

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies

Communication of Engagement

April 2021

To our stakeholders,

We are pleased to confirm RUSI's ongoing support and commitment to the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

In this Communication of Engagement, we outline RUSI's efforts towards these principles from January 2019 to February 2021. Further information about our work, including our annual report, is available at rusi.org. We welcome any feedback from our stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Dr Karin von Hippel

Director General

Introduction

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) is the world's oldest and the UK's leading defence and security think tank. Its mission is to inform, influence and enhance public debate on a safer and more stable world. RUSI is a research-led institute, producing independent, practical and innovative analysis to address today's complex challenges.

RUSI is a British institution but operates with an international perspective. Offices in Nairobi and Brussels reinforce our global reach. Over the years, we have built an outstanding reputation for quality and objectivity. Our heritage, location at the heart of Whitehall, together with our range of contacts both inside and outside government – though strictly independent of it – give RUSI a unique insight and authority.

United Nations Global Compact Principles

Human Rights, Principles 1 & 2

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

Principle 2: Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

RUSI supports and respects the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights standards and ensures that no project or staff member is complicit in human rights abuses through steadfast policies.

As an organisation that at times comes into contact with vulnerable people as part of its research, we ensure that Principles 1 and 2 are upheld through our Ethics Policy for Research Projects, which ensures that the human rights of interviewees and employees are upheld and protected at all times. This policy is given to all researchers, including consultants and partners carrying out person-to-person and desk-based research. Within this policy, 'harm' is taken to mean more than just physical harm and can refer to emotional harm and risk of upset, as well as reputational damage. Our robust safeguarding policies cover situations such as sexual harassment and bullying. RUSI also has a Designated Safeguarding Officer, allowing staff a consistent point of contact for any concerns in that regard. The safeguarding document, available to all staff at all times, further outlines the procedures for raising a concern, making the process transparent for all.

Additionally, RUSI staff receive training that covers multiple aspects of their work, such as cyber security and data protection, enabling them to carry out their work safely at all times and recognise potential hazards before they occur.

With the pandemic leading to almost everyone at RUSI working from home, management has understood the strain that this new situation can have on employees and has taken steps to remedy these effects. The Employee Assistance Programme by Health Assured provides employees with direct and confidential access to mental health services, such as a 24-hour hotline, wellbeing programmes and counselling services. Some

staff members are also training as [mental health first aiders](#) through St John's Ambulance and will receive a Level 3 Award in Mental Health: Workplace First Aider qualification.

Furthermore, the Human Resources department is planning wellbeing events and seminars, enabling staff to learn about the impact of stress, maximise their personal wellbeing and practise mindfulness.

RUSI's work includes research into current human rights issues, such as the [nexus](#) of denuclearisation and human rights in North Korea and the [UK's human rights commitment](#). A team of researchers at RUSI has explored the [role of AI in the UK's future national security framework](#), considering the human rights and privacy implications arising from the use of emerging technologies. This research has informed the internal approach of the UK's intelligence agencies to these issues and their consideration of operational need in the wider context of well-established human rights, while also facilitating more external dialogue with key representatives from the human rights and privacy space. RUSI is also involved in a research project [monitoring data-driven approaches to Covid-19](#), which includes assessments of how policymakers, local governments, private sector companies, the police and others have acted in relation to the public's data privacy and rights during the pandemic. Further, RUSI hosts an annual conference on the [International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers](#), addressing and discussing current issues of peacekeeping missions, such as policing and to what extent the UN should be a party to a conflict in which it is involved.

RUSI implemented STRIVE II, the second iteration of the STRIVE (Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism) programme, with the aim of contributing towards reducing radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremism by addressing structural factors, group-based dynamics, enabling factors and individual incentives in Kenya. These core objectives align with the EU-Trust Fund Programme's broader aspirations of increasing peace, stability and inclusive economic opportunities for youth and marginalised areas of Kenya. The project was launched in October 2016 and concluded in September 2020. The project has four components: 1) research focusing on improving countering violent extremism (CVE) programming and enhancing the understanding of relationships between conflict dynamics and recruitment patterns; 2) law enforcement preventing and countering violent extremism training for senior and mid-level managers and frontline officers from a range of agencies to strengthen prevention capabilities and respond to violent extremism with strategies compatible with international law and human rights standards; 3) a youth mentorship and referral system aiming to reduce the susceptibility of young people to political and ideological violence; and 4) preventive communications focusing on informing, informing and influencing CVE policy and practice within Kenya and on a global level.

Labour – Principles 3, 4, 5 and 6

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Principle 4: Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

Principle 5: Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour

Principle 6: Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

RUSI supports its employees' rights to join a union or a similar organisation, fulfilling Principle 3 on the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Through its established track record on research on modern slavery, RUSI has contributed extensively to Principles 4 and 5. RUSI has published a breadth of policy-focused research on human trafficking and forced and compulsory labour. In particular, RUSI's Organised Crime and Policing research group and the Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies (CFCS) has undertaken research on the disruption of modern slavery in the UK and abroad. Since 2017, RUSI has investigated the dynamics of human trafficking in Sudan, mapping its causalities and providing programmatic and policy recommendations for the UK government and international stakeholders. Currently, the team are conducting a three-month [study](#) on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on human trafficking/modern slavery in Sudan. The study explores the risks, people's experiences, and responses to the pandemic in Sudan. The study involves semi-structured interviews with relevant professionals working in Sudan (government, civil society and intergovernmental actors), as well as surveys, an evidence review and a focus group with Sudanese survivors living in the UK. The study aims to help understanding of how the pandemic has affected human trafficking/modern slavery in Sudan, and to recommend steps to help address these impacts.

RUSI's CFCS has worked with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery in order to broaden and empower the response of the financial sector to modern slavery and human trafficking. The CFCS aims to show why and how financial investigations can be used to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking and identify the resource and information gaps that exist across the globe. It highlights the need for the financial services industry to complement its existing efforts to pursue the illicit proceeds of modern slavery and human trafficking with a comparable effort to harness its resources, relationships and leverage to prevent it in the first place.

Since 2016, RUSI has published world-leading research on the form, dynamics and extent of the security threat posed by large-scale illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, bringing awareness of the need to recognise the threat as transnational organised crime. This includes the role of modern slavery and forced labour in the IUU fishing supply chain. RUSI's 2017 report '[Below the Surface: How Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Threatens our Security](#)' was quoted in a 2020 Blue Paper Summary for Decision Makers produced by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. The results of the project were presented on the 'Following the Money – Finance and IUU Fishing' panel at the 11th International Forum on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing at Chatham House in 2018. The project's research on corruption and IUU fishing contributed to [Interpol's Guide for Law Enforcement Practitioners](#) in the fisheries sector. The report is cited in academic journals, including *Trends in Organized Crime*, *Frontiers in Marine Science*, *Nature Food* and the *International Journal of Maritime Crime and Security*, among others. RUSI's 2019 report '[Turning the Tide: Learning from Responses to Large-Scale Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in Five Countries](#)' was extensively cited by the [United States International Trade Commission](#)'s 2021 investigation into the impact of IUU fishing on US imports and commercial fisheries.

Further, RUSI's [Strategic Hub for Organised Crime Research](#) (SHOC) has published several articles informing the public about the often-hidden nature of modern slavery and the steps required to remedy the situation. This includes an [educational piece](#) on online child abuse and sexual exploitation during the coronavirus pandemic, and an article on the role of [drug trafficking](#) in modern slavery. In 2018, RUSI partnered with the Freedom Foundation to publish guidance and recommendations on the role of the financial sector in

reporting modern slavery ahead of the UN General Assembly meeting on the same topic. In 2019, SHOC delivered a high-level conference on the role of [faith-based communities](#) in disrupting modern slavery.

RUSI has taken and continues to take steps to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, supporting Principle 6 through various measures:

RUSI is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. It is our policy to provide equal opportunities in employment regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or religious or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation, as per the 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010. The aim is for our workforce, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, to be truly representative of all sections of society and our stakeholders and customers, and for all employees to feel respected and able to give their best. This policy applies to all employees and to all applicants for employment. We are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and to ensure that the talent and skills of all employees are maximised. Our policy is to treat all employees with respect and dignity, and to ensure that employees are not victimised or subjected to harassment or discrimination on the grounds outlined above. We seek to fulfil this commitment to equal opportunities through the application of Policies and Procedures, which are consistent and equitable, and recognise the expertise and ability of each individual. Part of this is equal pay: RUSI is committed to equal pay and equality of terms and conditions in employment. We believe male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

RUSI is also part of the [Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy Initiative](#). Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy is a leadership network that brings together heads of organisations working in nuclear policy who are committed to breaking down gender barriers and making gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence. RUSI Director General Dr Karin von Hippel is the initiative's latest Gender Champion. RUSI's commitment to the initiative involves taking substantive action to address some of the specific issues around gender equality in the nuclear policy field. Staff across RUSI have worked to develop pledges for actions over the next year that will solidify this commitment. The hope is that these undertakings will have positive effects well beyond our Proliferation and Nuclear Policy programme. RUSI aims to:

- Look at recruitment policy and practices to make sure we are being as inclusive as we can be at every stage from role definition to hiring.
- Look at our approach to research to make sure that we track and implement best practice in ensuring diversity of sources, voices, partnerships, authorship and peer review, with particular emphasis on the work of our Proliferation and Nuclear Policy programme.

Furthermore, RUSI staff have created their own initiative to champion non-traditional voices in the defence and security space – Rebalancing Expertise in Defence and Security (REDS). By hosting a number of events and content produced throughout the year, REDS aims to improve the balance of researchers and practitioners from a diversity of backgrounds, through offering a dedicated platform to informed and expert voices on a variety of topics within the field. The REDS committee have organised two events since the project's establishment: the [inaugural event](#) in September 2020 on domestic and international UK security policy and its role in developing and improving diversity and inclusion; and a [second event](#) in February 2021

that examined the role played by diversity and inclusion in the day-to-day operations of the UK's defence and security policy institutions and the practical applications of the concept.

Environment – Principles 7, 8 and 9

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8: Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 9: Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

With the majority of staff working from home during the coronavirus pandemic, RUSI staff have drastically reduced their travel budgets and thus cut down on Co2 emissions. Adjusting to working from home has led to more conferences, events, training courses and research being conducted remotely: the CFCS alone held 25 virtual trainings in 53 countries with over 3,500 participants and conducted 37 virtual research trips, spanning six continents and culminating in 125 interviews. Guided by this approach, RUSI will continue to assess whether travel is strictly necessary for a project or if the collection of data can potentially be outsourced, or if, for an event, speakers can be dialled in from abroad.

RUSI significantly contributes to Principles 7, 8 and 9 through its environmental crime programme, established in 2014. Since then, RUSI has undertaken a wide range of cutting-edge global research activities, led by a team of experts in environmental security, wildlife crime, illegal fishing, associated corruption and illicit financial flows. In 2014–15, RUSI led pioneering research into the role of armed non-state actors in wildlife trafficking in the Horn of Africa. Cross-disciplinary empirical data was compiled and cross-referenced, a comprehensive mapping exercise conducted, and extensive fieldwork executed, resulting in the widely cited paper '[An Illusion of Complicity: Terrorism and the Illegal Ivory Trade in East Africa](#)'. In 2016, RUSI published the Whitehall Paper [Poaching, Wildlife Trafficking and Security in Africa: Myths and Realities](#), critically analysing the dominant perceptions of poaching and wildlife trafficking as threats to human security, as drivers of conflict, as funders of terrorism and as revenue streams for organised crime.

RUSI has a strong track record of influencing the private sector to take a more proactive response to protection of the environment. In 2018, RUSI was part of the team that established the United for Wildlife Financial Taskforce. In October 2018, HRH the Duke of Cambridge and leading financial institutions such as Standard Chartered, HSBC, RBS, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and JP Morgan signed the Mansion House Declaration, committing all taskforce members to identify specific actions that the financial sector can take to disrupt the illegal wildlife trade. Since 2015, the United for Wildlife Financial and Transport Taskforces have supported over 150 law enforcement investigations, facilitated the search of over 120 suspicious shipments, enabled 49 arrests, and trained over 80,000 industry employees in countering illegal wildlife trade (IWT) practices. There are now over 40 global financial institutions in the Financial Taskforce, as well as regional chapters in Southeast Asia and East and Southern Africa.

Finally, as aforementioned, RUSI regularly publishes on the impact of large-scale IUU fishing, bringing awareness of the need to recognise the threat as transnational organised crime and major environmental threat (see Principles 3–6).

Anti-Corruption – Principle 10

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

RUSI takes its procedures for dealing with suspected instances of fraud and bribery very seriously, and transparency and accountability of our funding and our activities is enshrined in the [Institute's values](#). An interest disclosure ('whistle-blowing') code of practice is included in the code of conduct that each RUSI employee and contractor receives upon commencement of their work. The document details the appropriate conduct of such a disclosure and sets out the point of contact for those that wish to make a disclosure. RUSI trustees must also disclose any conflicts of interest.

RUSI is committed to conducting its activities fairly, honestly and openly, in accordance with relevant legislation and to the highest standards of integrity. It has no tolerance of fraud, bribery or other forms of corrupt behaviour. This includes active bribery (the offering, promising or giving of a bribe) and passive bribery (the requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting of a bribe). Furthermore, RUSI believes that action against the briber is in the broader interests of society. As a charity deriving a significant proportion of its income from public funds, benefactions and charitable organisations, RUSI is concerned to protect its operations and reputation and its funders, donors and staff from the detriment associated with fraud, bribery and other corrupt activity. It is therefore committed to preventing fraud and bribery by its staff and any third party acting for or on behalf of RUSI. RUSI will take appropriate action to prevent fraud or bribery in respect of its activities. Where fraud or bribery are shown to have occurred, RUSI will take firm action, which may include dismissal and legal action. Fraud or bribery committed by RUSI employees and other workers will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

The code of conduct also includes guidance on gifts and expenses. RUSI follows robust rules that prevent internal corruption through steadfast measures such as half-yearly performance monitoring and separation of duties, as well as clear management lines. Further we have a recruitment policy that is systematic, efficient, compliant with relevant employment legislation, and promotes equality of opportunity. Financially, we perform and undergo regular external audits as well as ensuring a secure and thorough audit trail.

RUSI's research has long informed anti-corruption procedures. Since 2017, RUSI has run two cutting-edge UK government-funded projects – [Disrupting Wildlife-Linked Illicit Financial Flows in East and Southern Africa](#) – pioneering a new approach based on a strategic threat and needs assessment and production of tailored [rapid reference guides](#) to equip the public and private sector with the skills needed to initiate financial investigations in IWT cases. Our role in galvanising a cross-sector response also represents a key contribution to Principle 7. Financial investigations capacity building has been delivered to 308 delegates from 52 government agencies and 74 financial institutions in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Such training draws on the evidence base established in the major report '[Follow the Money: Using Financial Investigation to Combat Wildlife Crime](#)', which explores the financial dimensions of wildlife trafficking, and the need to disrupt the financial networks of those engaged in this crime. Our work continues in East Africa through a [five-year project](#) dedicated to countering wildlife crime activities in Uganda.

In 2020, this programme of work expanded to Southeast Asia through the delivery of financial sector workshops for 41 participants in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam.

This built on RUSI's recent work with the government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, who [invited RUSI experts](#) to pilot an innovative law enforcement case review methodology in the same year. This exercise generated new financial intelligence in two wildlife trafficking cases. RUSI's methodology therefore became a [global recommendation](#) in the Financial Action Task Force's 2020 report on IWT. As a result, in 2020–21, RUSI was commissioned to assist the Inter-Governmental Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa to produce a [regional assessment](#) of the baseline capacity to respond to the financial aspects of wildlife trafficking.

RUSI counts among its research teams one of the few illicit finance research centres in the world. The Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies (CFCS) delivers pioneering analysis and actionable ideas in the fight against financial crime, driving change through a partnership-based approach and viable solutions. The centre's work aims to advance the integrity of the financial system by equipping the international community with the knowledge, tools and ideas to understand, identify and disrupt the threats of illicit finance.

Since its creation in 2014, the CFCS has become a central figure in the policy landscape, working with governments, law enforcement, the private sector and other members of civil society to tackle challenges in the world of illicit finance. CFCS staff also partner with others at RUSI where the addition of a financial perspective can provide a further dimension to existing research disciplines, such as environmental and organised crime and nuclear proliferation.

The CFCS's work focuses on the analysis of global illicit finance threats, such as money laundering, terrorist financing, proliferation financing and illicit financial flows, and the responses to counter those threats through sanctions, public–private partnerships, financial inclusion, new technologies and related regulations, as well as capacity building and technical assistance.

In cooperation with the National Endowment for Democracy, the CFCS is currently developing training that [aims to empower civil society and journalists](#) in Latin America and East Africa to expose corruption by tackling illicit financial flows in their 'first mile' – before they escape into the global financial system.

RUSI has also published world-leading research on the links between corruption and degradation of the environment. In 2017–18, RUSI led research for the OECD on the nexus between corruption and wildlife trafficking in East and Southern Africa, resulting in the OECD publication *Strengthening Governance and Reducing Corruption Risks to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade*. The publication was cited in the World Bank Group's 2019 publication [Illegal Logging, Fishing and Wildlife Trade: The Costs and How to Combat It](#). In 2020, RUSI and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) released a policy briefing commissioned by the USAID project Targeting Natural Resource Corruption, exploring the need for financial approaches to corruption. In 2021, RUSI will begin a world-leading research project into the nexus between climate change, environmental crime and security.