

Activity Report 2022



The Foreign Policy Centre: Activity Report for 2022

About the FPC

The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) is an independent, non-partisan international affairs think tank based in the United Kingdom. Our mission is to inform both the British and global debate, seeking sustainable solutions for the world's most pressing challenges.

The FPC takes a global perspective, informed by the values of democracy, human rights, good governance and conflict resolution. To deliver our mission the FPC publishes independent research, holds events and engages with key decision makers and the wider public.

We provide an open and accessible space for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience, so that the voices of experts and advocates can be heard and acted upon.

We deliver our mission through both research and events. We publish a mix of [in depth essay collections](#), as well as shorter [articles and briefings](#), bringing together a range of different perspectives and experiences.

Our [events programme](#) mixes public seminars (held in the UK Parliament or on Zoom), conferences and invite-only roundtables for key stakeholders that provide opportunities to hear from leading experts, politicians, activists and journalists.

In 2022, there were some changes to FPC's core team led by outgoing Director Adam Hug, who stood down in December. In August, Susan Coughtrie was promoted to Deputy Director, before taking over as Director as of 2023. Meanwhile, in November, our team expanded with the addition of Leila Poel as FPC's Events and Communications Assistant. The staff team continues to be supported by Senior Advisor Craig Oliphant.

The FPC has [35 affiliated Research Fellows](#) with wide ranging expertise in the areas the FPC works on. We also work with our [Advisory Council](#) of senior experts and a cross-party [Political Council](#). The Chair of [Trustees](#) is Dame Audrey Glover DBE CMG.

This short review, published in April 2023, sets out the FPC's work over January-December 2022, including articles, publications and events, and highlights some of our key projects.

Our Donors for 2022

Over the last year the FPC has been fortunate to receive funding from a number of partners: the Open Society Foundations (OSF); the Justice for Journalists (JFJ) Foundation; the Joffe Trust; Lancaster University (in partnership with the Carnegie Corporation of New York); the Peaceful Change initiative (in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust); Kids Operating Room; Aston University; and City, University of London.



Quick Stats

3 research publications edited or co-edited by the Foreign Policy Centre team. You can read this year's research [here](#).

20 articles and briefings from our Research Fellows and other contributors. The FPC's Research Fellows and other contributors worked on a range of subjects last year. You can read our back catalogue of work [here](#).

14 public events and 2 conferences hosted or co-hosted last year that were open to the general public. You can read about past events and find the audio recordings [here](#). The videos are available to view on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

9 private roundtables with officials and Parliamentarians hosted by the FPC team.

69.3K Tweet impressions in November, when FPC co-hosted the 2nd UK Anti-SLAPP Conference. Across 2022, FPC increased its followers by 600+ including the APPG on Fair Business Banking, the Lords Communications and Digital Committee and the International Trade Committee.

40.8K impressions on our re-launched [FPC YouTube channel](#), with our event recordings.

Doubled our follower base to 800+ on [LinkedIn](#) after re-launching it in November 2022.



The Foreign Affairs Committee evidence session on SLAPPs in March 2022. L-R: Arabella Pike, Publishing Director at William Collins Books, investigative journalists Catherine Belton and Tom Burgis, and FPC's then Project Director Susan Coughtrie.

At a glance – highlights of 2022

February

Report & launch event: 'Reset Required? Reevaluating the Media Freedom Coalition after its first two years' authored by researchers from University of East Anglia, City University of London and University of the Philippines-Diliman. FPC also co-organised the launch event in at the MFC conference in Tallinn, watch [here](#).

March

Event: 'Making their voices heard: Relations between the UK's nations and regions and the EU post-Brexit', co-hosted by Aston Centre for Europe, watch [here](#).

Oral evidence: FPC's Project Director Susan Coughtrie gave oral evidence to two Parliamentary Committees on SLAPPs, highlighting FPC's research and the work of the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition. Watch the livestream from Foreign Affairs Select Committee and the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee.

April

Report & launch event: 'London Calling': The issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs against media emanating from the United Kingdom, co-published with ARTICLE 19. A launch event was held at the Frontline Club, 'Stopping SLAPPs: Legal threats to media freedom and what the UK should do to prevent them', watch [here](#).

Event: India and the UK: Tensions between values and interests, co-hosted by Aston University, info [here](#).

May

Event: Defending Press Freedom in Times of Tension and Conflict, co-hosted by Council of Europe's Safety of Journalists Platform, watch [here](#).

June

Event: Systems not symptoms: Tackling the root causes of the global health crisis, co-hosted with Kids Operating Room, watch [here](#).

July

Conference: Faith and State: Understanding the role of religious identities in political life in the Middle East, co-organised with the SEPAD Project at Lancaster University, see series [here](#).

Report & launch event: Dividing Lines: Reimagining Social Division in 'Divided Societies', edited by Prof Simon Mabon (SEPAD Project).

October

Event: Daphne: Inspiring an Anti-SLAPP movement across Europe, co-hosted with Index on Censorship, St John's Waterloo and The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, see info [here](#).

November

Event: The UK as a 'force for good' in Myanmar?, watch [here](#).

Parliamentary reception: FPC, together with the Bureau for Investigative Journalism organised a Parliamentary Reception to launch the Model Anti-SLAPP Law, co-hosted by MPs David Davis and Liam Byrne.

Conference:

Anti-SLAPP Conference: Spotighting Solutions, co-organised with the Justice for Journalists Foundation and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, watch [here](#).

Two connected evening events:

Azerbaijan: SLAPPs, media freedom and the prevention of 'open justice', see info [here](#).

The Great Enabler: SLAPPs, Sanctions & the UK's Kleptocracy Problem, see info [here](#).

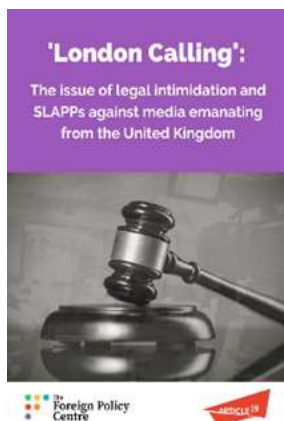
December

Event: How to keep Europe safe: Co-operation between the UK, Germany and beyond, co-hosted by Aston Centre for Europe, watch [here](#).

Report & launch event: Can Britain be a 'force for good' in Central Asia, read the country papers and watch the launch event [here](#).

Key 2022 Publications

‘London Calling’: The issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs against media emanating from the United Kingdom



In April 2022, FPC and ARTICLE 19 published the first comprehensive report on the issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs emanating from the United Kingdom, but particularly from London, against journalists and media outlets around the world. It found that SLAPPs are stifling scrutiny and debate on matters of public interest.

The report examined legal cases recently brought to the London High Court against investigative journalists, – including [Catherine Belton](#), [Tom Burgis](#) and [Carole Cadwalladr](#), that bear the hallmarks of SLAPPs, as well as those that did not reach the court stage. FPC produced a crib sheet outlining the 30+ cases referenced in the report is available [here](#). Read more about the publication [here](#). You can watch the launch event [here](#).

Since publication, the report has been accessed almost 4,000 times, and has been referenced, though FPC research, across media outlets such as [The Guardian](#), [The Times](#) and [The Citizens](#) as well as being cited in Parliament. In April 2023, FPC produced a short update tracking the progress of the report’s 24 recommendations, which is available to read [here](#).

Can Britain be a ‘force for good’ in Central Asia?

Over the course of 2022, the FPC coordinated the ‘Britain as a ‘force for good’ in Central Asia’ Working Group. This informal Working Group brings together academics and NGO representatives from the UK and Central Asia to look at the role the UK can play to improve human rights and governance in the region. In December 2022, the Group produced a series of country briefing papers, compiled from a range of different personal contributions, edited by FPC’s Adam Hug. These have so far been accessed over 1,500 times.

The briefing papers can be accessed as a collection [here](#). Or individually:

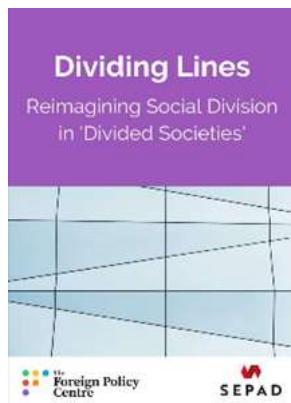
- [Kazakhstan paper](#)
- [Kyrgyzstan paper](#)
- [Tajikistan paper](#)
- [Turkmenistan paper](#)
- [Uzbekistan paper](#)



FPC’s corresponding event delved into the briefing papers, looking at the UK’s engagement with the region and examined the extent of the diplomatic and economic tools available to the UK to support positive change both bilaterally and in partnership with like-minded partners. It also looked at what changes are needed at home to prevent the UK from enabling some of the worst practices in Central Asia, notably to stop it being a repository for dirty money from the region. Watch the event [here](#).

In March 2023, FPC, on behalf of the Working Group, made a submission based on this research to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee’s [call for evidence](#) on ‘The UK’s engagement in Central Asia’.

Dividing Lines: Reimagining Social Division in ‘Divided Societies’



Together with the Sectarianism, Proxies and De-sectarianisation (SEPAD) project at Lancaster University, FPC brought together a range of experts to examine the similarities and differences across ‘divided societies’, using the concept of sectarianism to better understand efforts to address division across the world.

The result was ‘Dividing Lines’ report, which explores the concept of sectarianism in peacebuilding and the resulting effects that have emerged from this process, whilst also reflecting on divisions in other societies that are home to enduring social, political and religious divisions across the world.

This publication, which has since been accessed over 1,200 times, was edited by Professor Simon Mabon, Director of SEPAD and Professor of International Relations, Lancaster University and a FPC Senior Research Fellow. You can read the publication [here](#) and watch the recording of the launch event [here](#).

Reset Required? Evaluating the Media Freedom Coalition after its first two years

The FPC was pleased to support the publication of a report evaluating the first two years of the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC). The research was conducted by a team of six academics and researchers, from the University of East Anglia, City, University of London and the University of the Philippines-Diliman. The report poses one central questions: *is the Media Freedom Coalition working?*

The report was launched at the Global Conference for Media Freedom in Tallinn, Estonia on 12th February, at an event FPC organised together with Internews Europe and report’s authors. Since publication, the report has been accessed over 600 times. You can watch a recording of the event [here](#) and read the report [here](#). An accompanying scorecard is available in [English](#) and [French](#).



Launch event at the Global Media Freedom Coalition Conference in Tallinn, February 2022, with speakers including Dr Mary Myers, lead author of the ‘Rest Required?’ report (second left) and Rebecca Vincent Director of International Campaign Reporters without Borders and a member of FPC’s Advisory Council (far right).

Spotlight on a key programme: Unsafe for Scrutiny



The 2nd UK Anti-SLAPP Conference, held in November 2022. From L-R: Lord Cromwell, FPC's Susan Coughtrie, Journalist and author Tom Burgis, Rupert Cowper-Coles, Partner at RPC and Gill Phillips, Director of Legal Services at The Guardian

The Unsafe for Scrutiny programme looks at risks and threats to journalists who uncover financial crime and corruption, with a specific focus on the use of strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs). In 2022, FPC carried out a number of activities under this programme, including:

- Publication of the report '[London Calling](#)' together with ARTICLE 19, in April 2022, outlining 24 recommendations to address SLAPPs. A corresponding launch event was held at the Frontline Club, [Stopping SLAPPs: Legal threats to media freedom and what the UK should do to prevent them](#), kindly sponsored by the law firm Wiggin.
- FPC's Susan Coughtrie provided oral evidence to two parliamentary committees: the [Foreign Affairs Select Committee](#) and the [House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee](#).
- Continued to co-chair the UK's Anti-SLAPP Coalition, which FPC's Susan Coughtrie co-founded with Index on Censorship in January 2021. Through the Coalition, the FPC:
 - Supported the development and submission of the Coalition's response to the MoJ's consultation on SLAPPs, which ran from March – May 2022.
 - Supported the development of a [Model UK Anti-SLAPP Law](#), building upon the framework outlined by the Government when it committed to legislative reform in July 2022.
 - Co-organised a parliamentary reception to launch the model law with Bureau of Investigative Journalism, co-hosted by MPs David Davis and Liam Byrne.
 - Supported the coordination of an [open letter to Dominic Raab](#), Justice Minister, backing the adoption of the model law, signed by all major Fleet Street editors, key journalists and lawyers, as well as academics affected by SLAPPs, totalling more than 70 signatures.
- FPC also continued to engage with the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA), which published a [warning notice](#) on SLAPPs, a key recommendation from our 'London Calling' report.
- Along with our partners the Justice for Journalists Foundation and International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, the FPC hosted the second UK Anti-SLAPP Conference in November. With speakers from across journalistic, legal and political sectors, around 100 people attended the conference in person and almost 500 people joined online across the two days. You can learn more about the conference here: <https://anti-slapconference.info/>.

Spotlight on Articles

FPC continues to publish standalone articles by its fellows, senior advisors as well as guest experts on a wide variety of topics relevant to FPC's core themes. Below are some of the featured articles from 2022:

Does Russia want a new Berlin Wall?

Article by *Dr Beata Martin-Rozumilowicz*

29th January 2022, [Read here](#).

Power-Sharing: Why is it still central in the efforts to end the wars in Syria and Yemen?

Article by *Professor Simon Mabon and Professor Allison McCulloch*

14th February 2022, [Read here](#).

Amid Ukraine, keep watching Belarus.

That might be Putin's real sleight of hand

Article by *Professor Rick Fawn*

23rd February 2022, [Read here](#).

Could China be a partner for the West in managing the Ukraine crisis?

Article by *Anastasiya Bayok and Stefan Wolff*

23rd March 2022, [Read here](#).

How to stop Putin's war against Ukraine

Article by *Vladimir Dubrovskiy*

20th April 20th, [Read here](#).

Do militarised responses belong in the UK's International Development Strategy?

Article by *Lewis Brooks and Julia Poch Figueras*

20th June 2022, [Read here](#).

Armenia's Karabakh Dilemmas and the Quest for a Golden Bridge

Article by *Ilya Roubanis (PhD)*

1st July 2022, [Read here](#).

A small chink of light: EU-UK relations and parliamentary cooperation

Article by *David Harley*

4th July 2022, [Read here](#).

War as a sign of weakness: Failure of reforms and of reframing the Russian nation

Article by *Dr Leila Alieva*

27th July 2022, [Read here](#).

Sanctions against Russia: Why and how they work, or should work

Article by *Vladimir Dubrovskiy and Krassen Stanchev*

10th August 2022, [Read here](#).

The thin end of the wedge: The UK and escalating global authoritarianism

Article by *Dr Chris Ogden*

18th August 2022, [Read here](#).

What next for Global Britain under a Truss premiership?

Article by *Denisa Delic*

29th September 2022, [Read here](#).

Ukraine – A war's different seasons

Article by *Andra-Lucia Martinescu, with contributions from Cătălina Moisescu and Antonina Naidis*

12th December 2022, [Read here](#).

Looking Ahead: Key activities for 2023



Unsafe for Scrutiny

The current phase of the Unsafe for Scrutiny project will involve a new report in collaboration with Transparency International UK and Spotlight on Corruption. It will also include the third iteration of the UK Anti-SLAPP Conference organised in partnership with the JFJ Foundation and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute. The FPC also, alongside Index on Censorship and English PEN, continues to coordinate the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition.

Britain as a 'force for good' in Central Asia Working Group

This ongoing Working Group seeks to examine, inform and influence the development of the UK's relationship with Central Asia. As part of this process the FPC is continuing to engage Working Group members, experts and NGOs working on Central Asia, as well as UK policymakers. In March 2023, based on the research produced by the Working Group, FPC responded to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee's call for evidence as part of its ongoing inquiry on The UK's engagement in Central Asia.

Sectarianism and states in the Middle East

The FPC is continuing its collaboration with SEPAD project based at Lancaster University's Richardson Institute. An example theme for 2023 is – Saudi Arabia and Iran: Identities and Geopolitics in the Middle East.

Partnership with CREES

The FPC is partnering with the Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies (CREES) Project at the University of Birmingham on a webinar series and roundtable on the 'under-appreciated' impacts of the war in Ukraine. These include the repercussions of the war on the BRICs, individually and as an organisation; the wider obstacles to connectivity in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus; and the key question for the future, what does financing the reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine look like?

Collaboration with the Aston Centre for Europe

The FPC and Aston University are working together to organise a series of events this upcoming summer/autumn. The first of these events is with Dr Anne Jenichen on freedom of religion or belief, and the lessons that can be learned from the UK's approach to the promotion and protection of this human right.

