

'Attacks on humanitarian operations are an assault on basic human values'

Thank you, Mr President. And thank you Secretary-General, Mr Mardini, and Madam Grosjean.

Mr President, attacks on humanitarian operations are an assault on basic human values. They are shameful. They add to the human suffering of conflict, by targeting those workers who are trying to alleviate it.

In Tigray, for example, which is on the brink of a man-made famine, parties to the conflict are impeding aid deliveries, destroying infrastructure, and targeting civilians, including aid workers.

Whilst the announcement of a humanitarian ceasefire by the Government of Ethiopia on the 28 June was welcome, we have witnessed continued efforts to hamper aid delivery.

The UK again stresses that all sides must remove barriers blocking aid, protect infrastructure, facilitate banking services and allow communications equipment into Tigray.

Sadly, Tigray is not unique – not an exception.

In Afghanistan, hospitals are being targeted.

In South Sudan, humanitarian supplies are being destroyed.

In Yemen, bureaucratic restrictions are delaying the delivery of lifesaving aid.

In all three countries, and others, aid workers are being attacked.

The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention has visited several countries to call for the respect for International Humanitarian Law by all parties to conflict.

This Council has a responsibility to ensure this.

We welcome our agreement last week to adopt resolution 2585, facilitating the continued delivery of lifesaving cross-border assistance for 3.4 million people in Syria.

We must now work together to implement relevant resolutions which have the provisions to hold to account those who breach International Humanitarian Law.

This includes strengthening our use of sanctions, while ensuring that sanctions and counter-terrorism measures do not themselves hinder the delivery of assistance.

Through our Tri-sector Group, the UK is working with NGOs and banks, to find legal, safe and transparent ways to ensure that humanitarian aid benefits those in need.

And while we work towards an end to conflict, International Humanitarian Law is there to protect civilians and the humanitarian space and workers on which they rely.

This Council has a duty to hold to account those who fail to respect those basic principles.