

# Rethinking Security

for a just and peaceful world

Rethinking Security

c/o Saferworld

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Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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16 November 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

## **Re: 'Refresh' of the Integrated Review**

We are aware that a 'refresh' or updating of last year's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy was launched by your predecessor in September and it is our understanding, based on the public statements of the Secretary of State for Defence and others, that this process is continuing under your leadership.

Rethinking Security<sup>1</sup> is a network of experts on peacebuilding, security and disarmament policy and practice, which includes many of the most experienced and active NGOs and academics working in the field. We also have connections to many groups and individuals at the local level with a keen interest in the review and a desire to engage with it.

As such, we also note and welcome the statement (in response to PQ 61052) of 18 October of the then Minister for the Cabinet Office that the government commits to "engage with Parliament, the Devolved Administrations, external experts, industry and wider stakeholders with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity" in the course of this 'refresh'.

However, we are concerned at the near total lack of information shared with the public on this 'Refresh' so far. As you may be aware, there was much criticism of the original Integrated Review as well as its predecessor strategic defence and security review (SDSR) processes conducted in 2010 and 2015 for the lack of meaningful opportunities for civil society organisations and citizens to engage with them and thus provide critical external challenge.

We note in particular the various criticisms of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (JCNSS) in this regard, together with those of the chairs of the

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<sup>1</sup> Rethinking Security is a network of academics, activists and non-governmental organisations including CAAT, CND, Conciliation Resources, Forces Watch, International Alert, Movement for the Abolition of War, Peace Direct, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network, Saferworld, Scientists for Global Responsibility, UNA- UK, and War on Want.

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defence, foreign affairs and international development committees in the Commons. Indeed, the chairs of all four committees wrote to Prime Minister Johnson on 30 June 2020 to express their frustration at the lack of information shared by government with parliament and wider society on the Integrated Review, then underway.

Our network made profound and prolonged efforts to engage with the Integrated Review in 2020-21, which the Cabinet Office officially noted (FOI2021/11517) were “very helpful”. However, our own study (with United Nations Association – UK) of the external consultations conducted as part of the review concluded that they “were not only inadequate and inconsistent with the government’s own guidelines, but were also conducted in bad faith” due to the Cabinet Office’s failure to implement any commitments on better practice made in the wake of previous flawed reviews. This is an error that the Integrated Review ‘refresh’ can and must rectify.

We are concerned that the Review should be able to access and be challenged constructively by the wealth of external experience and expertise. It is our view that consultation should be open to the public without exception to have its say. This should include an open call and accessible forum for submissions to the government by individuals and civil society groups.

We would therefore very much welcome your response to the following questions:

- What are the terms of reference and the current timeline for the ‘Refresh’?
- What is the government’s plan to engage with and consult civil society on the updating of the Integrated Review?
- How will the government ensure that the perspectives of those most marginalised and insecure, at home and overseas, are included?
- How will the results of external consultations be fed into the updated Integrated Review, and what assurances of transparent use of evidence will you make?
- By what mechanism may organisations and individuals not actively consulted by the government make submissions to the ‘Refresh’?

Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond to these questions. I enclose a copy of our briefing on [External Consultation and the Integrated Review](#), which I hope your team will find interesting, challenging and useful.

We look forward to engaging with you and the Review team as they proceed with the refresh.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Reeve**

Co-ordinator, Rethinking Security

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## **Co-signatories:**

**Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (AIDD)**

**Airwars**

**Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)**

**Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)**

**Peace Direct**

**Saferworld**

**Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR)**

**Shadow World Investigations (SWI)**

**Tearfund**

**United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK)**