if you take photographs of people whose work you admire,” he shrugs, over a Zoom call from his studio in The Hague. Then, five years after their initial meeting, he finally agreed to make a video for their single *A Question of Time*, but only because he fancied a trip to the US. “I realised they had changed,” he says, “and somehow I realised how good their music and my visuals actually went together. But it was a surprise.”





‘I realised how good their music and my visuals went together’ ... Martin Gore on route to LA, 1988. Photograph: 2020 Anton Corbijn

It was the start of a 40-year partnership that grew from taking photos and directing videos to Corbijn becoming the band’s visual director, designing everything from their logos to their album sleeves to their stage sets – an association that’s celebrated in a new book, *Depeche Mode* by [Anton Corbijn](#). In retrospect, it looks like an obvious pairing. A band whose debut album had been dismissed by Rolling Stone as “PG-rated fluff”, Depeche Mode became increasingly dark and ambitious musically as the 80s progressed. They needed visual gravitas to match, and Corbijn’s grainy black and white images and hand-painted album sleeves certainly gave them that. “I felt people associated synthesiser music with being technical and emotionally distant,” he says, “and I felt they had soul. I think I had an approach that’s more in that direction, and that made the difference.”

Moreover, Gore’s songs frequently examined faith and belief – Blasphemous Rumours, Personal Jesus, virtually the entirety of 1992’s *Songs of Faith and Devotion* album – a subject that chimed with Corbijn’s upbringing. “My father was a pastor, and so were my uncles and grandfathers,” he says. “Up until the age of 10 or 11, I wanted to become a missionary. Until I read that in New Guinea, two missionaries got eaten, and that was off the table. I didn’t know what to do with my life until I was 17 and got a camera in my

hand. I guess I realised that Martin gets some energy and ideas out of religious writing and the Bible. Combined with my background, I think that felt very natural.”



‘They trust it somehow’ ... Depeche Mode in Santa Barbara, California, 2000. Photograph: 2020 Anton Corbijn

Corbijn also seems to have been blessed with an acute insight into what made Depeche Mode work. In the late 80s, he published a book called *Strangers*, featuring photographs of the band in Prague and the Mojave Desert, ostensibly to emphasise their burgeoning popularity both in eastern Europe and the US. In the former, they look like austere European electronic artists; in the latter – stripped to the waist, strumming guitars amid the cacti – like a traditional rock band. The fact that they were actually both feels central to their vast success. “Totally,” he nods. “[Dave \[Gahan\]](#) is a rock’n’roll guy, Martin much less so. I think that’s the tension in the band – which direction do we go in with this song or that song. He’s a great frontman, Dave, he’s fantastic. At his age, and having been clinically dead, it’s nothing short of a miracle that he performs and sings as well as he does.”



‘[It’s] as if he’s praying for Dave’ ... Daniel Miller (right), and Dave Gahan.  
Photograph: 2020 Anton Corbijn

Gahan “clinically died” in 1996, his heart stopping for two minutes after taking a cocktail of heroin and cocaine in an LA hotel. It was the culmination of a period during which Gahan descended into addiction, had a drug-induced heart attack on stage and attempted suicide. Gore succumbed to alcoholism and began having stress-induced seizures, Wilder quit the band and Alan Fletcher suffered a nervous breakdown, all while Depeche Mode were at the zenith of their success. Violator, from 1990, had sold 7.5m copies; *Songs of Faith and Devotion* went to No 1 on both sides of the Atlantic; an ensuing tour lasted 14 months, the band performing on a stage set Corbijn had designed “without knowing the limitations of what you could do”. It involved two stages, one on top of the other, and proved so costly that it was abandoned halfway through the dates. “But it was amazing while it lasted,” laughs Corbijn.

Two photos in the book sum the period up perfectly: in one, “just a snapshot really”, an emaciated-looking Gahan stares out of a window while, outside, Mute Records founder Daniel Miller appears to clasp his hands “as if he’s praying for Dave”; in another, Gahan lies topless on a hotel bed after a gig in Frankfurt, his stomach and arms a mass of scars and scratches. “Some of them are because he dived into the audience during the show, and some of

them are self-inflicted,” says Corbijn. “It really sums up, I think, the lowest point of Depeche and Dave: that was just before he went into the spiral that ended with him clinically dead. I showed it because obviously he came out of that, so it shows you the depth and the power he had, the discipline, to get out of that.”



‘Lowest point’ ... Dave Gahan bearing his scars. Photograph: 2020 Anton Corbijn

Corbijn has continued working with the band to the present day – he directed the 2019 documentary, [Spirits in the Forest](#), about the “very intense” relationship Depeche Mode’s fans have with the band’s music, despite his own career taking him from photography to Hollywood. [Control](#), his acclaimed biopic of Joy Division’s Ian Curtis, began a directing career that’s included working with George Clooney on the thriller [The American](#), the late [Philip Seymour Hoffman](#) on the John le Carré adaptation [A Most Wanted Man](#), and Robert Pattinson on the James Dean biopic [Life](#). It is, he concedes, a curious relationship he has with Depeche Mode: he has no contract, no job title. “It goes from one project to the next and I assume I’m involved.”

He says he only realised he was something more than a favoured photographer and director when the band agreed to his idea for the video for

the 1990 single [Enjoy the Silence](#) – despite the fact that they hated it. “I thought, ‘OK, they care for me or care about my ideas, they trust it somehow.’” The video, which featured Gahan as a king carrying a deckchair through a variety of landscapes, became hugely successful on MTV, propelling the single into the US Top 10. Its imagery subsequently inspired the lyrics of Coldplay’s Viva La Vida, for which Corbijn also directed [a similarly themed video](#).



They hated it ... Dave Gahan in Portugal for the Enjoy the Silence video, 1990. Photograph: 2020 Anton Corbijn

For the most part, he says, Depeche Mode just leave him to get on with it, a marked contrast to his other celebrated regular clients, [U2](#). “U2 are a band who believe in meetings, so everything has a meeting. With Depeche, it’s an exception to have a meeting at all. When I did visuals for The Joshua Tree 30th anniversary tour, I also filmed the show in Mexico City. After the concert, U2 all came to look at the footage. At midnight! For two hours! I mean, Depeche – you couldn’t get them to watch a minute. It’s an incredible difference in attitude. But that’s also the charm of Depeche. They don’t do many interviews, there’s no big plans, they just make a record and tour.”

Besides, he says, their laissez-faire arrangement works. “I think that lack of reining me in forces me to be great,” he says, “because I want to be great for

them. I don't want their trust to be an accident. I want their trust to be earned."

[Depeche Mode by Anton Corbijn is out now, published by Taschen.](#)

This article was amended on 1 June 2021. An earlier version referred to photographs of Joy Division in snow-covered Manchester, and said they were taken by Corbijn. They were actually taken by Kevin Cummins, and this reference has been removed.

- In the UK, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org). You can contact the mental health charity Mind by calling 0300 123 3393 or visiting [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

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## [New Zealand](#)

# World's only alpine parrot may have moved to the mountains to avoid people

Intelligent and mischievous, New Zealand's kea were once present in other parts of the country, research has found, and adaptability could help them survive habitat loss



The endangered kea is the world's only alpine parrot, and one of the most intelligent birds Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

The endangered kea is the world's only alpine parrot, and one of the most intelligent birds Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

[Tess McClure](#) in Queenstown

[@tessairini](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 23.29 EDT

New Zealand's rare, highly endangered alpine parrots may have headed for the mountains to avoid people – and researchers say their adaptability could



help them survive the climate crisis.

The kea is considered the only alpine parrot in the world. But scientists analysing DNA sequencing and fossil records have found kea were once present in other parts of the country.

The news is something of a knock to the kea's internationally unique "alpine parrot" status. But it may also be a saving grace for the endangered bird, making it more capable of surviving habitat loss or increased competition.

[Study finds parrots weigh up probabilities to make decisions](#)  
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Being an alpine specialist can make species like kea particularly vulnerable to the climate crisis – as the planet heats, alpine environments retreat, more competitive lowland species push in, and [species that adapted specifically to alpine conditions](#) can be threatened with extinction. Research from Europe, for example, has found up to [22% of species studied on glaciers in the Italian Alps](#) would disappear from the area once the glaciers had gone.

University of Otago researchers used whole genome data of the kea, and a similar, forest-adapted "sister species" of native parrot, the kākā. They were looking to identify the genomic differences associated with the two birds' habitat specialisations – but did not find major genomic differences associated with high-altitude life. They conclude that the kea may instead be a generalist, which was "using the alpine zone to – for example – avoid lower lying anthropogenic landscapes".

Associate professor Michael Knapp, one of the paper's lead authors, said that "Physiologically, there is nothing to stop the kea from surviving at lower altitudes. It's a generalist. It will survive from sea level to alpine."

['Wanted, preferably alive': the \\$10,000 search for New Zealand's 'ghost' bird](#)  
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He said that idea that kea had moved specifically to avoid people was still speculative, and there wasn't enough information to establish any causative relationship between human settlements expanding and the birds' adoption

of mountainous zones. But given kea were physically able to survive in a variety of habitats, it made sense to examine what the primary differences were. “What distinguishes the alpine habitat from the New Zealand lower-lying open habitats? [There] are usually heavily anthropogenic influences, agriculture going on and so on.”

Kea have certainly come into conflict with New Zealand’s human populations before. They are a particularly intelligent, mischievous and inquisitive species, known for their love of attacking rubber windshield wipers on the cars of mountain visitors.

Over the years, they’ve made headlines for rummaging through tourist bags, stealing wallets and in one case, making off with an unlucky [Scottish tourist’s passport](#). But among farmers, they acquired notoriety for [attacking and occasionally killing sheep](#). The attacks so incensed early New Zealand sheep farmers that the government put up a ‘bounty’ on kea beaks – a policy that continued for about 100 years, until 1970. [Analysis of government bounty payments found that](#) an estimated 100,000 kea were killed for bounty. According to New Zealand’s [Department of Conservation](#), kea today are nationally endangered, with only around 3000-7000 birds remaining in the country.

Those culls, Knapp said, would have put “huge pressure on the birds”.

“Again, is that what got them completely out of the lower zone, that they would just be shot if they were anywhere near humans?” Knapp asked. “These are all potential factors ...[but] more information is needed to really make that connection.”

Researchers speculated that the kea’s adaptation to alpine environments may have been helped along by its personality. The change in habitat, they wrote, “may have facilitated – or have been facilitated by – the evolution of the kea’s unique behavioural repertoire, which includes high inquisitiveness, learning and problem-solving abilities”.

If global heating dramatically shrinks alpine habitats for kea, they could return to the forests – a move that would push them back into competition with kākā. When New Zealand [passed a motion to declare a climate](#)

[emergency](#) in 2020, it specifically cited the “alarming trend in species decline and global biodiversity” including the decline in New Zealand’s indigenous biodiversity. But at present, New Zealand is struggling to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, and is [not on track to meet its obligations under the Paris climate accords](#) – or to meet its own goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

The paper was [published in the journal of Molecular Ecology](#).

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## [Opinion](#)**Mental health**

# Covid's 'lost generation' may be more resilient than we think

[Lucy Foulkes](#)

The fact most mental health problems begin in adolescence doesn't mean that most adolescents will suffer mental illness



'Many youngsters reported that they enjoyed having more time to develop hobbies, or to hang out with their families and pets.' A teenage girl skating in Brighton. Photograph: Scott Ramsey/Alamy Stock Photo

'Many youngsters reported that they enjoyed having more time to develop hobbies, or to hang out with their families and pets.' A teenage girl skating in Brighton. Photograph: Scott Ramsey/Alamy Stock Photo

Tue 1 Jun 2021 01.00 EDT

If you're ever going to experience a mental illness, it will most likely start in your adolescent years. One 2005 study found that about 75% of all mental

illness starts [by age 24](#); another from 2003 found that this number might even start [by age 18](#). We have known this for some time, long before the pandemic began. Then Covid-19 erupted, triggering a fresh wave of headlines about young people's mental health and a "[lost generation](#)".

There's good reason to be concerned. Initial evidence [suggests](#) that, in the early months of the pandemic at least, emotional problems increased on average in young people. This is unsurprising: lockdowns cause a great deal of stress for this age group, disrupting education and limiting vital contact with friends. Some young people will have been especially vulnerable, such as those who lost loved ones or spent lockdown in homes marked by conflict or violence.

But Covid or no Covid, adolescence has always been a period of heightened risk for mental health problems. To understand why, we need to think about what adolescence is actually for, evolutionarily speaking. Consider what a child is like before puberty: they are immature, vulnerable and highly dependent on their parents. By the end of adolescence (roughly [about age 24](#)), a person can support and look after themselves, manage complex social interactions and navigate sexual relationships. That's quite the journey. The route involves a number of dramatic, protracted changes to a person's physical body and psychological functioning, ignited by a surge of hormones and underpinned by extensive development in the brain.

All being well, this is nothing more than a bumpy ride. But it's this exact series of changes that can sometimes go off piste, and this can trigger a mental disorder. In the words of [one group](#) of researchers studying adolescent mental health, "moving parts get broken".

Take social development. To become a fully functioning, independent adult, a person must peel away from their parents and develop intimate, complex relationships with their peers. To achieve that, they need to understand and care about what other people think and feel about them. You can do this to an extent as a child, but in adolescence these skills really pick up, as you gradually learn the intricate dance that is adult social interaction.

Typically developing teens learn how to grasp subtext and identify sarcasm, jokes and lies. They become better at identifying subtle meaning in a

person's tone of voice, facial expressions and body language, and they use this to figure out who likes them, who is flirting with them and who might be a threat. This is cognitively demanding stuff: adolescents expend a great deal of brain power thinking about their peers.

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But it's easy to see how this social focus could cause problems. For some adolescents, the tendency to think about friends ramps up a little too much, and they become fixated on what others think of them. In its extreme manifestation, this can become social anxiety disorder (Sad), which is characterised by months of debilitating worry about social interactions. Sad most often rears its head in the early teenage years; it has been called the "[prototypical adolescent disorder](#)".

There are many other examples. Thanks to their newfound biological drives, many adolescents embark on sexual relationships. Most of the time, this doesn't cause issues, but when teenage sex goes wrong, it goes badly wrong. It can result in unwanted pregnancies or humiliating sexting incidents. Adolescents' drive to try risky new things – again, entirely necessary to become an adult who understands what is and isn't safe – can trigger any number of mental health problems, from the trauma of a car accident to substance abuse or addiction.

The growing ability to ruminate, which is necessary for learning from past behaviour, maintaining healthy relationships and developing a nuanced sense of self, can go off the rails and escalate into depression. Laid out like this, adolescence sounds disastrous: a ghost train through a haunted house, passing through an endless number of potential pitfalls and shocks.

If all this sounds a little bleak, take heart. When we talk about serious levels of psychological distress in adolescents – the level that might be considered a disorder – we are talking about the minority. For example, a study in July 2020 found that [16% of five-16-year-olds](#) have a "probable mental disorder" – but this means 84% of participants *didn't* meet criteria for a disorder. As we continue the important task of raising mental health awareness, we



mustn't fall into the trap of thinking that every adolescent is in crisis, or that all adolescent pain is indicative of ill-health. Plenty of people navigate the "[storm and stress](#)" of these years without any significant emotional cost.

Of course, we need to pay close attention to the 16%, and the others who are struggling but don't meet the threshold for a disorder. But even in the pandemic, some young people have coped well. For example, when adolescents are interviewed in detail about their experiences during lockdown, a mixed picture emerges. Many of them found it difficult, but others [reported](#) that [they enjoyed](#) having more time to develop hobbies, or to hang out with their families and pets. For some teenagers, lockdown might actually have [removed](#) key sources of stress in their life – such as school bullying and peer pressure. When 11-16s were [asked](#) in July 2020 how lockdown had affected their lives, 42.8% said their life was worse, but 29.6% said there had been no change; 27.5% said their life had actually improved.

Even among the teenagers who found lockdown hard, many displayed remarkable resilience. They found ways [to adapt](#) to their exceptional circumstances, such as by maintaining friendships via video calls and social media, or strengthening relationships at home. In fact, some degree of stress – provided it's at a manageable level and time-limited – can even be helpful for young people in the long run, because it provides them with the opportunity to develop coping strategies for later challenges.

Calling today's teenagers the "lost generation" is useful to a point. It hopefully means funding bodies will prioritise research into the impact of the pandemic and what can be done to mitigate its effects. It's useful if it means schools and universities make allowances for how disruptive this year has been for young people, and it's useful if it means mental health services finally get the funding they need. Even pre-pandemic, too many adolescents with mental disorders were waiting [too long](#) to get help, or not getting help at all.

But I would urge caution. The implication when something is lost, after all, is that you might not get it back. And making any generalisation about a "generation" implies everyone is the same, when they're not. We badly need to support those adolescents who are in crisis, and ideally, prevent them

from getting to that point in the first place. We need to tackle the systemic issues that make young people vulnerable, and understand why, even before Covid-19, mental health problems in this age group were on the rise. But in parallel, we should also explore and celebrate what makes young people resilient. Yes, most mental illness begins in adolescence – but that doesn't mean most adolescents will experience a mental illness.

- Lucy Foulkes is an honorary lecturer in psychology at UCL, and author of *Losing Our Minds: What Mental Illness Really Is – and What It Isn't*

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## OpinionTrade policy

# **A clause in the UK-Australia trade deal could let companies sue governments. We have been here before**

[Patricia Ranald](#)

Australians remember Philip Morris suing the government. We should not hand UK corporations the same weapon



Philip Morris found a Hong Kong-Australia investment agreement which included ISDS and sued the government for billions in compensation for lost revenue due to Australia's plain cigarette packaging laws. Photograph: Martin Rickett/PA

Philip Morris found a Hong Kong-Australia investment agreement which included ISDS and sued the government for billions in compensation for lost revenue due to Australia's plain cigarette packaging laws. Photograph: Martin Rickett/PA

Tue 1 Jun 2021 01.59 EDT

The British trade minister [has confirmed](#) that corporate rights to sue governments are being discussed in the final negotiations for the Australia-UK free trade agreement before an announcement at the G7 meeting in the UK on 11 June.

The agreement is part of the post-Brexit rush by the UK to conclude deals to make up for its loss of zero tariff access to the huge European market. It's therefore puzzling that the UK appears to be promoting, and that Australia may agree to, investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions which are likely to fuel community opposition to the deal in both Australia and the UK.

[Alarm at secret court scheme in UK-Australia trade deal](#)

[Read more](#)

All trade agreements have state-to state-dispute processes. ISDS is an optional extra only included in some bilateral and regional trade agreements. ISDS began when former colonies became independent and provided compensation to companies if their assets were expropriated. But the system has developed concepts like “indirect expropriation”, “legitimate expectations” and “fair and equitable treatment”, which allow corporations to seek compensation by claiming that regulatory changes reduce the value of their investment and/or that they were not fairly consulted about the change.

ISDS is unpopular because it gives global (but not local) corporations special rights to sue governments for millions of dollars in international tribunals if they can argue that changes to regulation by any level of government will harm the value of their investment. ISDS claims can be made over public health, environment and other public interest laws made by democratically-elected governments.

Legal experts such as the former high court chief justice [Robert French](#) have noted that ISDS has no independent judiciary. Cases are conducted by temporary tribunals staffed by [practising advocates](#) who can represent a corporation in one case and then sit on a tribunal the next. There are no precedent or appeals, leading to inconsistent decisions.

Even when governments win ISDS cases, they lose taxpayers' money that could be better spent elsewhere

Australians remember that the US [Philip Morris tobacco company sued Australia](#) for billions over our plain packaging law. The Philip Morris company could not sue under the US-Australia free trade agreement, because community opposition resulted in the Howard government refusing to include ISDS in the 2004 agreement.

Tobacco companies comprehensively lost a compensation claim in Australia's high court, and had to pay the government's costs. Philip Morris found an obscure Hong Kong-Australia investment agreement which included ISDS, shifted some assets to Hong Kong, declared they were a Hong Kong company and claimed billions in compensation, prompting community outrage.

It took the international tribunal almost five years to decide that [Philip Morris was not a Hong Kong company](#) and the tribunal could not hear the case. It took a further two years and two FOI requests to reveal that Australia's legal costs were \$24m, and only half of this was recovered. So even when governments win ISDS cases, they lose taxpayers' money that could be better spent elsewhere.

There are now [1,104 known ISDS cases](#), with increasing numbers against [health](#) and environment laws, including laws to address [climate change](#) and to protect [Indigenous rights](#).

Community opposition has pressured increasing numbers of governments to reject ISDS. The 27 EU member states have [terminated ISDS arrangements between themselves](#), and ISDS has been excluded from current talks for the EU-Australia free trade agreement. The US and Canada have excluded ISDS cases against each other from the revised North America free trade agreement, known as the [United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement](#).

More recently, strong community campaigns resulted in exclusion of ISDS from the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#) (RCEP) signed in

November 2020 between Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, South Korea and the 10 Asean nations.

UK companies are [frequent users of ISDS](#) with 90 recorded cases, the third-highest number after the US and the Netherlands. Inclusion of ISDS in the UK FTA would expose Australia to UK company cases for the first time.

[The legal clause which could allow Adani to sue Australia | Patricia Ranald](#)  
[Read more](#)

For example, Rio Tinto is listed as a UK company. Community and shareholder protest at the destruction of the Juukan Gorge Indigenous sacred sites recently led to a [public apology and resignation of its CEO](#). The Western Australian government is currently considering stricter regulation of Indigenous sacred sites on mining leases. ISDS requires that foreign investors are consulted about changes to regulation. If Rio Tinto objects to such regulation, it would have the option of suing, or threatening to sue the Australian federal government for compensation. Such threats can have a freezing effect on the development of regulation.

Another example is the UK company Bupa, which is one of the largest owners of nursing homes in Australia. If the government follows the recommendations of the royal commission into aged care and regulates for improved staffing levels and quality of care, Bupa could insist on being consulted and could sue for compensation, again with a freezing effect on regulation.

ISDS defenders point out that there are some exceptions for health, environment and Indigenous rights legislation in most agreements. But these exceptions do not prevent cases from being launched. Governments can only use exceptions to defend cases, which means they still bear the legal costs.

The Australian government should not hand UK corporations a weapon to use against democratically decided public interest legislation.

Dr Patricia Ranald is an honorary research associate at the University of Sydney and honorary convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network

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## [Opinion](#)[Fossil fuels](#)

# Shell's historic loss in The Hague is a turning point in the fight against big oil

[Tessa Khan](#)

The oil giants that have helped drive the climate crisis are finally being forced to take responsibility for their actions



‘This decision marks several legal firsts with global implications.’ Donald Pols, director of Milieudefensie, celebrates after the ruling in The Hague. Photograph: Remko de Waal/ANP/AFP/Getty Images

‘This decision marks several legal firsts with global implications.’ Donald Pols, director of Milieudefensie, celebrates after the ruling in The Hague. Photograph: Remko de Waal/ANP/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 1 Jun 2021 04.00 EDT

On a rainy afternoon in The Hague, the district court [delivered a judgment](#) against Royal Dutch Shell, the parent company of the Shell group. It refuted

the excuses regularly relied on to continue extracting oil and gas and vindicated longstanding calls to keep fossil fuels in the ground. The court held that Shell's current policy of merely reducing the "carbon intensity" of its products by 20% by 2030, and aiming to reach net zero by 2050, would contribute to climate impacts that endanger the human rights of the plaintiffs.

The extraordinary events preceding the oil industry's so-called [Black Wednesday](#) bring to mind the proverbial path to bankruptcy: it happens gradually, and then all at once. Hot on the heels of a [landmark report](#) by the global energy body the International Energy Agency warning against new fossil fuel production, Wednesday's historic ruling has blown another hole in the defences of an industry that has overwhelmingly failed to accept responsibility for driving the climate emergency.

The court found that Shell's policy is inadequate to meet the requisite standard of care under Dutch law, and ordered that the carbon emissions of the Shell group's global activities be reduced by 45% by 2030 relative to 2019. Further, it held that this obligation relates to Shell's entire energy portfolio and required that it cuts its operational emissions while making best efforts to reduce the emissions of its suppliers and emissions of its end users or customers by 45%. This is huge: Shell not only has to clean up emissions created by extracting oil and gas, but also has legal responsibilities in relation to the emissions produced by burning those products.

The decision marks several legal firsts with global implications. It is the first time that a court has found that a company has a legal duty to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in line with the goals of the Paris climate agreement. It is also the first time that international human rights standards have been used to inform a binding emissions-reduction obligation for a company.

Just as importantly, the court set a new precedent by scrutinising and rejecting some of the most common arguments used by the fossil fuel industry to justify its business model. It was unconvinced by [Shell's claim](#) that reducing its emissions is pointless because its competitors will simply fill the gap by extracting and selling more oil and gas. The court referred to

evidence that limiting fossil fuel production does in fact reduce emissions, and even if it accepts the claim, Shell is not absolved of the need to control emissions for which the company is responsible. Further, given the global need to reduce oil and gas extraction, other companies will also be required to take similar steps, levelling the competitive playing field.

Shell's argument that it is simply responding to continued demand for oil and gas, commonly referred to as the "drug dealer's defence", received similar treatment. The court was clear that the energy products that Shell supplies influences demand. Regardless, it reasoned, Shell still has an individual responsibility for the emissions over which it has control.

It is hard to overstate the consequences of a decision that is already being hailed as a turning point for big oil. Given the replicability of the arguments and the international standards and common facts that comprise the basis of the case, it will inspire a wave of similar actions around the world. The judgment has put the industry and its financial backers on notice that a company setting distant net zero targets without credible short-term action to reduce emissions exposes it to the risk of litigation, with knock-on effects expected for the cost of capital for oil and gas projects.

[We are passionate climate warriors. Our legal battle is not over but my heart is a bit lighter | Ava Princi](#)

[Read more](#)

A [lawsuit](#) in France against oil major Total is likely to be the next case in which a company's climate policy is tested against binding human rights standards. Dozens of cases seeking compensation from fossil fuel companies for climate impacts are already playing out in US courts, and [a recent case in the UK](#) exposed the public subsidies received by oil and gas producers. While Shell has indicated it will appeal against the district court's decision, there is no guarantee it will succeed – as the Dutch government learned when it [lost twice on appeal](#) in another landmark climate case.

This is a judgment that will be pored over by lawyers and campaigners for months and years to come. It leaves open intriguing questions that will undoubtedly be tested in boardrooms and courtrooms, including whether or not – given the attribution of [responsibility for Shell's climate policy to its](#)

[CEO](#) – it creates a new avenue for liability of company directors. The door to real corporate accountability for the climate crisis is finally wide open.

No discussion of the case should omit the fearlessness and perseverance of the plaintiffs and their lawyers, led by Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands), a cohort of other Dutch NGOs, and more than 17,000 individual co-plaintiffs. To take on one of the world's richest, most powerful companies in court is brave in any circumstances. To do so when the arguments you are making are unprecedented is extraordinary. That courage has paid off in ways that may change the course of history.

- Tessa Khan is an international human rights and climate crisis lawyer and campaigner, and the founder and director of Uplift

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## [OpinionArchitecture](#)

# What should Britain's memorial to the Covid pandemic look like?

[Eddie Blake](#)

Erecting a monument alone wouldn't be sufficient – after the first world war, whole villages were built in remembrance

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The Covid memorial wall on the Thames embankment in London, organised by campaign group Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice . Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

The Covid memorial wall on the Thames embankment in London, organised by campaign group Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice . Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 1 Jun 2021 03.00 EDT

Memorials aim to be an eloquent last word on an event. A key quality is that they resist change: they attempt to fix for us an abiding sense of what exactly has happened. They can be many things: columns, tombs, plaques, cenotaphs, village halls, even housing. But who are they for? The people who suffered, their families, the wider public or future generations?

At some point, inevitably, there will be an official, national memorial of the pandemic in the UK (as well as many more, surely, at local and international levels). What, then, should it look like? It will have to contend with how messy the past year has been – the death, the sorrow, the fear, but also the ensuing political and social division. Perhaps through all of that, memorialisation can play a therapeutic role.

Memorials naturally remove some of the complexity of the past, replacing it with something smoother, better suited to a broad audience: the [tomb of the Unknown Warrior](#) doesn't address one specific loss, so it can talk of all loss. Because of this universal ambition it is vital public memorials hit the right tone – being both honest and broadly interpretable, tending to avoid friction. As a result, though, memorials can feel as if they don't talk to you directly or seem too vague. But at a time when narratives are brutally contested, it seems unlikely that a pandemic memorial will avoid controversy, no matter how skilful the architect.

There have already been several attempts to memorialise the lives lost around the world during the pandemic, from the heartfelt and [informal](#) to the [grandiose](#).

Most recently, St Paul's Cathedral in London has announced it is fundraising to [create a memorial](#) from its online book of remembrance. Although these early expressions show there is a need to remember, none have fully grasped the scale of such an era-defining event.

Sir Edwin Lutyens, in designing the Cenotaph to remember those lost in the first world war, tackled the problem of remembering through abstraction. The calm, mute form reached beyond allusion or literal interpretation. Yet Lutyens' attempt was criticised by Church of England bishops for being too [ecumenical and secular](#).



After the first world war, the British government erected monuments to mark the conflict across the UK and the empire. They also built many memorial halls and in some cases social housing as a more ambitious tribute to the fallen. The idea originated after the Boer war, but by 1919 had expanded to whole “memorial villages”, which included traditional monuments to the dead but also housing and provision for employment. A good example of this can be found at [Westfield War Memorial Village](#), Lancaster. The mundane everyday-ness of it somehow makes it all the more poignant.

Site is crucial to how memorials work. Take London, where we have a kind of monument zone littered with commemoration, stretching from Trafalgar Square, down Whitehall, to Parliament Square and up to Hyde Park. The memorials sit next to places of power, marking them as an official record of events.

In the design of public memorials the pendulum has swung between abstraction and figuration. There is always a tension between the need to represent tangible things, and the need to go further, communicating a larger idea. Sometimes memorials suffer from being very literal: the [7 July Memorial](#) in Hyde Park, for instance, has 52 stelae standing in for the 52 victims of the 2005 London bombings. It feels almost too direct.

More striking is the solemn presence of the recently unveiled memorial to Cherry Groce in Brixton, south London, which makes a political point. Groce was a black woman who was [shot by the Metropolitan police](#) in her own home in 1985. The incident left her paralysed, and ultimately killed her in 2011. The memorial, [designed by David Adjaye](#), consists of a heavy solid triangle supported by a single column above a seating deck – all in immutable cast stone. There is an emphasis on the void beneath the structure, but then the seating also invites people to engage physically. The visible weight communicates something abstract about strength while also offering shelter. Topped by planting, it alludes to the potential for growth. Adjaye’s architecture uses abstraction to capture the ineffable nature of loss.

The pandemic is a unique, historically significant event, and should be commemorated as such. Ultimately a memorial to the pandemic will have to be for all: the dead, the survivors and future generations. Mass death is



nothing new, but our shared year of distance and solitude is perhaps what sets this experience apart. The extended isolation, the screen-mediated existence, and the clear understanding that this disease affects us all: how can a memorial capture this?

Architecture can contain the inexpressible. The really hard job of remembrance can be communicated through dumb stone. It is pathetic, pitiful even, that sometimes the best we can do as a species when confronted with oblivion is to pile up stones and write names on them. But it remains a valuable way of commemorating not just the dead, but also the trauma of those who survived and the experience of the wider public.

Perhaps, taking a lesson from 100 years ago, we can contemplate a bigger leap and revisit some of the ethos of memorial villages. Building more social housing as an act of remembrance would be a way of making those piled-up stones mean something more. It would also serve to remind us of the extremely domestic experience the pandemic. And, given the importance of parks and open spaces throughout this time, why not invest more public money in them? We could have a living response to the incomprehensibility of death.

- Eddie Blake is the director of architecture and research practice at Studio Palace in London

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## [OpinionCats](#)

# I love my new garden – I just wish it didn't come with a gang of neighbourhood cats

[Emma Beddington](#)



I didn't realise that when I moved to the suburbs I would be pushed into a war with so many felines intent on menacing the birds and my plants



On the prowl ... I am learning that when you move to the suburbs, you are allocated a quota of cats. Photograph: Juniors Bildarchiv GmbH/Alamy

On the prowl ... I am learning that when you move to the suburbs, you are allocated a quota of cats. Photograph: Juniors Bildarchiv GmbH/Alamy

Tue 1 Jun 2021 02.00 EDT

I have been wondering why no one eats the bird seed at the front of the house: my husband has the answer. He recently sent me a picture captioned “This is why”: three muscular cats draped over the wall, inches from my feeders. Seemingly relaxed, they nevertheless project an aura of lazy homicidal menace. I wouldn’t want to walk past them myself, so it’s [hardly surprising birds are put off](#).

I am learning that, when you move to the suburbs, you are allocated a quota of cats. Not your own: just some cats that are now part of your life, like it or not. By my calculations, it’s approximately 1.5 cats per head. We have the front yard gang, plus a sleek black puma-sized one that sits next to my small hens, appraisingly. The vegetable patch also has a cat tenant: a judgmental tabby who gets annoyed when I interrupt his busy schedule of digging up and defecating on my seedlings. Then there’s Derek, 20, confused and bony, often found by the back door emitting the haunting wail of a lost toddler (he’s my favourite).

[Cats killing huge numbers of British birds, Sir David Attenborough warns](#)  
[Read more](#)

Nowhere I have lived before has involved much feline interaction, so this is all new. I find my new feline neighbours beautiful and respect their general unbothered “vibe”. However, as a bird lover during fledgling season and as someone now responsible for keeping plants alive, I have been thrust, involuntarily, into the role of sworn cat enemy. I have acquired an ultrasonic cat repeller (my cat quota all sit in front of it, licking their bits) and am contemplating an eccentric installation of sticks to deter the seed-digging tabby. Sometimes, as if compelled by an external force or ancestral instinct, I find myself banging on a window, indignantly making shooing noises as a cat stares blankly back at me.

I suppose we are all just fulfilling our destinies: the cats being wild bird murderers (the [New Yorker recently reported on research](#) indicating cats are genetically far closer to their wild ancestors than dogs are to theirs). Mine seems to be gesticulating impotently at them through windows.

Emma Beddington is a Guardian columnist

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## Myanmar

# Rise of armed civilian groups in Myanmar fuels fears of full-scale civil war

Dozens of grassroots people's defence forces have emerged to take on brutal military



A photo issued by Myanmar's shadow national unity government (NUG) shows People's Defence Force (PDF) soldiers who have been training to challenge the ruling junta. Photograph: National Unity Government/EPA

A photo issued by Myanmar's shadow national unity government (NUG) shows People's Defence Force (PDF) soldiers who have been training to challenge the ruling junta. Photograph: National Unity Government/EPA

*Reporter in Yangon and [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) in Bangkok*

Mon 31 May 2021 20.00 EDT

Myanmar is on the verge of a new civil war, a spokesperson for the country's parallel government has warned, as communities increasingly take up arms to protect themselves from a relentless campaign of military violence.

Conflict has raged for decades in Myanmar's borderlands, where myriad ethnic armed groups are fighting with the military for greater autonomy. Since February's coup, however, dozens of new, grassroots people's defence forces have emerged to oppose the junta, with battles occurring in areas of the country that were previously peaceful.

"The people of Myanmar have been left with no other choice. They just have no other option left," said [Dr Sasa](#), spokesperson for Myanmar's national unity government (NUG), which was set up by pro-democracy politicians.

The constant threat of military raids, arrests, torture and killings had pushed communities to take up arms, he said.



Military troops and police on patrol in Kayah state, eastern Myanmar, Sunday 23 May 2021. Photograph: AP

"It is just the beginning. The situation will become out of control. Even if it is one man in a village, they will not just bow in front of these murderers. It is the whole country on the road to civil war," Sasa said.



Over the past week, tens of thousands of people have been displaced in eastern Kayah state by intense fighting between the military, the newly formed Karenni People's Defence Force and the Karenni Army, an established ethnic armed group. On Monday evening, the military used helicopters to bomb and fire at civilian fighters, the Karenni People's Defence Force told local media. "We attacked with light weapons but they responded with artillery shells," a the KPDP member told the independent outlet [Myanmar Now](#).

At least 58 defence forces have formed across the country, of which 12 are active, according to the [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project \(Acled\)](#), a non-profit that tracks conflict. These groups are formed at a local level and are not necessarily officially linked to the NUG. Groups have revealed little about the nature of their training, but their resources and intensity vary.



A demonstration in Hpakant, Kachin state, in support of Mindat, Chin state, where local militia clashed with the military. The signs read: 'Stay strong Mindat, Hpakant is behind you.' Photograph: Kachinwaves/AFP/Getty

In the town of Mindat in Chin state, one of the poorest areas of the country, volunteers armed with little more than traditional hunting guns rose up against the military in May. Elsewhere, young city dwellers have fled to the

jungle to learn how to make homemade explosives. Celebrities are among those who have announced that they are joining training – from a former beauty queen who represented Myanmar in the Miss Grand International contest, Htar Htet Htet, to Han Htoo Lwin, known as Kyar Pauk, the lead singer of punk rock band Big Bag.

In Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon, members of the security forces have been targeted in a wave of attacks over the past week, including shootings and explosions. A wedding party was also targeted, reportedly because the groom was suspected of being a military informant. Four people were killed – including the bride – after a bomb was disguised as a gift, according to local media. No one has claimed responsibility for the blasts.

Schools across the country, some of which have been occupied by the military, have been bombed or set alight by unknown perpetrators, in what may be an attempt to reinforce the shutdown of the education system by anti-coup protesters. The junta has ordered parents to register their children to return to school, but the vast majority have not done so. More than half of the teachers working in state schools are on strike, according to local media.

Such attacks, including the targeting of individuals suspected of colluding with the military, were a worrying trend, said Richard Horsey, senior Myanmar adviser to [Crisis Group](#). “It will be difficult to contain once this kind of violence becomes the norm. It's hard to shut these dynamics down again later.”

The NUG, which has spoken of plans to build a new federal army, has urged anti-coup groups to follow ethical guidelines and not target schools or hospitals. It released a video on Saturday showing the first batch of defence force troops who have finished training.

Some ethnic armed groups have offered support to anti-coup forces, though others are ambivalent. Groups could seek to exploit the coup for their own territorial gains, further complicating the crisis.

Anti-coup defence forces face an infamously brutal military that has an estimated 400,000 armed personnel, making it the second largest in south-east Asia after Vietnam's. It is supplied primarily by China and Russia,

drawing on generous state funding as well as its lucrative business networks – which campaigners are trying to weaken by placing pressure on international companies.

[Myanmar: fossil fuel giants cut payments to junta but gas still flows](#)  
[Read more](#)

Sasa is calling for the international community to recognise the NUG as the official leaders of Myanmar. Doing so, he said, would help the body to demand that oil and gas companies, such as Total and Chevron, hand over payments to democratic officials rather than army generals.

“It is an insult to us that the gas that is from the land of Myanmar is being used by these military generals, and being paid for by Total company or [other] western companies, to buy weapons from Russia and China to kill the people of Myanmar,” he said.

Nine neighbouring south-east Asian countries have reportedly proposed that a draft UN resolution be weakened by removing a call for an arms embargo.



Dr Sasa, known by only one name, in a video projected on a screen during a night-time demonstration in Yangon. He has called for the international



community to recognise the NUG as Myanmar's leadership. Photograph: STR/AFP/Getty

Sasa called for like-minded countries to push for the measure, and to introduce tougher, targeted sanctions. The more the international community delayed, he added, "the more bloody it will become, the closer we get to civil war and genocide".

More battles are already reported to have taken place in Myanmar in the first half of 2021 than in the entirety of last year, according to Aced. It has also tracked sharp increases in reports of attacks on civilians, and reports of explosions and other forms of remote violence, which include the deployment of artillery, shelling, grenades or IEDs.

Previously, conflict was concentrated in Rakhine state and northern Shan state, but it has now spread more widely across the country. This is likely to place pressure on local commanders, said Horsey, but it is hard to know what impact it will have on the military as a whole.

"They are quite large, they have a lot of military resources and they are not concerned at all about civilian casualties. In fact, their whole approach to internal conflict over the decades has been to deliberately target civilians as part of a quite brutal counter-insurgency strategy," Horsey said.



Protesters demonstrate against the military coup in Shan state, 2 May 2021.  
Photograph: Shwee Phee Myay News Agency/AFP/Getty Images

Salai Za Uk Ling, deputy executive director of the [Chin Human Rights Organization](#), said people from Mindat reported the military had used civilians as human shields during recent clashes. Thousands of people from the town remain stranded just as the rainy season was beginning, he said.

“They say they are getting very, very desperate. There has been some delivery of food aid and basic medical aid from volunteers, but there has been no large-scale delivery,” he added, warning of an impending humanitarian crisis. Covid-19 is also spreading along the Indian border.

At least 833 people have been killed by the military since it seized power in February, according to estimates by the advocacy group [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma](#). Thousands have been detained, often in unknown locations where they are at risk of torture.

An activist who has met young people who are training to fight the military, and who asked to remain anonymous, said volunteers believed violence was the only language the military understood. “They want to scare the soldiers coming into their communities making arrests, beating and torturing,” she said. “Some people are hoteliers, some have their own restaurants, bars – and they have now left all their businesses.”

One young medical student had fled alone to train, the activist said. “She was so passionate because her friends got killed. Her place was terrorised under martial law. She saw people burning alive in front of her. That experience pushed her to pick up the gun.”

## Palestinian territories

# Senior figures attack ‘obstruction’ of ICC’s Palestine investigation

Exclusive: Open letter signed by dozens of European ex-officials calls for end to ‘unwarranted public criticism’ of inquiry into alleged war crimes

- [Attack on the ICC must be condemned – letter](#)



Fatou Bensouda, the international criminal court’s chief prosecutor, announced the launch of the investigation in March. Photograph: Bas Czerwinski/AP

Fatou Bensouda, the international criminal court’s chief prosecutor, announced the launch of the investigation in March. Photograph: Bas Czerwinski/AP

[\*Peter Beaumont\*](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 15.00 EDT

More than 50 former foreign ministers, prime ministers and senior international officials, including two British Conservative former ministers, have signed an open letter condemning political interference in efforts by the international criminal court (ICC) to investigate alleged war crimes in Palestine.

[The letter](#) follows moves by the Trump administration to sanction court officials – orders that have since been reversed by the Biden administration – and is also seen as a rebuke of Boris Johnson, the British prime minister.

Johnson said last month that [an ICC investigation opened in March](#) gave “the impression of being a partial and prejudicial attack on a friend and ally of the UK’s”, referring to Israel. The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, [has said](#) that any ICC investigation would be “pure antisemitism”.

Condemning the “increasing attacks on the ICC, its staff and cooperating civil society groups”, the letter identifies the Trump administration’s moves against the court as part of a wider trend.

“We witnessed with serious concern the executive order issued in the United States by the former president Donald Trump and the sanctions designated against the court’s staff and their family members,” the letter says.

“Deeply worrying is now the unwarranted public criticism of the court regarding its investigation of alleged crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory, including unfounded accusations of antisemitism.”

“It is well established and recognised that accountability for serious rights violations by all sides to a conflict is essential for achieving a sustainable and lasting peace. This is the case in Israel-Palestine, just as in Sudan, Libya, Afghanistan, Mali, Bangladesh/Myanmar, Colombia, and Ukraine.

“Attempts to discredit the court and obstruct its work cannot be tolerated if we are serious about promoting and upholding justice globally,” the signatories add while pushing back against complaints of the kind levelled by Johnson, which he made in a letter to the Conservative Friends of Israel.



“We understand fears of politically motivated complaints and investigations. Yet we strongly believe that the Rome statute guarantees the highest criteria of justice and provides a crucial avenue to address impunity for the world’s most serious crimes. Failure to act would have grave consequences.”

The ICC’s investigation has also run into opposition from other European countries, including Germany, whose foreign minister, Heiko Maas, has said that the “court has no jurisdiction because of the absence of the element of Palestinian statehood required by international law”.

The signatories to the letter come from across Europe’s political spectrum, and include the Conservative former cabinet ministers Sayeeda Warsi and Chris Patten; Douglas Alexander, former Labour secretary of state for international development; Sir Menzies Campbell, former leader of the Liberal Democrat party; and Ben Bradshaw, a Labour former minister of state at the Foreign Office.

Among international signatories are a number of former prime ministers, including Jean-Marc Ayrault of France, Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, John Bruton of Ireland, Ingvar Carlsson of Sweden, and Massimo d’Alema of Italy. Others who have signed the letter include the former Nato secretary general Javier Solana, and Hans Blix, former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Defending the current investigation into alleged war crimes in Palestine, the Danish former foreign minister and former president of the UN general assembly, Mogens Lykketoft, told the Guardian: “A rules-based global order is predicated upon the idea that violations of international law must be met with consequences.

“The international criminal court is a crucial tool to that end, and it is incumbent upon us to protect its independence and strengthen its ability to work. Challenging the independence of the court, on the contrary, challenges the protection of a global rules-based order.

“The current investigation of the international criminal court can be an important component of this, and the international community must do what it can to protect the independence of the court in carrying out its work.”

While the letter does not mention Johnson by name, his intervention underlined concerns over attempts to hobble the ICC's investigation, which was formally announced earlier this year.

The Palestinian mission to the UK described Johnson's letter as a "deeply regrettable" contradiction of international law and previous British policy.

"It marks a low point in UK-Palestine relations and undermines the UK's credibility on the international stage," it said. "It is clear that the UK now believes [Israel](#) is above the law. There is no other interpretation of a statement that gives carte blanche to [Israel](#)."

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/31/senior-figures-attack-obstruction-of-iccs-palestine-investigation>

## Rights and freedomGlobal development

# Migrant guards in Qatar ‘still paid under £1 an hour’ ahead of World Cup

Promises of better working conditions ring hollow for tens of thousands of security guards, who say they still work long hours for low pay



A security guard at Souq Waqif, a market in Doha, Qatar. Despite reforms, many migrant workers are still paid below the minimum wage of £1 a hour. Photograph: DeGe Photo/Alamy

A security guard at Souq Waqif, a market in Doha, Qatar. Despite reforms, many migrant workers are still paid below the minimum wage of £1 a hour. Photograph: DeGe Photo/Alamy

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# HUMANITY UNITED

[About this content](#)

[Pete Pattisson](#)

Tue 1 Jun 2021 02.29 EDT

Every day at 5pm, Samuel boards the company bus that takes him to his night shift as a guard at a luxury high-rise tower near Qatar's capital, Doha. When his shift ends 12 hours later, he says he will have earned £9, just 75p an hour.

Samuel, who is from [Uganda](#), says he almost never has a day off. "You have to tell lies, like 'you are sick, you're not feeling good', so that you get a day off," he says.

When football fans touch down in Qatar next year, security guards such as Samuel are some of the first people they are likely to meet – politely checking their bags at the airport, greeting them outside their hotels and patrolling the shopping centres, parks and stadiums.

As Samuel talks, the clanging of a construction site and the screaming engine of a supercar echo in the background. In the distance, illuminated by the lights on construction cranes, the [Lusail Stadium](#) is nearing completion. Next year, as 80,000 spectators fill the huge bowl-shaped arena to watch the

World Cup final, they will rely on thousands of private security guards for the smooth running of the event.

Qatar recently boasted of introducing “comprehensive and long-lasting” [labour reforms](#), including a new minimum wage, in response to widespread criticism of the state’s treatment of its vast low-wage workforce.

The UN’s International Labour Organization says that [more than 400,000 workers](#) will benefit from the new minimum wage and the Qatari authorities say 100,000 workers have changed jobs since the reforms were introduced.

Yet men like Samuel say they have yet to see the benefits. He says he is paid below the minimum wage, which is only £1 an hour plus food and board. Qatar’s labour reforms mean migrant workers are now able to change jobs without their employer’s permission, which they needed under the traditional *kafala* system, but in reality it does not appear to be that easy. “I’m working a 12-hour duty, I have no days off. How can I look for a job?” Samuel says.

In recent weeks, guards from two security companies have [staged protests](#) over their pay and conditions. One of the companies had supplied guards for the Fifa Club World Cup in February, according to the German broadcaster WDR. The Qatari authorities say they stepped in to resolve the disputes, but the incidents have exposed the gap between the promises of reform and the experience of some workers.

Qatar and Fifa are facing increasing calls from national football associations to step up their efforts to protect workers’ rights. Last week, six Nordic associations [wrote to the Fifa president, Gianni Infantino](#), urging him to ensure human rights are respected at “all facilities used before, during and after the World Cup”.

“It is a matter of utmost importance for the football community across the globe ... that the theatre of the greatest dreams in football also can be the stage of human rights, respect and anti-discrimination,” the letter said.

The security guards employed directly at [World Cup](#) stadiums and venues may benefit from strict welfare standards imposed by the events’ organising

committee, but thousands of people deployed at other sites across Qatar are more vulnerable to abuse.

Robert, a Kenyan guard on the same shift, says he earns even less than Samuel – just 65p an hour. His contract, seen by the Guardian, states he must work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. “I feel exhausted but if you ask for a day off they tell you ‘we will deduct it [from your salary] this month’,” he says.

I feel exhausted but if you ask for a day off, they tell you they will deduct pay from your salary

*Robert, security guard*

As demand for security guards in Qatar has grown, with more than 40,000 private security guards and 74 private security companies already operating in the Gulf state, more east and west African migrant workers have been recruited with the promise of secure jobs and lucrative salaries. Most hand over large fees to recruitment agents in their home countries to secure the jobs.

Once in Qatar, they say, the lie is exposed. “What you think [you are going to earn] is not what you find this side,” says Samuel, who paid an agent the equivalent of £1,500 for his job.

Workers say they often find themselves housed in cramped and squalid dorms, working long shifts with few days off and having to stand for hours in searing temperatures.

The Qatari government told the Guardian it had strengthened its ability to identify and punish companies that try to evade its labour laws, with more than 7,000 penalties issued to businesses for labour offences in the last quarter of 2020.

Some, like Robert, are willing to put up with the low wages and long hours. “Life here is difficult but if I stop working right now, who will assist my family back home? Nobody. So I have to work whatever,” he says. Samuel says when his contract ends he is going home and will never return to Qatar.

Samuel and Robert asked the Guardian not to use their real names for fear of repercussions. They have good reason to be afraid.

[Rights group fear for migrant activist ‘disappeared’ in Qatar](#)  
[Read more](#)

On 5 May, Malcolm Bidali, a Kenyan security guard and blogger who wrote about the plight of migrant workers, was [detained](#) by Qatar’s state security services. Human rights groups have said his detention may be linked to his articles about workers’ welfare, although the authorities stated that a Kenyan national was under investigation for violating security regulations.

For the past year, Bidali has documented the mistreatment, discrimination and humiliation he and his fellow migrant workers face, in a series of online articles under the pseudonym “Noah”. In one, he described his accommodation: “We were crammed, six of us, into a tiny room in a labour camp ... Said room was characterised by bunk beds, mould and bedbugs ... eight toilets for 72 of us on each floor.”

On Saturday, Bidali was charged with “offences related to payments received by a foreign agent for the creation and distribution of disinformation” in Qatar.

A spokesperson for Migrant-Rights.org, an organisation supporting worker’s rights in the Gulf, said none of Bidali’s writing can be considered “disinformation”.

“He was always nuanced and multi-layered, with the sole intent of improving conditions in Qatar – not maligning the country. These charges appear to serve to intimidate others who exercise their right to freedom of expression,” the spokesperson said.

James Lynch, a director at Fairsquare Projects, which advocates for worker’s rights, called the charges “very concerning.”

Lynch said, “Everything we have seen indicates that this is a case of a migrant worker freely expressing his opinions and being locked up as a result.”



In a statement, a spokesperson for the Qatari government said workers were “strongly encouraged to file complaints ... if they believe a law has been broken. When reported to the authorities, most complaints are resolved in an efficient and timely manner.

“Achieving systemic change is a long-term process and shifting the behaviour of every company will take time. By strengthening its enforcement procedures, Qatar is winning the battle against companies that think they can bypass the rules.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jun/01/migrant-guards-in-qatar-still-paid-under-1-an-hour-ahead-of-world-cup>

## [Canada](#)

# Calls to find all Canada's Indigenous unmarked graves after school discovery

First Nations groups say giving children proper burial will help families find closure following discovery of 215 bodies at Kamloops school



Children's shoes were placed on parliament hill in Ottawa, Ontario, after the discovery of more than 200 child bodies at Kamloops Indian residential school, once Canada's largest such school. Photograph: Adrian Wyld/AP

Children's shoes were placed on parliament hill in Ottawa, Ontario, after the discovery of more than 200 child bodies at Kamloops Indian residential school, once Canada's largest such school. Photograph: Adrian Wyld/AP

*Agencies*

Mon 31 May 2021 21.34 EDT

Indigenous groups in [Canada](#) are calling for a nationwide search for unmarked graves at residential school sites after the discovery of the remains

of more than 200 children at one former school last week shocked the country.

Prime minister [Justin Trudeau](#) said on Monday that searching for more unmarked graves was “an important part of discovering the truth” but did not make specific commitments.

“As prime minister, I am appalled by the shameful policy that stole Indigenous children from their communities,” Trudeau said.

“Sadly, this is not an exception or an isolated incident,” he said. “We’re not going to hide from that. We have to acknowledge the truth. Residential schools were a reality – a tragedy that existed here, in our country, and we have to own up to it. Kids were taken from their families, returned damaged or not returned at all.”

[Canada: remains of 215 children found at Indigenous residential school site](#)  
[Read more](#)

Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk’emlups te Secwépemc people said last week they had [found the remains of 215 children](#), some as young as three, buried on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian residential school, once Canada’s largest such school, with the help of ground-penetrating radar.

She described the discovery as “an unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented”.

In meetings across the country, Indigenous communities are now working to figure out how best to investigate, said grand chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.

“It’s absolutely essential that there be a national programme to thoroughly investigate all residential school sites in regard to unmarked mass graves,” he said.

Perry Bellegarde, chief of the Assembly of First Nations, has said while it is not new to find graves at former residential schools, it’s always crushing to have that chapter’s wounds exposed.

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Saskatchewan government have said they want Ottawa to help research undocumented deaths and burials at residential schools in the province. Federation chief Bobby Cameron said finding the children's remains and giving them proper burials was important to help First Nations communities and families find closure.

The federation has compiled a list of initial sites where it hopes to complete radar ground searches.

Sol Mamakwa, an opposition lawmaker with the New Democrat party in Ontario, joined the calls, saying: "It is a great open secret that our children lie on the properties of former schools. It is an open secret that Canadians can no longer look away from."

Between 1831 and 1996, Canada's residential school system forcibly separated more than 150,000 First Nations children from their families as part of a program to assimilate them into Canadian society. They were subjected to abuse, malnutrition and rape in what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission tasked with investigating the system called "cultural genocide" in 2015. They were forced to convert to Christianity and not allowed to speak their native languages.

Indigenous leaders have cited that legacy of abuse and isolation as the root cause of epidemic rates of alcoholism and drug addiction on reservations.

[Canada must not ignore Indigenous 'genocide', landmark report warns](#)  
[Read more](#)

Opposition New Democrat leader Jagmeet Singh called on Monday for an emergency debate in parliament, saying: "Anytime we think about unmarked mass graves, we think about a distant country where a genocide has happened. This is not a distant country."

Opposition Conservative lawmaker Michelle Rempel Garner said: "This discovery is a stain on our country. It is one that needs to be rectified."

Last week's announcement sparked outrage, prompting flags to be flown at half-mast and people to lay hundreds of tiny shoes in public squares, places of government and on the steps of churches, in reference to the role of Christian churches from a range of denominations in running the schools.

There have long been rumours within Indigenous communities, also discussed by the commission, of children buried at these schools.

The Kamloops school operated between 1890 and 1969, when the federal government took over operations from the Catholic church and operated it as a day school until it closed in 1978.

The fourth volume of the commission's report, titled Missing Children and Unmarked Burials, identified 3,200 children who died at residential schools, about a third of whom were not named. Since that report's publication in 2015, an additional 900 have been identified.

Parents "spoke of children who went to school and never returned", the report reads.

A working group established by the commission in 2007 proposed, among other things, a study to identify unmarked gravesites. While the federal government initially denied the C\$1.5m (\$1.2m) needed to conduct this work, the government announced in 2019 C\$33.8m over three years for a "national residential school student death register" and an online registry of residential school cemeteries.

Richard Gagnon, archbishop of Winnipeg and president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, said he wanted to express "our deepest sorrow for the heart-rending loss of the children at the former Kamloops Indian residential school".

*With Reuters and Associated Press*

This article was amended on 1 June 2021 to remove references to "mass graves" from the headline and text, unless specifically described as such in quotes.

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## Uganda

# Assassination attempt on Ugandan minister kills daughter and driver

Gunmen open fire on car carrying Gen Katumba Wamala in suburb of the capital, Kampala

00:38

Ugandan minister speaks from hospital bed after assassination attempt – video

*Reuters in Kampala*

Tue 1 Jun 2021 09.46 EDT

Gunmen have opened fire on a car carrying a Ugandan government minister in an attempted assassination, wounding the former army commander and killing his daughter and driver, the military and local media have said.

Four attackers on motorcycles shot at a four-wheel drive vehicle carrying Gen Katumba Wamala, the minister for works and transport, on Tuesday in the Kampala suburb of Kisaasi, the local television station NBS reported.

The president, [Yoweri Museveni](#), condemned the attack, blaming it on criminals, terrorists and “pigs who do not value life”. In a Twitter post he said authorities already had clues in the case and that the criminals responsible would be defeated.

Images circulating on social media showed Wamala in apparent distress beside the car with his mouth open and his trousers splattered with blood.

Police investigators have searched the area, examining bullet holes in the car and casings left on the ground.





Gen Katumba Wamala once served as the head of Uganda's police. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

The private television station NTV Uganda broadcast social media footage of Wamala speaking in hospital. Referring to his daughter, who was in the car with him, he said: "I have survived, we have lost Brenda ... The bad guys have done it, but God has given me a second chance."

Brig Gen Flavia Byekwaso, an army spokesperson, told Reuters: "There was a shooting involving him ... he is hurt and he's been taken to the hospital. His driver was killed."

A government official said a local resident was also shot and wounded in the incident and was in hospital.

Wamala once served as the head of Uganda's police, who have been accused of human rights abuses by campaigning groups, including arbitrary arrests and torture of opposition activists. The police deny carrying out such abuses.

There have been several unsolved assassinations and mysterious deaths of high-profile officials in the east African country in recent years that have fuelled speculation about perpetrators and their motivations.

Victims have included a lawmaker, a senior police officer, the country's top public prosecutor and senior Muslim leaders. Nearly all were committed by gunmen on motorcycles.

[Uganda police drive-by killings revealed using mobile phone footage](#)  
[Read more](#)

The attempt on Wamala's life took place in the same suburb in the capital where in 2017 gunmen on motorcycles sprayed bullets at a vehicle carrying a senior police officer. That police officer, Felix Kaweesa, was killed alongside his bodyguard and driver.

In 2019, the government installed a CCTV camera system on main roads in Kampala and other big towns to curb such high-profile homicides. But many Ugandans have complained that the CCTV network has not helped police solve many killings involving opposition activists and members of the public.

The former opposition MP Latif Ssebagala told reporters he hoped the incident would prompt investigators to look afresh at the unsolved killings.

“This is very unfortunate because when you see that even those who are guarded – even those who are in military attire – are not feared, can be attacked, then that will explain [how] the entire country in terms of security is lacking,” he said.

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## Headlines monday 31 may 2021

- [Coronavirus End of England Covid lockdown on 21 June increasingly in doubt](#)
- [UK Blackburn with Darwen overtakes Bolton to top list of most new Covid cases](#)
- [Universities Students in England call for 30% Covid discount on tuition fees](#)
- [Housing Charity's plea for tenants as eviction ban ends](#)

## [Coronavirus](#)

# End of England Covid lockdown on 21 June increasingly in doubt

Date for lifting remaining curbs may be moved amid warnings of third wave driven by India variant

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Bolton, one of the areas in England targeted with rapid vaccine programmes and surge testing amid exponential growth in the variant first found in India. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Bolton, one of the areas in England targeted with rapid vaccine programmes and surge testing amid exponential growth in the variant first found in India. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

[Damien Gayle](#) and agencies  
[@damiengayle](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 05.10 EDT

The 21 June target for scrapping England's remaining coronavirus restrictions appears increasingly under threat, as a senior government adviser said the country was in the early stages of a third wave.

Prof Ravi Gupta, a member of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag), told BBC Radio 4's Today programme there had been "exponential growth" in new cases, with the variant first detected in India accounting for three-quarters.

Asked if the third wave had begun, Gupta replied: "Yes."

He added: "Of course, the numbers of cases are relatively low at the moment – all waves start with low numbers of cases that grumble in the background and then become explosive – so the key here is that what we are seeing here is the signs of an early wave.

"It will probably take longer than earlier waves to emerge because of the fact that we do have quite high levels of vaccination in the population, so there may be a false sense of security for some time, and that's our concern."

Speaking later on the same programme, the environment secretary, George Eustice, said the government "couldn't rule anything out" when asked whether [reopening would go ahead on 21 June](#).

"The rates are going up again slightly but from a low base and probably to be expected, given there are a significant number of younger people who are now out and mixing but haven't had the vaccine – I suppose that is to be expected," Eustice said.

"But the right thing to do in a couple of weeks' time is to assess that data before deciding what we can do."

Asked whether businesses should prepare for a delay to the unlocking, Eustice replied: "I've said all along, as has Matt Hancock and the prime

minister, we can't rule anything out because we know this has been a difficult pandemic, a dynamic situation.

“We have to make that judgment a couple of weeks before. It will only be by then that we will see the full impact of the latest easements we made on 17 May, so I know everyone wants to know what is going to happen but we can't actually make that judgment until we see the impact of the easements just made.”

Prof Adam Finn, from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, said authorities ought to have a clear picture of the pandemic before easing any restrictions.

Finn said while the country's vaccination programme “will ultimately give us ... protection” against the India coronavirus variant, key markers in the community should be taken into account before the next phase of reopening.

[Don't drop 'data, not dates' approach, UK adviser warns as Covid cases surge](#)  
[Read more](#)

“I think it's unfortunate that everyone's got this particular date in their head, because really what we need to do is understand how things are going and adjust accordingly,” Finn told ITV's Good Morning Britain.

“What we've done wrong in the past is left it too late and delayed making decisions, ultimately pushed them back and then ended up with large waves of infection.

“This time around, we should be cautious, wait to see what's happening, and then let everyone free, if you like, once we know for sure that's safe and that we can do that without having another round of lockdowns and so on.”

The latest warnings come after Nadhim Zahawi, the vaccines minister, on Sunday [refused to deny](#) that some restrictions such as mask wearing and working from home might remain in place to reduce the spread of the virus.

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# Blackburn with Darwen overtakes Bolton to top UK list of most new Covid cases

North-west region's highest seven-day rate since February boosted by large number of 17 to 18-year-olds

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



A volunteer puts up signs outside a mobile vaccination clinic in Blackburn, north-west England, last week. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

A volunteer puts up signs outside a mobile vaccination clinic in Blackburn, north-west England, last week. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

[Maya Wolfe-Robinson](#) and agencies

Mon 31 May 2021 10.52 EDT

Blackburn with Darwen has replaced Bolton as the area of the UK with the highest rate of new cases of Covid-19, with a large number among younger people in both areas.

Enhanced surge-testing began in Blackburn on Friday, with council staff door-knocking in areas with high rates, to hand out PCR tests. The army has also been called to staff community hubs to provide test kits.

The high rates in Blackburn are particularly among 17- to 18-year-olds, according to the council's director of public health, who has called for children as young as 12 to be prioritised for vaccines as soon as it is safe.

A total of 584 confirmed cases were recorded in Blackburn with Darwen in the seven days to 26 May, Public [Health](#) England said. This is the equivalent of 390.1 cases per 100,000 people – the highest seven-day rate for the area since the start of February, according to analysis by the PA Media news agency.

Dominic Harrison, the director of public health at Blackburn with Darwen council, said older teenagers were “struggling the most at the moment”.

In a tweet on Sunday evening, [he said](#): “[Blackburn with Darwen] rates for 15-19s is raised because of 17-18yo rate of over 1050 /100,000. I think late teenage/young adults are struggling most at the moment – we need 12-18 vaccination prioritised in high-transmission areas as soon as judged safe/effective.”

In surge-testing areas, PCR tests will be left for every member of the household, including children over 11. Harrison said the increased testing would aid understanding of how rapidly the variant was spreading across Blackburn.

Meanwhile, unions have warned that increased pressure to the local hospital may force the closure of its A&E service and cause delays to test results,

including antibody tests, as biomedical scientists began three-week strike action on Monday. Twenty-one scientists employed by East Lancashire NHS Trust, based at the Royal Blackburn hospital and Burnley General Teaching hospital, are locked in a dispute over back pay they say they are owed.

Unite regional officer, Keith Hutson, said its members had “faced unprecedented challenges since the beginning of the pandemic”. He said the strike action, which is planned to last until 21 June, would “inevitably cause disruption” across the trust, but that the scientists “feel they have been left with no other option, as management has reneged on its promise to pay the money owed”.

East Lancashire NHS Trust did not respond to a request for comment.

The seven-day rate in Bolton stands at 386.7 cases per 100,000. This is down from 452.8 on 21 May, and suggests the recent surge in cases in the town, driven by the B.1.617.1 variant, first discovered in India, may have peaked.

Dr Helen Wall, the senior responsible officer for the Covid vaccine programme in Bolton, warned against complacency. “I’m pleased to report that things are starting to slow in terms of the rise here in Covid cases, but we really can’t rest on that. It’s only been a few days of the rates slowing down so we really are keen to keep pushing forwards and get the rates down further,” she told BBC Breakfast.

Wall said there were very young populations in many of the areas that have recorded the highest rises in Bolton, and each time the age came down for vaccine eligibility thousands more people were able to come forward for the jab.

“I think the age of eligibility going down every few days has really helped, and will really help us, if we can get those people through the doors to be vaccinated asap,” she said.

Bolton, in Greater Manchester, shares a border with Blackburn with Darwen, which is in neighbouring Lancashire. Both areas have reported some of the

highest numbers of cases of the India variant, with Bolton recording 1,354 up to 25 May – the highest in the country – and Blackburn recording 361.

Health teams in both local authorities have been running surge testing, along with [“surge vaccinations”](#) to boost take-up among everyone who is eligible for the vaccine.

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## Universities

# Students in England call for 30% Covid discount on tuition fees

University students propose rebate for coronavirus-affected tuition, funded by increased interest rates

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Students' unions say the £1bn cost of the 30% rebate would be paid for only by high-earning graduates. Photograph: Chris Radburn/PA Media

Students' unions say the £1bn cost of the 30% rebate would be paid for only by high-earning graduates. Photograph: Chris Radburn/PA Media

[Rachel Hall](#)

[@rachela\\_hall](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 02.00 EDT

University students in England are offering to accept higher interest rates on their loans in exchange for an immediate £2,700 discount on their tuition fees as compensation for the disruption to their education caused by the Covid pandemic.

A group of students unions led by the London School of Economics and the University of Sheffield have written to the education secretary, Gavin Williamson, and the universities minister, Michelle Donelan, to propose that the government funds a 30% tuition fee rebate for all students this year by increasing interest rates by 3% to 6.2%, meaning it would be repaid only by the highest earning graduates.

The letter stated: “We are asking for immediate financial justice for Covid-affected cohorts of university students. In an ideal world, education should be free; however, in a year when students are calling for compensation on their fees, we have created a fiscally neutral solution to adjust tuition fees, supporting students with a one-off payment.”

The student leaders, who are all from research universities in the Russell Group, based their calculations on [modelling from the London Economics](#) consultancy. It suggested that increasing the interest rate on student loans would mean that the £1bn cost of the 30% rebate would be paid for by high-earning graduates, because loans are written off after 30 years, rather than the taxpayer or graduates on low incomes.

The average male graduate would pay £6,500 more in loan repayments over their lifetime, with the very highest earners paying up to £29,800 more, but female graduates on average salaries could repay the same amount because their lifetime earnings are lower.

The pandemic meant most students were barred from their campuses from the end of the autumn term until 17 May, so they missed out on in-person teaching, access to facilities such as libraries, and social and extracurricular activities. Many were frustrated to find themselves unable to access rooms in halls of residence and flats they had already paid for.

“Universities pitched themselves wrong in the summer of 2020. They were overzealous in their recruitment of students, which contributed to unrealistic

expectations of what this academic year would look and feel like. It's led to a situation where students are extremely angry they're being charged extortionate prices for their education," said David Gordon, the general secretary of LSE students' union.

Some students have voiced their anger with universities this year through rent strikes, building occupations and socially-distanced protests. Gordon said the refund modelling was an attempt to find a constructive way to speak to the government about compensation after exhausting other avenues, including the Competition and Markets Authority, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, which handles student complaints, and the Office for [Students](#), the higher education regulator for England.

The letter was signed by 17 students' unions from LSE, UCL, King's College and Queen Mary in London, Queen's University in Belfast, and the universities of Exeter, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Leeds, York, Glasgow, Durham, Manchester, Cardiff, Sheffield and Bristol. Students in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland signed the letter in a display of solidarity with unions in England.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Universities have a strong track record in delivering excellent blended tuition, and we have been clear from the start of the pandemic that the quality and quantity should not drop.

"The Office for Students will be monitoring to ensure this is the case, and universities should be open about what students can expect."

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/may/31/students-in-england-call-for-30-covid-discount-on-tuition-fees>



## [Renting property.](#)

# Help struggling tenants weather end of Covid eviction ban, urges poverty charity

Joseph Rowntree Foundation fears ‘two-tier recovery’ with homeowners receiving more support than renters during pandemic

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) said the government had been setting the country up for a ‘two-tier recovery’ by prioritising wealthier homebuyers. Photograph: Peter Byrne/PA

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) said the government had been setting the country up for a ‘two-tier recovery’ by prioritising wealthier homebuyers. Photograph: Peter Byrne/PA

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#)

[@kalyeena](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 02.01 EDT

The UK government is being urged to commit more cash to support struggling renters [as the end of a Covid ban on evictions](#) puts nearly half a million tenants at risk of losing their homes.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) said the government had been setting the country up for a “two-tier recovery” by prioritising wealthier homebuyers, who have benefited from a stamp duty holiday tax break, over poorer renters who have fared significantly worse throughout the pandemic.

A study, commissioned by the charity and conducted by YouGov, found that the end of the eviction ban could result in about 400,000 households being told to leave their homes after receiving eviction notices or warnings from their landlords.

[Private renters in England on ‘cliff edge’ as eviction ban ends](#)  
[Read more](#)

The foundation estimates a further 450,000 households are behind on rent across Great Britain, and nearly a fifth of those have been in arrears for more than four months. While the government has extended the eviction notice period to four months, tenants who are already behind on four months’ rent will only be given a month’s notice to vacate once the ban is lifted in England on 1 June.

In Wales, the eviction ban is due to lift on 30 June. Scotland’s ban will run to 30 September for some areas still facing level 3 and 4 Covid restrictions.

“In contrast to homeowners, renters have received very little targeted support despite being more likely to have faced a drop in income,” the JRF said. The charity warned that without further support across the UK, “those who were prospering prior to the pandemic will continue to do so, while those who have been hit hard will sink even further behind”.

It is calling for grants to support renters who have fallen behind on payments, via the discretionary housing payments system (DHP).

The DHP, which allows local councils to top up payments for struggling tenants, has been granted £180m, but the JRF says it is “nowhere near sufficient” to support those in arrears. A boost to DHP payments would help reset the housing market and allow renters to recover at the same pace as the rest of the country, the charity said.

The JRF claims wealthier homeowners have disproportionately benefited from the “generous” [stamp duty holiday](#), which has cost the government an estimated £5bn in tax receipts. Existing homeowners are also making gains due to a surge in house prices, which grew 10.2% in March, while first-time buyers have found it more difficult to get on the property ladder.

“The government has stated its aim to ‘turn generation rent into generation buy’ but has largely targeted support in the housing market towards people who already own their own homes,” the JRF said.

Guardian business email sign-up

The report warns poorer tenants and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds will be disproportionately affected.

A government spokesperson said the government had taken “unprecedented action” to support renters during the Covid crisis, adding that tenants would still benefit from longer notice periods and financial help through the furlough scheme until September.

“Thanks to the success of the vaccine programme, national restrictions are gradually being eased and it’s now the right time to start to lift the emergency measures we put in place,” they added.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2021/may/31/end-eviction-ban-puts-half-a-million-households-risk>

## 2021.05.31 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: Japan mulls tests for Olympics fans; India posts lowest case numbers since April](#)
- [UK Third wave may be under way, scientists warn](#)
- ['Lab leak' theory US must share intelligence on origins of virus, expert says](#)
- [Mandatory jab Ministers urged not to 'threaten' NHS staff](#)

## [Coronavirus live](#)

### [Coronavirus](#)

# Scientists warn of need to speed up second jabs in England; France opens vaccines to all; Peru death toll nearly triples after review – as it happened

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/may/31/coronavirus-live-news-japan-olympics-fans-test-india-cases-uk-third-wave>

## [Coronavirus](#)

# Third wave of Covid may be under way in UK, scientists say

With new infections at level last seen in March, experts have cautioned against lifting restrictions too soon

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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A Covid-19 sign on the high street in Hounslow, west London. Photograph: Kirsty O'Connor/PA

A Covid-19 sign on the high street in Hounslow, west London. Photograph: Kirsty O'Connor/PA

[Aubrey Allegretti](#), [Nicola Davis](#) and [Ian Sample](#)

Sun 30 May 2021 14.48 EDT

Scientists have warned ministers that a third wave of coronavirus may have already begun in Britain, casting doubt on plans in [England](#) to lift all lockdown restrictions in three weeks' time.

Experts cautioned that any rise in coronavirus hospital admissions could leave the NHS struggling to cope as it battles to clear the huge backlog in non-Covid cases.

Downing Street insisted it was too soon for speculation about whether the plan to lift all lockdown rules in England on 21 June could go ahead, prompting calls from the hospitality industry for the government to ensure it provided "advance notice" for struggling businesses of any "lingering" measures.

The vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, [refused to deny](#) that some restrictions such as mask wearing and working from home might remain in place to reduce the spread of the virus. Senior scientific advisers believe that, where possible, working from home makes sense beyond June because it would cut the number of people who come into contact with each other.

Ministers are grappling with whether a rise in cases and further spread of the Covid variant first discovered in India could throw Boris Johnson's roadmap off track. Despite the progress of the vaccination programme, advisers are unsure to what extent the new infections – which are at levels last seen at the end of March – will translate into hospitalisations and deaths.

Outbreak modellers advising Sage expected a resurgence of infections even before the new variant, called B.1.617.2, was found in the UK. That is because, as restrictions ease, the virus can spread more easily among millions of people who have not been protected by vaccines. Research by Public [Health](#) England that suggests the new variant is highly transmissible and partially resistant to vaccines has heightened concerns that a third wave could overwhelm the NHS.

Speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr show, Zahawi refused to rule out that the planned unlocking could be tweaked, adding that an announcement will be made on 14 June. "We have to look at the data and we will share that with



the country,” he said. “It would be completely wrong for me to now speculate. There are many people watching your programme, in jobs and businesses, who want to basically follow the exact direction the government is giving them whilst taking personal responsibility.

This video has been removed. This could be because it launched early, our rights have expired, there was a legal issue, or for another reason.

Wait and see whether Covid lockdown will end on 21 June, says vaccines minister – video

“At the moment, we don’t have enough data. There are some parts of the country where there’s literally no B.1.617.2 and everything is pretty stable; in other parts of the country it is beginning to overtake the B.1.1.7 variant – the Kent variant.”

The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, was similarly cautious, telling the Mail on Sunday: “We will know more as we approach the date.” The India variant is thought to be driving a [rise in cases in parts of the UK](#) and there are signs of a slight rise in hospitalisations. [Up to three-quarters of new Covid cases in the UK](#) are thought to be caused by the variant.

Martin McKee, a professor of European public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said he believed the third wave had begun.

“We can already see that the current measures are not stopping cases rising rapidly in many parts of the country. This looks very much as if we are now early in a third wave,” he said. “Unless there is a miracle, opening up further in June is a huge risk. The rise in cases we are seeing now should cause a reassessment of the most recent relaxation.”

Paul Hunter, a professor in medicine at the University of East Anglia, said he was concerned the UK was seeing the early signs of a third wave earlier this month, as it became clear the India variant was spreading in the community.

Prof Ravi Gupta of the University of Cambridge, a co-opted member of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag), also raised concerns. “If things go as I think they are going to go, we will likely end up with a third wave. It will be a big wave of infections and there will be deaths and severe illness,” he said.

“It will put pressure on the NHS at a time when we are trying to get back to normal and it is going to require a redoubling of efforts from the government to step up vaccination and to look at boosting of waning [immune] responses.”

Gupta said he was in favour of delaying the planned 21 June relaxation in England until the summer holidays, when the chance of spread within educational settings is reduced.

A substantial rise in coronavirus patients would hit the NHS just as staff are facing lengthy waiting lists for delayed procedures. Chris Hopson, the chief executive of NHS Providers, said staff were “going full pelt” to deal with the backlog and did not have the space for a significant increase in coronavirus admissions.

“While it’s great news that the vaccinations are working – and I think that sends us one message in terms of opening up on 21 June – what we mustn’t forget is there are still lots of people who need to be vaccinated, and we know this variant that originated in India is much more transmissible,” Hopson told BBC Breakfast.

Dr William Hanage, a professor of the evolution and epidemiology of infectious disease at Harvard, said the UK’s current approach was not enough to prevent a third wave of infections. “The only question is how consequential it will be in terms of hospitalisations and deaths, and when exactly it happens,” he said. “A full reopening in June is not compatible with controlling the virus.”



## Coronavirus

# US must share intelligence on Covid origins, WHO-affiliated expert says

Theory that coronavirus leaked out of a Wuhan lab was ‘not off the table’, Dale Fisher says

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The Wuhan Institute of Virology is seen during a visit by members of the WHO investigating the origins of Covid-19. Photograph: Héctor Retamal/AFP/Getty

The Wuhan Institute of Virology is seen during a visit by members of the WHO investigating the origins of Covid-19. Photograph: Héctor Retamal/AFP/Getty

[\*Matthew Weaver\*](#)

Sun 30 May 2021 11.19 EDT

A health expert affiliated with the [World Health Organization](#) has called on the US to share any intelligence it has about the origins of the coronavirus outbreak with the WHO and the scientific community.

Last week the Wall Street Journal cited US intelligence agencies who said they were told that three unnamed members of staff at a lab in the Chinese city of Wuhan were sick enough to go hospital in November 2019 with Covid-like symptoms.

[US intelligence chiefs later stressed](#) they did not know how the virus was transmitted initially, but that they had two theories: either it emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, or it was a laboratory accident.

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's The World This Weekend, Dr Dale Fisher said the theory that the virus leaked from a laboratory was "not off the table", but remained "unverified". Fisher, chair of the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, which is coordinated by the WHO, urged the US to share any intelligence it had. "The Wall Street Journal is not really the way to share science," he said.

An on-the-ground investigation by WHO experts earlier this year concluded that it was "extremely unlikely" that the pandemic began with a laboratory incident. But the terms of reference for their mission, agreed with [China](#), were limited to studying the potential animal origins of the outbreak.

The broad consensus among scientific experts remains that the most likely explanation is that Covid-19 jumped to humans from an animal host in a natural event. Nevertheless, some experts have called for the lab leak theory – once dismissed as a conspiracy peddled by Donald Trump – to be looked at further.

Referring to the WHO's visit earlier this year, Fisher said: "We believe that all the laboratory workers have had serology [tests] done and all those antibody tests were negative and that was part of the reason why the risk was downplayed."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO, said he did not believe the initial report was extensive enough and called for more research, adding that all hypotheses as to the origins of the virus that causes Covid-19 “remain on the table”.

Fisher urged the WHO to set out its plans for further investigation. He said: “People really haven’t heard anything since the February mission was done and therefore people think they’ve stopped looking for the origins, which is far from the truth – it’s only really just begun.”

The UK vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, said the WHO must be allowed to fully investigate, telling Sky News: “I think it’s really important that the WHO is allowed to conduct its investigation unencumbered into the origins of this pandemic and that we should leave no stone unturned.”

Fisher, who took part in a WHO mission in 2020, suggested that China’s secrecy about the origins of the virus could be driven by fears of compensation claims.

He said: “Any country that found any Covid-19 in its borders before the outbreak started would suddenly clam up. This is why I would argue that diplomacy is the way forward with this, creating a no-blame culture. The only way you really can get to the bottom of this is just to say: ‘Look, there’s no penalties, we just need to sort this out.’”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/30/us-must-share-intelligence-covid-origins-expert-says>

## [Health policy](#)

# Ministers urged not to ‘threaten’ NHS staff over mandatory Covid jab

Labour calls for caution after vaccines minister says government is considering plan

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Health and social care staff were among the first to be offered the vaccine but there are concerns that some are reluctant. Photograph: Ian Forsyth/Getty Images

Health and social care staff were among the first to be offered the vaccine but there are concerns that some are reluctant. Photograph: Ian Forsyth/Getty Images

[Aubrey Allegretti](#)  
[@breeallegretti](#)



Sun 30 May 2021 10.07 EDT

Ministers have been urged not to “threaten” [NHS](#) staff by forcing them to get vaccinated against coronavirus under plans being considered by the government.

The shadow Commons leader, Thangam Debbonaire, said it was not a “good idea” after the vaccines minister, [Nadhim Zahawi](#), said the proposal was being investigated alongside the existing consultation on making jobs mandatory for social care workers.

There is nervousness in Whitehall about doing anything to destabilise the vaccine rollout by requiring that people get the jab instead of keeping it voluntary – something that several behavioural scientists have warned could dampen take-up among already vaccine-hesitant groups.

But after concerns that a sizeable number of health and social care staff, who were among the first to be offered the vaccine, are reluctant to get jabbed, the government has been consulting on making vaccines mandatory for care workers, and is now expanding that to include all those working in the NHS.

Zahawi said people in those professions had a “duty of care to those who are most vulnerable” and that ministers needed to protect those who “are being infected in a place when they’re going into hospital ... by those who are tasked to look after them”.

He stressed: “There are no decisions yet made” but said it was “absolutely the right thing” to look at the issue, and added: “It would be incumbent on any responsible government to have the debate, to do the thinking, about how we go about protecting the most vulnerable by making sure that those who look after them are vaccinated.”

There is already a precedent, Zahawi told Sky News’s Trevor Phillips on Sunday, pointing to how surgeons need to be vaccinated against hepatitis B. He said if a similar decision were taken for all NHS workers it would be a “condition of deployment” – “not condition of employment”.

But Debbonaire urged the government to keep Covid vaccines an entirely free choice for all. She told the same programme: “Given we have got a recruitment crisis in parts of the NHS I think it’s far more important we try and work with staff rather than against them. Threatening staff I don’t think is a good idea.”

Public [Health](#) England and the NHS had been successful when they had worked with people to address their doubts and answer questions about the jab, Debbonaire said, adding: “I would like to see the government work with the NHS and social care staff.”

While the government considers the results of its call for evidence on making vaccines compulsory for social care workers, which closed earlier this week, it will likely be mindful of any potential legal challenges under human rights legislation.

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## 2021.05.31 - Spotlight

- [Food bank supremo Emma Revie This is the best job in the world – and it shouldn't have to exist](#)
- [Leonora Carrington's sculpture-filled home Is that a surrealist masterpiece by the draining board?](#)
- ['The loss is incalculable' Descendants of the Tulsa massacre on what was stolen from them](#)
- [Tulsa race massacre at 100 An act of terrorism America tried to forget](#)
- [360 video An act of terrorism America tried to forget](#)

## [Food banks](#)

### Interview

# Food bank supremo Emma Revie: ‘This is the best job in the world – and it shouldn’t have to exist’

[Sam Wollaston](#)



‘Too many people are falling through holes ...’ Emma Revie in the trust’s distribution warehouse in west London. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

‘Too many people are falling through holes ...’ Emma Revie in the trust’s distribution warehouse in west London. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

The Trussell Trust gave hungry Britons 2.5m food parcels in the last year. A million were for children. Its CEO talks about the failure of the benefits system, the strains of the pandemic – and her awe at the people who step up to help



[@samwollaston](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 01.00 EDT

Among the shiny glass and steel riverside developments in south-west London is a huge shed. It used to be Currys PC World; people still wander in looking for a washing machine or laptop. But now it's full of food – donated food stacked in crates and plastic boxes.

I'm meeting Emma Revie, the CEO of the Trussell Trust, the network that supports more than 1,200 food bank centres around the UK, including this one. Revie, 45, volunteers here at Wandsworth food bank as well as running the umbrella organisation. There are also about 900 other independent food banks in the country. [Food banks](#) in the Trussell Trust network distributed 2.5m food parcels in the year to April 2021 – a third more than in the previous year. A million of those were for children.

Revie has heard people saying it so many times. "All I want to do is to be able to provide for my children and family, they say." And she is hearing it more and more often.

"Parents try to mask it – we know that often they will skip meals multiple times before they come," she says. "It's actually at the point when they're not sure how they are going to feed the kids that they come to a food bank."

She has two children herself, aged 14 and 12. “I know that when they are hungry – and I mean between meals – it becomes something that they are fixated on. To experience hunger over a long period of time, the fear of not knowing where your food is going to come from, I think is all-pervasive for kids. It must be so difficult to engage in education, to keep your emotions under control.”

Wandsworth’s manager, Dan Frith, and its founder, Sarah Chapman, join us to show me around. It’s arranged like a kind of pop-up supermarket – rice and pasta over there, tins here, fruit, bags of spinach, washing-up liquid, loo roll, toiletries, pet food. There’s a box labelled “Kettle Only” for people housed (as part of the [Everyone In](#) programme to get homeless people off the streets) in B&Bs and hotels without cooking facilities. It contains things such as instant noodles, rice and couscous.

They had a tin of smoked oysters once. It went to a chef on a zero-hours contract, and made a lovely pasta dish, apparently. But the most exotic thing was probably an edible bikini. That didn’t go in a parcel – one of the volunteers took that one home. The only donation they really didn’t know what to do with was a tin of yacht varnish. Not a single one of their guests – they call the people who use the food bank guests – had a yacht that needed varnishing. It wasn’t wasted, though. They sold it on eBay for £30, and bought food with it.

Pre-Covid, people came into Trussell Trust food banks having been referred by a GP, social worker, mental-health team, Citizens Advice bureau or a school, and took home about three days’ worth of essential food. But since the pandemic, the food banks have been delivering to people’s homes, and they will continue to do so until September.



Sarah Chapman, the founder of the Wandsworth branch of the trust's network. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

Later, I help out with a delivery. There's still a shame and embarrassment about using food banks, says Frith. Chapman, who's on deliveries today, using her own car (they also use by-the-hour rental vans), calls ahead to ask if anyone on the list of 10 or so deliveries is willing to talk to a journalist. Two agree.

So in Tooting, somebody welcomes us into her ground-floor flat. Lisa, 46, recently moved out of a difficult relationship; now she lives here with her 17-year-old son and is on universal credit. She gets £1,825 a month, which may sound like a lot, but the £1,534 rent for her privately owned flat comes out of that, leaving £291 for food, bills, everything else.

Lisa is the carer for her son, who has autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and they were getting an extra £64 a week personal independence payment (Pip), which made the difference between not coping and coping, but that was stopped. With the help of Citizens Advice, she's challenging [the Pip decision](#); the hearing is coming up.

She first used the food bank a month or so ago – pride prevented her coming earlier. “We all feel people will look down on us,” she says. “There's a



stigma behind it. But I've come to the conclusion: why should there be a stigma, because everyone is struggling?"

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Even before Covid, food bank use was increasing alarmingly. In the year up to March 2020, food banks in the Trussell Trust network provided 1.9m food packages to people in crisis, up 18% on the previous year. Ten years ago, it was just 60,000.

Revie rolls off the reasons – years of freezes and benefits not keeping track with the cost of living, a significant reduction in the value of working-age benefits, the [five weeks claimants have to wait](#) before receiving any universal credit, “pushing them into debt and pushing them into food banks”.

“We know that, for the majority of people who come, the main source of income is the social security system, and what they say to us is that it isn't enough to cover the basics.” And there are groups and communities – lone parents, people with disabilities, anyone with extra costs that are not covered – that are significantly over-represented.

Isn't this catastrophic failure by the government? “This is a failure of our social security system, to keep up with the basic needs that people have in terms of their costs,” she says. “The erosion of the value of those benefits has led to the situation.”

She is not going to play the blame game, but she does admit: “It's definitely in the gift of government to do something about it.” It's a phrase she uses a few times – it's in the gift of so-and-so to do something about it, an opportunity, when many people would say they should bloody well do it, should have bloody well done it already. Hers is a more diplomatic, CEO-style approach. She has regular dealings with the Department for Work and Pensions. “We share all our evidence; we regularly meet and advocate strongly for changes and uplift to universal credit and other changes to benefits.”

The pandemic hit the trust fast and hard. In the first two weeks of March 2020, demand was up 89% on the same period the previous year. Everything happened at once: supermarkets were being stripped; many food bank

centres were too small for people to socially distance; a lot of volunteers were over 65 and shielding; many of the frontline organisations that refer people to food banks closed down.

“I remember thinking: I’m not sure our network is going to be able to keep going. But it was extraordinary. There was this position among volunteers and staff – we’re not *not* going to be providing food, we’re going to find a way through.”

They did. They rolled out a digital system so that agencies could refer clients to them, and distributed tablets to all the food banks. They got help, from supermarkets donating food, from companies with empty warehouses, from logistics companies and from 15,000 new volunteers. “It was extraordinary. Most days, I was weeping with joy ... not joy, with *awe*. My hope is topped up to the top about people’s willingness to help their neighbours, to see that what they think is right is done, and to step forward.”

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Revie was born in London, but moved to Perthshire when she was six months old. Her parents ran a business manufacturing jet washers; they were comfortable, but her dad had experienced extreme poverty when he was a kid, and would talk about it; about being hungry.

At university in Strathclyde, she got involved in the Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt campaign, which called for cancellation of debts owed by developing countries. “It felt wrong that there were countries that were unable to afford debt repayments and were experiencing such levels of poverty. I’ve been there from quite a young age.” After uni, she worked at IBM for a couple of years to get some skills, and has been in the charity sector ever since. She has been in charge at the Trussell Trust since 2018.

She is concerned that her children have never lived in this country without food banks. “That’s really worrying to me: that it is becoming normalised, and that when someone loses their job or becomes unwell and is unable to afford food, the response is an emergency food parcel. We expect that our social security system would catch it ... at the moment, too many people are falling through holes in that system and arriving at a food bank.”

But the horror of the past year has also brought hope. “We were all touched in some way – people we knew, people we’d heard of, people we’d never thought would become unwell, unable to work or lose their job. What the pandemic did was make us connected. It’s not a faceless group of people over there accessing social security – it’s my neighbour, my brother.”



Tins ready for distribution in the warehouse. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

Revie has been overwhelmed by the generosity and compassion she has witnessed: people volunteering and setting up collection points on their doorsteps; people simply refusing to accept that food banks are a dignified or acceptable solution. “We saw people responding, saying they could see it was needed, but also that this is not right, and that gives me a great deal of hope.”

For the country, these have been the most difficult circumstances since the second world war. “Last time it happened we had an incredible response in terms of the birth of the NHS. This is now a chance to redefine how we want to be. It’s a real moment for us – we’ve seen how we can care for one another during a pandemic, people stepping forward and doing incredible things. What are we going to call on our elected officials and ourselves to do differently as a nation?”

There's background music wafting around the warehouse, perhaps retail muzak left behind by Currys PC World. It just so happens that at this point in our conversation Revie is accompanied by soaring strings. And that feels right – it's a stirring appeal to build back better, not as a hollow political slogan, but a genuine call and a belief: "We can build a hunger-free future, a future where people don't have to come to food banks."

Of course, that would put her out of work, but she's OK with that. "There are so many paradoxes in this job, actually." It's the best job in the world because of the staff and volunteers, and the worst because it shouldn't have to happen. They are having to increase provision at the same time as working on strategies to end it. They want to be welcoming, they also want to be saying – in the nicest possible way – we hope to never see you again.

Has she found the same community spirit and compassion from the government as she has from the people? In some ways, yes, she says. "I think you move into public service because you believe in community. I think it's a very difficult job to be an MP and not be committed to community."

Really? What about the PM – does she think he is committed to the idea of community? "I believe he is committed to community. I think I would want to work with him on how we can ensure that is the experience of everyone in the country and that no one is left behind." Revie's not going to slag off anyone.

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Back on the deliveries, and on to a low-rise estate in north Battersea, in the shadow of the luxury development of Battersea power station. Eleanora, 29, lost her job as a chef early last year, before furlough. She didn't go straight on to universal credit, didn't want to be a burden on the system – she used up her savings, found some part-time work as a carer, but it wasn't enough to cover food and rent.

Eleanora has diabetes; she wasn't eating regularly or well, and it was affecting her health. When she was on the phone to the jobcentre, her work coach asked her if she needed help with food. "I come from a family that

never had to use any benefits of any sort, so my initial thought was no. But then I was like, oh my God, you know what? I do need help.”

Eleanora’s pretty sure it’s going to be short term for her – she can see a way out. She’s going to be moving to Durham in September; she’s got a place at university there, reading Chinese studies.

Earlier, Revie had talked about the importance of learning from the people who came to the food banks. “We know that, within our network, many of our volunteers are people who have themselves had to use food banks in the past and as a result of the service wanted to contribute to it,” she said.

And Eleanora is an example of that. As we’re leaving, she tells Sarah she would be free the following week to come in to the Wandsworth food bank. Not as a guest, but to help out.

*You can join 120,000 others in the Trussell Trust’s Hunger Free Future movement at [trusselltrust.org/hff](https://trusselltrust.org/hff).*

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## Art

# Is that a surrealist masterpiece by the draining board? Inside Leonora Carrington's sculpture-filled home



‘Glimpses beyond the everyday’ ... Leonora Carrington's kitchen.  
Photograph: Claudio Cruz/AFP/Getty Images

‘Glimpses beyond the everyday’ ... Leonora Carrington's kitchen.  
Photograph: Claudio Cruz/AFP/Getty Images

The great British artist's home in Mexico has been turned into a wonderful museum, full of her sculptures, books, diaries and unsmoked cigarettes. Our writer, Carrington's cousin, takes an emotional tour



[Joanna Moorhead](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 01.00 EDT

In October 2010, a few months before her death, I said my last goodbye to my cousin Leonora Carrington. As I left her home in Mexico City, she stood waving on the doorstep. Today, I'm back for the first time – to see Leonora's house recreated as a visitor attraction. It feels surreal, but the surreal has become the everyday since I set off to find Leonora in 2006, almost 70 years after she checked out of our family and Britain. She travelled first to Paris to be with her lover, the German artist [Max Ernst](#), before moving on to Mexico with a diplomat she met after she and Ernst were separated by the second world war.

This house, 194 Calle Chihuahua, is where she was anchored for more than 60 years. Here, she painted some of her best-known works, including [The Juggler](#), which sold at auction in 2005 for £436,000; [And Then We Saw the Daughter of the Minotaur](#), now at MoMA in New York; and her mural The Magical World of the Mayans, now at the National Anthropological Museum in Mexico City.

As well as being a pivotal figure in the surrealist movement, Leonora was a sculptor, textile artist and writer – it was in this house, too, that she wrote



The Hearing Trumpet, deemed by the Guardian to be one of the [1,000 novels to read before you die](#). And it was here that she raised her children, two sons, by the man she married in Mexico, a Hungarian photographer called Chiki Weisz.



‘Her worlds were beautiful, scary, profound’ ... the house is full of Carrington’s sculpture. Photograph: Claudio Cruz/AFP/Getty Images

The house is still filled with her sculpture: weird and wacky pieces, including a maquette of *How Doth the Little Crocodile*, named after the Lewis Carroll poem. Leonora held court at this address, the most exotic of the 1940s artist-émigrés who Frida Kahlo, the incumbent queen of Mexican art, dismissed as “those European bitches”.

The £3m restoration, by the Metropolitan Autonomous University of [Mexico](#) (UAM), is now almost complete and I’ve been invited here to work on various connected projects before its opening later this year. (Virtual visits are already possible.) It feels very strange, being back here without Leonora. In the kitchen – the engine room of her world, where we spent so many hours sitting chatting – her teacup, glasses and some letters are on the table in front of her empty chair. There’s a cigarette in the ashtray. I’m half expecting her to come in, sit down, relight her cigarette and say: “So, what’s the news today?”



The most exotic of the 1940s artist-émigrés ... Carrington's courtyard, featuring her sculpture Woman with Pigeon. Photograph: Claudio Cruz/AFP/Getty Images

Leonora was 94 [when she died](#), but her curiosity never wavered. She was far more interested in talking about politics – or world events, or the newspaper vendor down the street, or her dog Yeti's latest escapades – than she was about Ernst or Picasso or Dalí or Duchamp, all of whom she had known in Paris. Every day with her was an adventure: she lived absolutely in the moment, always on the lookout for glimpses of ridiculousness or oddness or fun.

On the kitchen shelves, her jars of spices, with her handwritten labels, still stand. Taped to the cupboard doors, just as they always were, are a selection of postcards including some of the royal family, one of them doctored so Prince Charles – who gave Leonora her OBE on a visit to Mexico in 2000 – is sporting a balaclava. People used to ask if they were they ironic. Perhaps so, but part of Leonora missed her homeland. Indeed, in *The Hearing Trumpet*, her alter ego-protagonist Marian Leatherby, 92, dreams of escaping to Europe from the Spanish-speaking country she was transported to many years before.

You'll have a sense of how 194 Chihuahua feels if you've seen Roma, Alfonso Cuarón's Oscar-winning film from 2018. It is set in a house a few streets away: both have the same Bauhaus-style architecture, the same leaded windows, the same internal courtyard, the same open staircase to the rooftop world where the washing is done, and hung in the blazing sunshine to dry. In Leonora's time, the roof terrace was the realm of Yolanda, her housekeeper. Today, it's a spacious paved area where Leonora's sculptures stands guard.



Foliage and four-legged friends ... another courtyard. Photograph: Casa Estudio Leonora Carrington UAM

The most intimate view into Leonora's world comes when you step into her first-floor bedroom, off a narrow, tiled, external corridor. Nowhere is the natural frugality of her approach to life better displayed than in this simple room, with its single bed, a few chairs, table and cabinet. Her husband Chiki, by the end, slept next door; he died in 2007. The only item of abundance in Leonora's bedroom is books: they cover the shelves along the far wall, just as they cover the walls of her sitting room and the study where the typewriter, on which she wrote *The Hearing Trumpet*, sits on a table.

The books are perhaps the best insight the house offers into her mind: they range from the contemporary novels she loved (Ian McEwan, Doris Lessing

and Margaret Atwood were all favourites) to the books that informed her art: tomes on the occult, gnosticism, kabbalah, tarot, herbalism and shamanism; titles on Renaissance art and various movements; as well as the work of her friends, including the photographers [Lee Miller](#) and [Kati Horna](#), the painter Remedios Varo, and the Nobel prizewinning Octavio Paz. Birds with Human Faces and Birds with Human Souls share shelf space with The Book of Owls and Expert Obedience Training for Dogs. (I'm not sure that one was deployed to best effect on Yeti.)



My surrealist friends ... Carrington with André Breton, Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst in 1942. Photograph: Herman Landshoff/bpk/Münchner Stadtmuseum, Samm

“I knew she was a surrealist,” says Dr Alejandra Osorio, director of the project. “And that was about it. I actually knew more about her writing than her paintings.” The house was bought by UAM complete with more than 8,600 objects, ranging from clothes to phonebooks, from half-finished artworks to diaries that recorded her dreams. Combing through the minutiae of Leonora’s life has given Alejandra insights into the life of someone she never met, but now thinks about every day.

“I feel very connected to her,” she says. “She was a very congruent person: what she believed, she lived. Because of the themes of her art – the occult



and so on – people sometimes think she was complicated. But I don't think she was. She was instinctive: she believed in feelings and following them.”

Excitingly for the increasing number of art historians and academics interested in Leonora's work, the Casa Estudio [Leonora Carrington](#), as 194 is now known, includes a study centre on that surprisingly spacious roof terrace. Alejandra thinks one especially fertile area of research could be searching through Leonora's annotated books to find links with her paintings. That makes me laugh, because Leonora famously refused to discuss what her paintings meant. Death may yet reveal her in a way she refused to be revealed in her lifetime. My instinct is that she wouldn't have minded: she always told me she wasn't interested in dwelling on what would happen after she'd gone.



Come into the parlour ... Carrington's living room. Photograph: Claudio Cruz/AFP/Getty Images

In 1988, the Guerrilla Girls made their landmark piece *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist*. Listed among the merits were avoiding the pressure of success, making it into the revisions of art history, and having a career surge post-80. Leonora scores on all counts. Although she died 10 years ago this month, and although she lived into her 90s, her reputation and her status are, I believe, still in their infancy. But her fame is growing, as the Casa

project reveals. [Museums](#) across the world are actively seeking her work. There have been five major international exhibitions over the last few years, with another postponed to 2023 because of Covid. And two museums of her sculpture have opened in Mexico, one in the town of San Luis Potosí, the other in Xilitla where her friend Edward James created an extraordinary surreal sculpture garden.

Last year, an indie band from LA called Conditioner released [a single about her, entitled Leonora](#). “We’re just a couple of young guys in our 20s,” band member Riley McCluskey told me. “But when we came across Leonora’s work, we were blown away. She seemed able to access some space that most humans can’t access – or at least, not often. Her worlds were beautiful, scary, profound. They give us glimpses beyond the everyday.” Leonora’s themes – especially feminism, ecology, the connectedness of everything, the occult and spiritual meaning outside organised religion – feel very 2021.



Honoured ... the artist on a Lotteria Nacional ticket. Photograph: Joanna Moorhead

As I head to the airport, I stop to buy some tickets for Mexico’s national lottery. To mark the 10th anniversary of her death, they feature Leonora’s image. In the spirit of surrealism, I buy one fully expecting to scoop the £1m jackpot. But knowing Leonora has been a far bigger prize than that.

[Casa Estudio Leonora Carrington](#) is open for virtual tours. The Surreal Life of Leonora Carrington by Joanna Moorhead is published by Virago.

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# ‘The loss is incalculable’: descendants of the Tulsa massacre on what was stolen from them

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## Red Summers

# Tulsa race massacre at 100: an act of terrorism America tried to forget

It was among the worst acts of violence in US history, and no one was held accountable – how much has changed in the last 100 years?

by Bayeté Ross Smith. Essay by Jimmie Briggs

Mon 31 May 2021 03.00 EDT

06:41

An act of terrorism America tried to forget – 360 video

Racial terror has long been the go-to response for aggrieved whites in America. The insurrectionists waving Confederate flags who attacked the Capitol on 6 January to overthrow the results of the 2020 national elections weren't an anomaly. The intimidation, disempowerment and humiliation of the "other" to maintain entitled rights has been a recurring narrative since the arrival of European colonizers in America and the growth of the slave trade.

"The trigger for white rage, inevitably, is Black advancement," Carol Anderson writes in her seminal 2016 book, *White Rage*. "It is not the mere presence of Black people that is the problem; rather, it is *Blackness* with ambition, with drive, with purpose, with aspirations, and with demands for full and equal citizenship."

## Tulsa teaser

This is a lens through which to understand the significance of the centenary of the 1921 Tulsa [Race](#) Massacre, among the worst acts of violence in US history, and a past that lives today in the ongoing political, economic and extrajudicial attacks on Black people. As the United States and the world commemorate the anniversary of the murder of George Floyd, the long-

hoped-for racial reckoning still awaits a country seemingly unwilling to acknowledge in its historical memory the most terrible, deliberately obscured sins in its past and their impact today.

Between 31 May-1 June, white residents, peace officers, and soldiers attacked the historical Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma, known as the “Black Wall Street”, killing an estimated [300 residents](#), displacing upwards of 1,000 more, and inflicting irrevocable economic damage to a thriving business district created by and for Black Americans. It’s believed to have been the first time that bombs were dropped on an American community, and the actions undertaken by the white marauders, who received significant resistance from both everyday Black civilians and soldiers recently returned from the first world war, wasn’t taught in Oklahoma school books and barely mentioned in national textbooks for generations afterwards.

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**Carol Anderson**

“The trigger for white rage,  
inevitably, is Black advancement.”

EXCERPT FROM ANDERSON'S  
2016 BOOK 'WHITE RAGE'

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As Blacks were recklessly and wantonly raped, murdered and driven from hard-earned homes and businesses, the cover-up by local and state government representatives was chillingly efficient. Survivors and their descendants held out hope across generations that the full truth of what happened to Black Tulsans would be acknowledged, and recompense would come. A century later, thanks to the last three survivors of the Tulsa

Massacre and the descendants of those who were killed or survived the violence, the full horror may finally be understood.

For much of 1919, from March through November, more than 100 Black people were lynched, thousands were seriously wounded or died from mob actions, and over 30 cities across the United States were attacked by spasmodic, white-led violence including Charleston, South Carolina, Longview, Texas, and Syracuse, New York. Faced with post-pandemic fear and uncertainty following the devastatingly fatal spread of the Spanish flu a year before; the return of nearly 400,000 Black soldiers from combat in the first world war; a squeeze for housing and jobs traditionally held by white men; and the emergence of a thriving, robust Black middle and working class, white Americans in the south and the north saw Black strivers as an existential threat. They seized upon any reason, no matter how flimsy the excuse, to lay waste to their neighbourhoods and communities through physical attacks, as well as rhetoric and policies reminiscent of the past five years of American political life.



Between 31 May-1 June, a white mob killed an estimated 300 Black residents and displaced upwards of 1,000 more. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

Over the past two years, artist and photographer Bayeté Ross Smith has revisited the sites of Red Summer and the violence following the war, capturing present-day images through [360 VR \(virtual reality\) footage](#) and pairing those with interviews of descendants, historians and activists to bring greater consciousness to a little understood and discussed historical period of the United States that is still relevant today. In addition to Tulsa, Smith visited Washington DC, where white men in military uniform laid siege to Black neighbourhoods forcing President Woodrow Wilson to call in the national guard; Omaha where 10,000 whites attacked a county courthouse where they captured and burned alive a Black man accused of rape; and Chicago, where an estimated 50 people were killed, over 500 injured and more than 1,000 Black families left homeless in the greatest violence in the Red Summer. And he also visited East St Louis, Illinois, where whites fearful of losing political power attacked Black voters and their white allies two years before the Red Summer.

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Returning home to the  
unchanged realities of systemic  
racism and violence drew many  
to political action.

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Before and after the Red Summer, Black Americans fought white rage with whatever weapons they could; following the first world war Black veterans became a core factor in that resistance. As NAACP co-founder and scholar WEB DuBois wrote in The Crisis in May 1919, “we return [from the first world war] fighting”. DuBois had previously called for Blacks to “close ranks” with their white counterparts at the outset of the war and volunteer to

serve. Returning home to the unchanged realities of systemic racism and violence drew many to political action. The NAACP had less than 10,000 members in the early 1900s, but grew to 100,000 by the early 1920's.

Out of the ashes of Red Summer, the East St Louis riots, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and the later civil rights efforts of the United Negro Improvement Association, founded by revolutionary activist Marcus Garvey, the seeds of the modern civil rights movement and ultimately Black Lives Matter were sown.



The Tulsa massacre is believed to be the first aerial assault on US soil. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

**Jamaican writer Claude McKay's** July 1919 poem, *If We Must Die*, was the Black anthem for the Red Summer and endures today as a call to never accede to terror, violence or injustice. In it he urges "If we must die, let it not be like hogs ... Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack, Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!" Yet, without full understanding and acknowledgment of the lessons and still resilient legacy of that span of American history, we are inevitably sentenced to relive a contemporary version of it.



In the century since the Red Summer and Tulsa Massacre, historical memory regarding race has perhaps been among the greatest casualties in the war for a commonly shared national narrative. Within the next 20-25 years, the United States will be a country of so-called “minorities”, people of color, further interrogating the ever-relevant question of “who is us?” Can someone be “American” without embodying a fossilized, milquetoast archetype still upheld by many in the United States? In his 1925 poem, *I, too am America*, Langston Hughes proclaimed his right to full citizenship and recognition, but in the 21st century “Americanness”, and what parts of history deserve to be explored, are still being debated. The denial of truth risks not only the social gains for intersectional racial justice, but also the possibility of a true reckoning with this country’s terrorism of people of color, including Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and Latinos.



Black Tulsa residents stand in front of a leveled building in Greenwood. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

Racial terror undermined the promise of Reconstruction in the wake of the civil war. Between 1865-1877, Freedmen saw unparalleled economic and political gains throughout the defeated south and in urban areas in the north where burgeoning opportunities in industry and commerce prompted the first



Great Migration. White backlash – and fear of Black excellence – was swift, without true accountability, or justice. More than 1,000 lynchings occurred in the south by 1920; 90% of those killed were Black and more than half happened in Mississippi, Georgia, Texas, Alabama and Louisiana – also locations of Red Summer murders. Louisiana saw two of the most horrifying instances of racial massacres. In April 1873, approximately 150 Black men were killed by armed whites for peacefully and freely assembling in front of a courthouse. More are thought to have perished but the precise number remains unknown as many bodies were thrown into the Red River. A year later in Coushatta, Louisiana, six white Republicans and 20 Black witnesses were killed by members of a paramilitary outfit called the “White League”.

Scores of Blacks migrated north, where the racial codes around housing, jobs and education had a less threatening veneer but were no more equitable than what was faced in the south. By the end of 1919, over a million Black Americans had relocated to northern communities such as Chicago and Philadelphia, whose Black populations grew by 148% and 500%, respectively.



The Harlem Hellfighters – a largely Black infantry regiment – return from a tour of duty during the first world war. Photograph: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library

**In the years immediately preceding the Red Summer**, the United States was a country very much on edge, having formally entered the war in 1917, then facing a global Spanish flu pandemic a year later. In many urban hubs restless white residents blamed the spread of the disease on Black soldiers returning from the war as well as international migrants. To white men, Black men in uniform were especially a tremble-inducing sight, returning to America having proven themselves on the battlefield and received widespread recognition and awards from the French, alongside whom they often fought. Yet after the war's end, more than [13 Black veterans were lynched](#) across the United States – most while wearing their uniforms – according to the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative.

Wilson, the first southerner in the White House since the civil war and the second Democrat, largely ignored the racial violence that occurred between 1917-1923. As president, he enacted segregation within the federal government. He also infamously screened DW Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* at the White House in 1915, praising the film, which glorified the Ku Klux Klan, saying it was "like writing history with lightning". His tolerance and general blind eye to the year-long racist attacks, even when they occurred within view of the White House, gave tacit approval to the violence.

By mid-summer 1919, the pace of violent incidents had escalated. Justification often hinged on the enduring racist perception of Black men victimizing white women, but usually they were instigated intentionally to undermine or destroy some emblem of Black progress. As quixotic as it ultimately was, resistance inspired communities of color across the country to advocate and mobilize with newfound vigor and hope. The individual toll of the Red Summer on communities across the country was often too heavy to overcome in many places – as the economic and psychological trauma proved to be too great for recovery. The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre remains the most visceral example.



More than 300 Black residents had died by the time the violence subsided on 1 June 1921. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

**On 31 May that year**, a 19-year-old Black shoeshiner named Dick Rowland entered the Drexel Building in downtown Tulsa to use one of the only public bathrooms accessible to Black residents. According to the [Oklahoma Historical Society](#), he either accidentally stepped on her foot or startled a 19-year-old elevator operator named Sarah Page. Either way, she screamed, drawing bystanders to beat and detain Rowland for arrest by the local police. Black residents – including veterans from the first world war marched to the police station in protest and were met by a white mob looking to take Rowland. In the ensuing confrontation white civilians with the active participation of police, military soldiers and state agents attacked the Greenwood neighbourhood, known as “Black Wall Street”.

When it was over on 1 June, more than 300 Black residents were dead, thousands were injured and maimed, 1,200 homes were destroyed, and over a million dollars (in 1921 value) in damage was inflicted, according to the NAACP executive secretary, Walter White. In the aftermath, the official death toll was 36, though many Black bodies were burned, put in mass graves, driven away in trucks, or thrown in rivers.



Insurance companies never paid out claims to the Black victims of the Tulsa massacre. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

“One story was told to me by an eyewitness of five colored men trapped in a burning house,” White recounted in a later report. “Four were burned to death. A fifth attempted to flee, was shot to death as he emerged from the burning structure, and his body was thrown back into the flames.”

BC Franklin, father of renowned historian and scholar John Hope Franklin, was a Greenwood district lawyer who survived and recounted that the “sidewalk was literally covered with burning turpentine balls”, from bombs dropped on the Black community by airplanes. “For fully forty-eight hours, the fires raged and burned everything in its path and it left nothing but ashes and burned safes and trunks and the like that were stored in beautiful houses and businesses.”

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## Warren G. Harding

"God grant that, in the soberness,  
the fairness, and the justice of  
this country, we never see  
another spectacle like it."

HARDING'S COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY LESS THAN  
ONE WEEK AFTER THE TULSA MASSACRE

Wilson's successor in the White House, the Ohio Republican Warren G. Harding is still among the most forward-looking presidents on racial equity and justice. Less than a week after the carnage in Tulsa, he gave the commencement address at Pennsylvania's Lincoln University, the first degree-granting historically Black college and university. "God grant that, in the soberness, the fairness, and the justice of this country, we never see another spectacle like it," he commented in reference to Tulsa. In his State of the Union address a month before, Harding asked Congress to [pass anti-lynching legislation](#), a request still unfulfilled today.

In the weeks after the massacre, the Tulsa City Commission squarely laid blame for the deaths and destruction at the feet of Black residents, absolving the white mob of any wrongdoing. "Let the blame for this Negro uprising lie right where it belongs – on those armed Negroes and their followers who started this trouble and who instigated it and any persons who seek to put half the blame on the white people are wrong," stated the body officially. No insurance claims made by Black survivors were honored and the only recompense of any kind went to a white gun store owner whose business was raided by white residents en route to terrorize the Greenwood community.





Local authorities deputized white men to detain and even kill Black men. Photograph: The Department Of Special Collections & University Archives McFarlin Library The University of Tulsa

In 1997, the state of Oklahoma convened a study commission to fully examine what occurred in Tulsa, and the role of state and local government, law enforcement, the military and civilians – both Black and white. The report produced in 2000 affirmed the accounts of Black survivors and witnesses to the extent of the violence, targeted dismantling of Black wealth, and cover-up by authorities. Oklahoma’s governor at the time, Frank Keating, accepted the report but rejected its calls for reparations. A lawsuit filed by esteemed Harvard professor Charles Ogletree, along with civil rights attorney Johnnie Cochran, among others, was eventually rejected by the US supreme court.

### [Tulsa teaser](#)

Three years ago, Tulsa’s mayor, GT Bynum, announced a citywide search for mass graves from the 1921 massacre, with one site having been found last fall in the midst of nationwide Black Lives Matter protests. Excavation of remains will resume in June. The remaining three survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre – 107-year-old Viola Fletcher, her brother 100-year-old Hughes “Uncle Red” Van Ellis, and 106-year-old Lessie “Mama Randle”

Benningfield Randle [testified](#) two weeks ago before Congress. The survivors are lead plaintiffs in a recent lawsuit for reparations.

“This story shouldn’t go away,” observes Dreisen Heath, a researcher and human rights advocate with Human Rights Watch who spearheaded the organization’s recent reporting on economic and policing inequities for Black Tulsa residents, as well as a historically grounded case for reparations to survivors and descendants of victims. “The [state] culpability is there [as well as] the continued preservation of whiteness and power in Tulsa. There is massive media coverage of [the Tulsa Massacre Centennial] and I appreciate it, but I also hope that news coverage encapsulates the continuing harm since the massacres. The book didn’t close in the late afternoon of June 1, 1921 when martial law was declared.”

The history of white rage and Black resistance is still being written.

*Jimmie Briggs is a journalist with more than two decades of experience at the Washington Post, Village Voice, Life magazine, among others. The views expressed here are Jimmie Briggs’s own, written in his personal capacity, and should not be attributed to any organization.*

*[Red Summers](#) is a 360 video project by the artist and film-maker [Bayeté Ross Smith](#) on the untold American history of racial terrorism from 1917 to 1921. The project is funded by Black Public Media, Eyebeam, Sundance Institute, Crux XR and the Open Society Foundations.*

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## [Red Summers](#)

# An act of terrorism America tried to forget – 360 video

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## 2021.05.31 - Opinion

- [If nothing sticks to this government, it's because nobody is making it stick](#)
- [Video games have turned my kids into wage slaves – but without the wages](#)
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## [OpinionDominic Cummings](#)

# If nothing sticks to this government, it's because nobody is making it stick

[Nesrine Malik](#)

The familiar revelations in Dominic Cummings' testimony are a reminder that facts don't 'cut through' on their own



Illustration: Matt Kenyon.

Illustration: Matt Kenyon.

Mon 31 May 2021 02.00 EDT

One of the first things we are taught about liberal democracy is that the structure of a healthy political system has separate branches with distinct responsibilities, so that “checks and balances” will prevent the concentration and abuse of power. But one of the many [difficult lessons](#) for liberals in recent years has been the belated realisation that accountability requires more than institutional structures. A functioning democracy *also* depends on

a balance of power between the government and an ecosystem of independent actors who can publicly hold the state to account – including a formal political opposition and media organisations that are not affiliated with the government or beholden to its backers.

What Dominic Cummings described in [his testimony last week](#) was not just the government failing in its duty: it was the absence or weakness of those oppositional forces that might curb the excesses of power, or demand that it change course. Unless you've wiped your memory of the past year, none of what Cummings revealed about the early stages of the pandemic was new.

I remember the sense of panic and foreboding among many who felt that the British response was delayed, that there seemed to be an alarming detachment and lack of urgency. I remember the scenes from Italy and Spain, the [warnings](#) sent to us, and the magical thinking that it wouldn't happen here because of reasons of Britishness. I remember Johnson saying he had shaken hands with “everybody” in the hospital. I remember how the first lockdown happened right after a quarter of a million people were allowed to [attend](#) Cheltenham. And I [remember](#) the instinctive [deference](#) to the government in those early weeks of the pandemic – even as the disasters unfolded in plain sight, just as they did in the [second](#) wave, and perhaps in a [third](#).

Cummings' unrevealing “revelations” will inevitably be met with the question that now follows every new chapter of government failure – will this be the one that finally “cuts through”? When it comes to figuring out why little seems to stick to this government, this is the wrong question. The facts don't cut through on their own.

What the past year teaches us is that sometimes political disasters are not caused simply by a lack of knowledge or bad information. Sometimes terrible governments will survive, and indeed thrive, even though their faults are clear and visible to the public – and not simply because the public doesn't care about the truth. “The truth” about any government is itself a narrative, not merely a set of facts. In public discourse, “the truth” is an argument, and one that has to be made often, consistently and persuasively for it to stick.

And so Cummings' testimony revealed two crises: first the obvious one, in which narcissistic dilettantes wield great power in a catastrophic government of egotists and charlatans. But watching him on television, flamboyantly oversharing, it was hard to avoid the sense of a much larger crisis – a sort of failure of context, in which this entire cast of inadequate characters is caught repeatedly lying and failing, and yet their collective errors do not come together into a coherent account of the government's mishandling of the pandemic. The right question now is: who is responsible for making those facts cut through?

Let us take the actual opposition. As the pandemic response disaster was unfolding, the Labour party substituted rage for optics, eager to appear level-headed, to come across like a party not “politicising” a crisis, when in fact everything about the pandemic was political. Keir Starmer thought he could toggle between “[constructive opposition](#)” and presenting himself as a competent alternative to Johnson, but somewhere between the two failed to land on the urgency of it all, to paint a clear and compelling picture of a government taking the country into catastrophe. Afraid of appearing radical, he forgot his one job – opposition – and instead landed on coalition. Tactically, the focus on competence was always going to be a self-laid trap, because the moment the government did a single thing right, such as rolling out the vaccine, it would look like an emphatic refutation of Starmer's one argument.

The other party in the scheme of checks and balances, the media, has indeed skirmished with the government. But every blow landed by way of hard-hitting [investigation](#) into its failures was undercut by columns [fawning](#) over Johnson: his importance, his relatability, whether the birth of his latest child or even the firing of Cummings [might finally snap him into seriousness](#). The rest was undermined by tone. The gossipy language about the Cummings testimony itself demonstrates that part of the problem. His appearance was merely the latest act in an event of political theatre. It was Cummings' revenge, in a hearing “[longer and bloodier than Hamlet](#)”, the return of a “[crazed ex-boyfriend](#)” in an episode where the highest stakes were about who was going to lose their cabinet position. In the glut of coverage we have an impression of a media that is doing its job, but is really mostly sitting in the galleries munching snacks and watching “[popcorn-worthy sessions](#)”. That is, unless it's let in behind the scenes, of course, where it is flattered by

access and ventriloquises the government line as the insight of “[sources](#)”. Even after Cummings’ testimony, when there was no room for doubt, some still engaged in political science fiction, excusing the government’s performance because, well, what was the alternative?

That fatalism is of a piece with a wider belief among the British public – one encouraged by the papers – that whatever we have is the best we could possibly do. Some of that is genuine support for a Conservative agenda, but some is a resignation that takes its lead from the inertia and gullibility of the opinion-forming classes. It is easier to justify the familiar status quo than risk its disruption by contemplating a leftwing alternative, even if that means rationalising and justifying the loss of tens of thousands of lives.

The pandemic continues to confront us with what this country is lacking. In its first stages, it exposed how vulnerable we have become to all shocks, be they virus-related or economic, in a hollowed-out state and rundown public services infrastructure. More recently, it has revealed another insufficiency: we can get angry but can’t stay angry. When we ask about the impunity this government continues to enjoy, we are not talking about a passive and uninformed public, but a public poorly served by those whose job is to oppose and challenge the government. After all, impunity doesn’t exist in a vacuum: it is created by the vacuum.

- Nesrine Malik is a Guardian columnist

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## [OpinionGames](#)

# Video games have turned my kids into wage slaves – but without the wages

[Zoe Williams](#)



Gaming is task-driven, repetitive and often frustrating – just like having a job. Childhood isn't supposed to be so serious





‘Everyone is locked in concentration, shouting at other people.’ Photograph: Carol Yepes/Getty Images (posed by models)

‘Everyone is locked in concentration, shouting at other people.’ Photograph: Carol Yepes/Getty Images (posed by models)

Mon 31 May 2021 02.00 EDT

There are currently three computer games occupying the house: the 13-year-old (M), sometimes in conjunction with the 11-year-old (F), plays Fortnite, a game mainly about shooting people; the 13-year-old (F), also sometimes with the collaboration of the 11-year-old, plays [Genshin Impact](#), a whimsical, open-world environment game, whatever the hell that means. Avatars dressed as pirates or fairies wander about the place, doing chores, occasionally fighting giant warthogs. Mr Z plays [Hitman](#), another shooting game with very densely layered storylines, though he always skips them so never knows what’s going on beyond that; the aim is to leave everyone else dead in a laundry hamper.

Observing all this, I feel like the manager of a hi-tech sweat shop. Everyone is locked in concentration, shouting over headphones at other people who may or may not be in the same house, a cross between high-intensity data inputting and horribly frazzled air traffic control. I know what I should be worrying about – are they getting enough fresh air? Will they become

addicted? Is this a useful life lesson, to find meaning through shooting others?

What I'm actually worried about is that this is way too much like work. Task-driven, repetitive, monotonous but immersive, often very frustrating, it's exactly like having a bullshit job. The best thing about childhood, the bit that makes up for people constantly telling you what to do and where to be, is that you have those years outside the productive economy, where no one thinks to measure your worth by the net value you create, where all you have to do is grow and be endearing. While it remains the case that none of them is creating any value, in every other respect they are at the coal face, wage slaves without the wages. I'm worried that the kids have a seriousness of purpose, a rigidity of application totally out of whack with the task in hand, that nobody should rightly learn until their mid-20s, answering emails with no greater aim than creating more emails.

The best solution I've come up with is to find a game of my own. I play Five Nights at Freddy's on a virtual reality headset. The genre is indie horror, which I think means it's like regular horror except with bears and a more sinister atmosphere. It's nothing like having a job. It's like being trapped in a nightmare that is much more real than any of my nightmares. I love it.

Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/may/31/video-games-have-turned-my-kids-into-wage-slaves-but-without-the-wages>

## OpinionIdentity politics

# The ‘culture wars’ are a symptom, not the cause, of Britain’s malaise

[Samuel Earle](#)

Polling shows that Britain isn’t as divided as the right claims. Our supposedly irreconcilable differences are driven by fiction



Boris Johnson in 1999, when he became editor of the Spectator. ‘A journalist by trade, a liar by nature, he is all too familiar with the energising power of some well-placed hyperbole.’ Photograph: Martin Godwin/The Guardian

Boris Johnson in 1999, when he became editor of the Spectator. ‘A journalist by trade, a liar by nature, he is all too familiar with the energising power of some well-placed hyperbole.’ Photograph: Martin Godwin/The Guardian

Mon 31 May 2021 03.00 EDT

It’s often said that Conservatives and the rightwing press are good at stoking divisions. What’s perhaps less acknowledged is that they do so mostly by

inventing them: those who campaign for more inclusive policies become “the woke mob” and “the loony left”; those who want students to learn about the darker parts of Britain’s history become “people who hate Britain”; judges and politicians who want to follow basic parliamentary procedures become “enemies of the people”, “saboteurs”, and “traitors”, and so on.

In every case, we’re told that the future of the nation is at stake. The relentlessness of this “culture war” narrative leaves us with the image of an irreconcilable rift at the heart of British society: between liberals obsessed with identity politics who live, literally or spiritually, in “north London”, and sidelined social conservatives who live – or rather, are “left behind” – everywhere else (most emotively in “the red wall”). These fantasy constructions are now the twin pillars of Conservative rhetoric.

But this image of an irreconcilably divided nation is just that: an image. A spate of polls have shown that we are not as divided as many would have us think. Views in the so-called red wall are [largely consistent](#) with the rest of the country and, nationwide, few people know what either the “culture war” or “wokeness” even mean. Yet the right still pushes this narrative relentlessly, railing against a lefty elite that somehow manages to both wield a hegemonic control over Britain’s culture and be hopelessly out of touch with it. The new rightwing television channel, GB News – one of many new ventures to pitch itself as an urgent corrective – will host a segment called Wokewatch, to illuminate and amplify examples of the loony left’s looniness.

As the sociologist [William Davies](#) has written, this is the logic of the culture war: “Identify the most absurd or unreasonable example of your opponents’ worldview; exploit your own media platform to amplify it; articulate an alternative in terms that appear calm and reasonable; and then invite people to choose.” Exaggeration is therefore intrinsic to culture wars: it is a battle waged mostly by straw men.

It’s no surprise that Boris Johnson thrives in this environment: a journalist by trade, a liar by nature, he is all too familiar with the energising power of some well-placed hyperbole. As the Daily Telegraph’s Europe correspondent in the 1990s, Johnson wrote all kinds of wild and made-up provocations about the EU’s regulatory overreach: before Wokewatch there

was Brusselswatch. The aim of Johnson's exaggerations wasn't any particular political agenda, but rather to stoke animosity. "Everything I wrote from Brussels was having this amazing, explosive effect on the Tory party," [Johnson recalled](#) in his Desert Island Discs interview for Radio 4 in 2005, "and it really gave me this rather weird sense of power." As prime minister Johnson pursues the same approach, but his plaything is now the nation at large.

[The Tory fixation on wokeness is all about division. Labour must build bridges instead | Zoe Williams](#)  
[Read more](#)

The cynicism and bad faith that underlies so much of the culture war should warn us against one of the dominant tendencies within the vast and burgeoning literature on our polarised times: to blame evolutionary biology and an inherent "tribalist" instinct we share. "The mechanism is evolutionary," New York Times writer [Ezra Klein writes](#) in his recent bestseller, *Why We're Polarised*, because "our brains know we need our groups to survive". But by conjuring up a primordial past as the source of our divisions, we lose sight of all the contemporary forces and strategies that are deliberately designed to inflame and exaggerate our differences. The climate crisis wasn't destined to be such a divisive issue, for instance – it required, in the words of [climatologist Michael Mann](#), "the most well-funded, well-organised PR campaign in the history of human civilisation". The Flintstones might not have agreed on everything either, but at least they didn't have Fox News.

The culture war is in this sense the ultimate fiction: what seems like a battle for the soul of our country is a pantomime where we are conscripted to play both gladiator and spectator and obliged to pick a side. The hope seems to be that, amid all the sparring and theatre, we lose sight of what truly frustrates us: in Britain, that is an increasingly harsh economy, imposed by a callous government, which has left us with the worst wage growth in 200 years, public services that are chronically underfunded and a third of children living in poverty – a misery offset by one of the stingiest welfare systems in the developed world. If society now feels coarser, it's because it is – but the reason is not a sudden decline in civility.

Yet while the Conservatives, in power for over a decade, are the main architects of this dreary, resentful state of the nation, they are also its main beneficiaries. The Conservatives have always excelled at stoking resentment and redirecting it elsewhere; now is no different: they are clear favourites to win the next election, a record fifth in a row.

So even amid this total and unsettling ascendancy, the Tories will still insist that the blame for Britain's woes lies elsewhere: with Londoners hoarding all the nation's wealth, with university professors teaching "cultural Marxism" in their classes, or asylum seekers trying to cross the Channel, or any other phantom threat they can think of. This strategy goes beyond the usual "divide and conquer". It was said of the Romans and their imperial dominance that they "make a desert and call it peace". The Tories are trying a different tactic: make a desert and call it war.

- Samuel Earle is a writer based in London

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## [Opinion](#)US healthcare

# An everyday story of US healthcare – or how a visit to the ER can cost you \$10,000

[Emma Brockes](#)



The fear of dying in New York was uppermost in my mind as my bruised foot swelled and turned black: I could never afford it





Ambulances outside a New York hospital. Photograph: Marie Le Ble/ZUMA Wire/REX/Shutterstock

Ambulances outside a New York hospital. Photograph: Marie Le Ble/ZUMA Wire/REX/Shutterstock

Mon 31 May 2021 04.00 EDT

I had dropped my kids off at school and was lifting one of their scooters, when I turned sharply and felt something ping in my foot. It wasn't much; a bad cramp, I thought, more painful than usual, which would probably wear off by the time I got home. I limped back to my apartment, took painkillers and put it on ice. By the next morning, the foot had begun to turn black. By the evening, the flesh was rising like dough. "Ew," said a friend, when I showed it to her that night. "You need a pedicure. Also: you need to see a doctor right now."

It's either laziness, Britishness, or a strain of my general belief in denial, but in most circumstances I'd rather suffer than bother the doctor. In the US, this impulse is compounded by the knowledge that, however much you spend on health insurance, even the smallest engagement with the medical establishment will result in a cascade of bills. I'm still fighting with my insurers over a \$1,000 charge from last summer.

“It’ll be fine,” I said, and an hour later, when it wasn’t – the skin was now purple and gently contoured like foam – booked a 10pm video appointment with a podiatrist. He logged on via his phone from what seemed to be the parking lot of a restaurant in Long Island. “What’s all this?” he said. “Do you really need this appointment?” I showed him the foot. He squinted at the screen, crossed the lot and got into his car, where he turned on the light and squinted again. “OK, I don’t want panic you, but you need to seek emergency care right away.” My friend, meanwhile, had sent a photo of the foot to her brother in California, who is a doctor and also very much her brother. “Ew, she needs a pedicure,” he replied. “No one needs to see that. Also, that could be a blood clot, she needs to get to the ER.”

I left my kids with my friend and got in a taxi. “How bad is a blood clot?” I’d asked my friend’s brother before leaving, and he’d reassured me it was no big deal as long as it didn’t detach. “Then what?” “You’ll die instantly.” This was concerning, particularly since the solution, he said, was “not to jiggle the leg”, but at that point my fears lay elsewhere. It’s expensive to die in New York, and as we crossed Central Park, I rang my insurers to get pre-authorisation (a promise with approximately the value of Neville Chamberlain’s [piece of paper](#), but you may as well try.)

Then I rang my friend Oliver. It’s curious to me now, what surfaced in that moment. “Can you make sure, if anything happens, that you take the girls to England,” I asked, as he scrambled to catch up. “What? Are you near the hospital? How far off are you?” “Make sure they know about England,” I repeated. “Take them for the summer, on holiday, to England.” I sounded mad. It’s amazing, looking back, that I didn’t mention the Isle of Wight, and which hotel they should stay at. “OK, but just let me know when you get to the hospital,” he said.

The ER was half-empty. I have always wondered whether, in an emergency, my personality would undergo an exciting change, converted in the heat of the moment from a sort of vaguely up-myself diffidence to something more thrusting and American. Now I know. “How are you, how can we help?” said the check-in clerk and reflexively I replied, “I’m fine.” For five minutes, I sat in the waiting room wondering if I was about to keel over and should be raising more alarm. Another five minutes passed, and the triage nurse came over. Even delivered in my apologetic, half-assed fashion, the

words “suspected blood clot” had an immediate effect and I was sent straight through to the doctor.

It wasn’t a blood clot. It wasn’t a broken bone, either. No one that night could figure out what it was, except maybe a rip in the tendon, although they were very thorough and drew blood to rule out the possibility of low platelets. I don’t know what lesson to extract from all this, either, other than something reassuring about consistency of character.

Mainly, I’m aware, with weary resignation, that although the swelling has gone down and the foot is definitely on the mend, in other ways this is just the beginning. After an ultrasound, X-ray, blood test and patient transport all over New York’s premier hospital, I’m waiting for the inevitable \$10,000 bill and the hours I will spend on the phone to contest it. It’s the story of American healthcare; the real pain starts now.

- Emma Brockes is a Guardian columnist

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[Guardian Opinion cartoon](#)

[Boris Johnson](#)

# Nicola Jennings on Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds' wedding – cartoon

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## 2021.05.31 - Around the world

- [Nigeria Gunmen abduct about 150 students from Islamic school](#)
- [China Australian and New Zealand PMs warn of ‘those who seek to divide us’](#)
- [Brexit EU Commission calls on UK to ditch ideology over Northern Ireland protocol](#)
- [New Zealand flooding State of emergency in Canterbury, with hundreds evacuated](#)
- [Uganda Police drive-by killings revealed using mobile phone footage](#)

## Nigeria

# Gunmen in Nigeria abduct about 150 students from Islamic school

One person shot dead after armed gang on motorcycles attack town in north-central Nigeria, 'shooting indiscriminately'



Relatives of students abducted in Nigeria in March 2021 hold a demonstration. The recent kidnapping of pupils in Tegna adds to the hundreds abducted in the country in recent months. Photograph: Kola Sulaimon/AFP/Getty Images

Relatives of students abducted in Nigeria in March 2021 hold a demonstration. The recent kidnapping of pupils in Tegna adds to the hundreds abducted in the country in recent months. Photograph: Kola Sulaimon/AFP/Getty Images

*Reuters*

Sun 30 May 2021 20.29 EDT

An armed gang has abducted students from an Islamic school in the north-central Nigerian state of Niger.

The school's owner, Abubakar Tgina, told Reuters he witnessed the attack and estimated about 150 students had been taken. "I personally saw between 20 and 25 motorcycles with heavily armed people. They entered the school and went away with about 150 or more of the students," said Tgina, who lives around 150 metres from the school.

"We can't be exact because most of them have not reported to the school as at that time."

A spokesman for Niger's state police said in a statement gunmen on motorcycles attacked the town of Tgina at around 3pm on Sunday. He said the attackers were "shooting indiscriminately and abducted a yet-to-be-ascertained number of children at Salihu Tanko Islamic school".

['I had to find them': kidnapped filmmaker Mellissa Fung on her mission to find the Boko Haram girls](#)  
[Read more](#)

Tgina said around 300 pupils attend the school, and are aged between seven and 15. He said pupils live at home and only attend classes at the site.

One person was shot dead during the attack and a second person was seriously injured, the state governor's spokeswoman said.

She said 11 of the children taken were released by the gunmen because they were "too small and couldn't walk". A group of bus passengers were also abducted, she said.

Armed groups carrying out kidnapping for ransom are being blamed for a series of raids on schools and universities in northern Nigeria in recent months, abducting more than 700 students for ransom since December.

Sunday's attack in Niger took place the day after the release of the remaining 14 students of a group abducted last month from a university in neighbouring Kaduna state.

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## [Asia Pacific](#)

# Ardern and Morrison present united front on China, warning of ‘those who seek to divide us’

Australian and New Zealand prime ministers talk up closeness of ties as Ardern is forced to defend ‘soft’ stance on Beijing



New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern and Australian counterpart Scott Morrison talk about China and threats to the Anzac partnership in Queenstown. Photograph: James Allan/Getty Images

New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern and Australian counterpart Scott Morrison talk about China and threats to the Anzac partnership in Queenstown. Photograph: James Allan/Getty Images

[\*Tess McClure\*](#) in Queenstown

[\*@tessairini\*](#)

Mon 31 May 2021 00.06 EDT

The Australian prime minister, [Scott Morrison](#), has warned that “there are those far from here that would seek to divide us”, during a press conference with his New Zealand counterpart, Jacinda Ardern, that focused on how the two countries handle China.

The leaders emphasised unity in the face of Beijing’s increasing regional influence and Morrison said any forces trying to scupper the partnership would not succeed.

The question of how to respond to the rise of China – and perceived differences in the two countries’ approaches – dominated both prime ministers’ comments at their first in-person talks since the pandemic began. Talking to the press in Queenstown, [New Zealand](#), on Monday, Ardern and Morrison sought to present a united front on China and international trade and security issues.

“I have no doubt there will be those who seek to undermine Australia and New Zealand’s security by trying to create points of difference that are not there,” Morrison said.

[‘A matter of time’: New Zealand’s foreign minister warns China ‘storm’ could be coming](#)  
[Read more](#)

He said the “direct personal relationship” between him and Ardern “will only continue, because we have common challenges. There are common threats.”

While the initial comments on “those who seek to divide” were made in response to questions on [China](#), Morrison would not comment on whether he was referring to the country directly. “People always try to divide New Zealand, all over the place,” he said.

Ardern was forced to defend New Zealand’s position, which has been characterised in the Australian press as soft or cosying up to Beijing. “[I] directly and strongly refute the assertion that NZ is doing anything other than taking a very principled position on human rights issues, on trade issues as they relate to China,” she said.

“At no point in our discussions today did I detect any difference in our relative positions on the importance of maintaining a very strong and principled perspective”

Morrison answered with a straight “no” when asked if New Zealand had ‘sold its soul’ to China. “Australia and New Zealand are trading nations, but neither of us would ever trade our sovereignty or our values,” he said.

Ardern said the two countries had “broadly been positioned in exactly the same place” on major human rights and trade policy statements. New Zealand has joined Australia on a number of key statements raising concerns about China’s conduct in Hong Kong and Xinjiang – but its stance has been interpreted as softer across the Tasman. In April, the foreign minister, Nanaia Mahuta, said New Zealand was “uncomfortable” expanding its invocation of the Five Eyes alliance with Australia, Canada, the UK and the US beyond intelligence matters, into wider policy statements. That stance has led some to call New Zealand [the “weak link” of the alliance](#).

But Ardern shot down the proposition that New Zealand’s standing in the Five Eyes network could be downgraded. “The answer to that question is no,” she said.

“We carry responsibility for ourselves to ensure adequate investment in our defence forces - and equally, that we carry our weight as a member of the intelligence and security community.”

Referring to the two allies’ strong historic relationship, Morrison said the two nations had carved out “a uniquely Anzac path through Covid-19” and “must also continue to pursue an Anzac path through the other issues”.

Morrison had opened talks with brief comments referencing regional pressures created by China. “The broader issue of the Indo-Pacific and a free and open Indo-Pacific is something that Australia and New Zealand feels very strongly about,” he said. “All of us have a big stake in ensuring a world that favours freedom and a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

[China and deportations policy likely to overshadow Morrison-Ardern talks](#)  
[Read more](#)

The Indo-Pacific includes the hotly contested South China Sea, where China has been increasing its military presence and [island-building](#) – dumping sand on to small atolls to create larger islands that can host military bases. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has said those efforts “may undermine peace, security and stability” in the region. The Australian military is [actively patrolling the South China Sea](#), and in May, the New Zealand defence minister, Peeni Henare, said the country’s navy would be joining a British flotilla tour of the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea later this year.

Asked directly about the prospect of conflict with China over the South China Sea or Taiwan, Morrison responded that “the world is being characterised by increased strategic competition between the United States and China”, but that competition “doesn’t need to lead to increased likelihood of conflict”.

Both Australia and New Zealand are highly dependent on China for trade. China accounts for around 30% of New Zealand’s exports, and \$33bn of total trade. China is also Australia’s largest export market, but over the past year, that’s been hurt by a deteriorating relationship between Canberra and Beijing in a trade war that disrupted Australian industries valued at [an estimated \\$47.7bn last year](#).

Also on the table was New Zealand’s frustration at Australia’s “501” policy of deporting citizens who commit a crime – even if they have lived in Australia for most of their lives. The policy has been a simmering “sore point” between the two nations, Mahuta has said. At the last set of talks between the two leaders, Ardern publicly rebuked Morrison for the policy. “Do not deport your people and your problems,” she said.

This year, Ardern said she had once again made clear New Zealand’s position on the deportations. The issue seems to be at a stalemate, with no movement from Australia.

Despite those disagreements, Ardern also continued to emphasise the connections between the two nations, saying that “when we talk about Australia and New Zealand being family, being *whānau* [the Māori word for

extended family], we actually mean that quite literally as much as we mean it symbolically”.

“As with any family, we will have our differences from time to time but those differences are still undertaken in the spirit of openness and ultimately friendship. We are much bigger than our differences – the last year has taught us that,” she said.

A joint statement released by the two leaders outlined the countries’ shared positions, which included statements on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and “serious concern over developments in the South China Sea, including the continued militarisation of disputed features and an intensification of destabilising activities at sea”.

It also outlined a series of positions that, while not referencing China specifically, point to shared concerns over Beijing’s influence in the region. They committed to supporting sovereign states in the Indo-Pacific, and said those countries must be able to “pursue their interests free from coercion”. They also cited shared commitments to “countering foreign interference”. Both leaders “expressed concern over harmful economic coercion and agreed to work with partners to tackle security and economic challenges.” On Saturday, New Zealand opted to join as a third party in Australia’s dispute with China over punitive tariffs on barley, as it goes to the WTO.

This article was amended on 1 June 2021. An earlier version said that analysis had shown that “China’s declared and undeclared sanctions against Australia cost the country around AU\$47.7bn last year”. This should have referred to the total value of the export sectors affected by the trade actions, rather than the final cost of the sanctions.

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## Brexit

# EU Commission calls on UK to ditch ideology over Northern Ireland protocol

Maroš Šefčovič says he is trying to iron out disruption to businesses caused by the protocol



Maroš Šefčovič says he is ready to offer solutions to solve current problems.  
Photograph: Juan Carlos Hidalgo/EPA

Maroš Šefčovič says he is ready to offer solutions to solve current problems.  
Photograph: Juan Carlos Hidalgo/EPA

[Aubrey Allegretti](#) *Political correspondent*  
[@breeallegretti](#)

Sun 30 May 2021 15.07 EDT

A senior European Commission figure has defended the [Northern Ireland](#) protocol, calling on the UK government to ditch ideology in favour of pragmatism in order to transform problems arising from the Brexit deal.



Maroš Šefčovič said he was looking at “solutions” to iron out disruption to businesses caused by the protocol, a key part of the [Brexit](#) agreement designed to protect the bloc’s single market at its frontier with the UK on the island of Ireland, without a return to a hard border.

It means Northern Ireland has in effect stayed within the EU’s single market for goods, and a customs border was enforced on goods crossing the Irish sea. The resulting checks at the ports of Belfast and Larne have angered unionists and loyalists, who feel the region is being separated from the rest of the UK, and this anger has escalated into threats, violence and rioting.

Edwin Poots, who earlier this month [succeeded Arlene Foster as the leader of the Democratic Unionist party](#), claimed on the BBC’s Andrew Marr show on Sunday that the EU Commission “don’t seem to care for the peace process in Northern Ireland and that really needs to change”.

The DUP is calling for the protocol to be scrapped, and Poots told Marr the checks were “doing demonstrable harm to every individual in Northern Ireland” and “having a devastating impact”, agreeing the violence could get worse as summer and the perennially tense marching season approaches.

Šefčovič, who is in charge from Brussels’ side of leading talks with the UK’s Michael Gove and David Frost to adapt the protocol, later defended the arrangement, saying it presented “opportunity” and would take care of daily problems in Northern Ireland.

He said he was investigating how to address issues arising from the protocol, but insisted it would be wrong to scrap it completely.

In response to Poots’ accusation that Brussels was treating Northern Ireland as a “plaything”, Šefčovič said there was “plenty of opportunity” to transform the protocol into “something positive, good for the future which would guarantee the peace, stability and prosperity for all”.

[Senior loyalist says NI post-Brexit tensions ‘most dangerous for years’](#)  
[Read more](#)

He promised to take soundings from the DUP and other political parties in Northern Ireland before his next meeting with Frost in London, expected to take place in several weeks.

Recalling his talks with Gove last December, when the post-Brexit trade deal was signed, Šefčovič said he had offered Swiss-style transition agreements on matters such as veterinary issues, which would prevent someone with guide dogs needing a certificate proving they were free of rabies to take the animals from Great Britain into Northern Ireland.

He added he was ready to offer solutions to solve current problems, but added the UK “just need to get over, I would say, ideology into pragmatism and real politics and go for this type of veterinary agreement, which could be done just like this within a few weeks”.

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## New Zealand

# New Zealand flooding: state of emergency in Canterbury, with hundreds evacuated

The MetService has issued a red warning for heavy rain in Canterbury and multiple warnings elsewhere



New Zealand's Canterbury region has been placed under a state of emergency after heavy rain caused widespread flooding. Photograph: Sanka Vidanagama/NurPhoto/Rex/Shutterstock

New Zealand's Canterbury region has been placed under a state of emergency after heavy rain caused widespread flooding. Photograph: Sanka Vidanagama/NurPhoto/Rex/Shutterstock

*Reuters*

Sun 30 May 2021 20.07 EDT

Hundreds of people have been evacuated and many more face being forced to abandon their homes in New Zealand's Canterbury region as heavy rains raise water levels and cause widespread flooding.

A state of emergency was declared for the entire Canterbury region and at least 300 homes were evacuated overnight as water levels rose in rivers across the region in a "one-in-100-year deluge", [local media reports said](#) on Monday.

[New Zealand records seventh-hottest year, with extreme weather more likely.](#)  
[Read more](#)

Several highways, schools and offices were closed and New Zealand's Defence Forces deployed helicopters to rescue some people stranded in floods in the Ashburton area. Ashburton's mayor, Neil Brown, said "half of Ashburton" would need to be evacuated if the river's levees broke but there was "still quite a bit of capacity" in the river.

"We need it to stop raining to let those rivers drop," said Brown, according to the New Zealand Herald.



A member of the New Zealand Defence Force rescues a dog from floods as they help evacuate a family near Ashburton. Photograph: Corporal Sean

Spivey/AP

The military helped evacuate more than 50 people including several overnight in an NH-90 military helicopter.

One man was clinging to a tree near the town of Darfield when he jumped into flood waters and tried to swim to safety but was swept away, the military said.

Helicopter crews scoured the water for 30 minutes before finding the man and plucking him to safety. The military helicopter also rescued an elderly couple from the roof of their car.

Another man was rescued by a civilian helicopter pilot on Sunday after he was swept from his farm as he tried to move his stock to safety.

Paul Adams [told the news website Stuff](#) he thought he had been hit by a wall of water that he hadn't seen coming. He was swept down the raging Ashburton river before managing to drag himself on to a fence and then into a tree. Another farmer spotted his headlamp and organised a rescue mission.



New Brighton pier in Christchurch, New Zealand. Heavy rain has battered the region, causing widespread flooding. Photograph: Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images

“The rescuers are fantastic,” Adams told Stuff, adding that he was now back on his farm and “good as gold”. He said that so far he’d only found about 100 of his herd of 250 animals alive.

New Zealand’s MetService had [issued a red warning on Sunday](#) for heavy rain for Canterbury and multiple warnings elsewhere. Some places received as much as 40 centimetres of rain over the weekend and into Monday. Forecasters warned of possible heavy rain through Monday evening before conditions improved.

The government announced NZ\$100,000 (£51,000) towards a mayoral relief fund to support Canterbury communities affected by the flooding, Kris Faafoi, the acting minister for emergency management, said in a statement.

“While it is still very early to know the full cost of the damage, we expect it to be significant and this initial contribution will help those communities to start to get back on their feet,” said Faafoi.

New Zealand’s prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, planned to travel to Christchurch later on Monday to be briefed on the situation first-hand.

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## Uganda

# Uganda police drive-by killings revealed using mobile phone footage

Interviews with more than 30 witnesses also used in investigation by BBC Africa Eye into deaths in Kampala



Hajarah Nikitto holds up a picture of her dead son, Amos Ssegawa, who was walking home with her in Kampala when he was hit by a bullet. Photograph: BBC

Hajarah Nikitto holds up a picture of her dead son, Amos Ssegawa, who was walking home with her in Kampala when he was hit by a bullet. Photograph: BBC

*Jason Burke Africa correspondent*

Sun 30 May 2021 19.01 EDT

A single truck carrying eight police officers was responsible for a mass shooting in the centre of the Ugandan capital, Kampala, in November last



year in which at least four people died and many more were injured, an investigation by BBC [Africa](#) Eye has found.

The shootings were part of [a crackdown on protests in Kampala](#) following the arrest of opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi, a singer turned politician known as Bobi Wine, who was campaigning as a candidate for presidential elections held two months later.

More than 50 people were killed and hundreds hurt by security forces and police over two days in the capital and elsewhere. President Yoweri Museveni [won a sixth term in office in the polls](#), which opposition politicians said were fraudulent.

Officials initially said that any casualties had been criminals and violent rioters, before admitting that some innocent people had died after being hit by “stray bullets”.

Images posted on social media showed police in Kampala firing indiscriminately at people in buildings overlooking the protests and unidentifiable men in plainclothes, believed to be security personnel, firing automatic weapons. More than 350 people were arrested, police said.

The BBC Africa Eye investigation, [released on Monday](#), reconstructs the killing of four people on Kampala Road as well as the death of a 15-year-old boy and the serious wounding of two women elsewhere in the capital. The analysis of more than 300 video clips from mobile phones and interviews with more than 30 witnesses strongly suggests that all were shot by police or soldiers and that none were engaged in any criminal activity or protest.

Authorities in [Uganda](#) admitted the vehicle identified in the investigation was a police patrol car, but said they had no information linking it to indiscriminate shooting.

Mobile phone videos and photographs show the patrol truck passing within metres of Kamuyat Ngobi, a 28-year-old mother of four, who collapsed and died with a single bullet in the head seconds later. A shot is heard on recordings as the police truck passed her.



A still from footage analysed by BBC Africa Eye, showing Kamuyat Ngobi circled. Photograph: BBC

Ngobi earned her living cooking and selling food to local businesses and had made a delivery to a local shop moments before she was killed. Images of her bloody body show smashed plates of food she was carrying to her grandfather in a nearby building.

“If I ever see the person who shot Kamuyat I will ask them to shoot me too. What hurts me most is that I will never see her again,” said Zikaye Takumala, her mother.

The same police vehicle continued along Kampala Road, passing a restaurant where two people were shot and injured. After driving another 60 metres, it passed John Amara, a 31-year-old father of two and mobile phone shopworker who was shot in the chest and killed. The next victim was 23-year-old Abbas Kalule, who was hit in the upper thigh and died in hospital four days later. The police truck then turned north-east and passed John Kitobe, who had come into Kampala to change money. The 72-year-old retired accountant was hit in the neck by a bullet and killed.



Abbas Kalule, who was shot on Kampala Road and died four days later.  
Photograph: BBC

During the minute or so that the shootings lasted, there were burning road blocks on the Kampala Road, but none of the victims appear in any way involved in any protests.

[BBC Africa Eye](#) has also analysed a video that shows a “drive-by” shooting of two sisters, Shakira Nyemera and Shamim Nabirye, on Jinja Road in Kampala on the same day. The women are seen among a small group of local people sheltering from the unrest in a sidestreet and watching the road. A convoy drives past, at least one shot is heard and the two women collapse. Both women survived but doctors were unable to save Nabirye’s three unborn triplets. “I lost my children and I loved them,” she said.



Another still from the BBC Africa Eye footage highlights the weapons being used by the people on the patrol truck. Photograph: BBC

Ugandan authorities claim to have no record of two women shot on Jinja Road, and said the incident had not been reported to the police.

The investigation also includes new evidence in the case of Amos Ssegawa, a 15-year-old boy who was walking home with his mother, Hajarah Nikitto, when he was hit in the face by a bullet. Eyewitnesses said that Amos was killed by Ugandan soldiers shooting from a military vehicle. The teenager was rushed to hospital but pronounced dead on arrival.

“It was the military that shot my child,” said Nikitto.

Ugandan authorities confirmed that her son was killed on 19 November, but again attributed his death to a stray bullet. A government spokesman told the BBC that innocent victims will be compensated, but that verification takes time.



The locations of the shootings positioned on a satellite image of Kampala.  
Photograph: BBC

During the unrest in November, Brig Flavia Byekwaso, a military spokesperson, described “a war-like situation” that meant the army “has to deploy”.

Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, has acknowledged that he reinforced security before the elections by deploying special forces who “killed a few” people [he described as terrorists](#).

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