

Speech: Chemical Weapons in Syria

Thank you very much Mr President, and as it's the first time I personally am taking the floor may I congratulate you on the presidency and thank Bolivia for her presidency last month. Thank you too, to the High Representative for your briefing.

I think it's clear that not enough progress has been made. At one level this isn't a surprise, given the Syrian authorities' track record. But there's another level Mr President. I think it just beggars belief; chemical weapons are universally prohibited weapons. They're prohibited by international law. Everybody on the Council, bar one member, stresses this and stresses the supreme importance of upholding that prohibition. And I think the Kuwaiti intervention laid out very well the historical place that chemical weapons hold in global nonproliferation regimes. So what part of "these are prohibited weapons" do Syria and Russia not understand? I think it's almost absurd that we should have to rehearse each month quite how terrible these weapons are. It really ought to be globally recognized and globally upheld that we work to strengthen the OPCW, to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to make sure these weapons are never used. That ought to be a universal good, Mr President, that everybody in the United Nations ought to be able to subscribe to and I think future generations will judge us very harshly, but will judge two countries particularly harshly for breaking that prohibition.

I think as well, as many speakers have said, the OPCW is doing good work. It is mandated to do this work and the Conference on States Parties have decided to strengthen the work that it does. There was an alternative Mr President. There was an alternative to have a Security Council mechanism, but that came to a grinding halt with a Russian veto.

Therefore we must all support the OPCW Director General and his work to implement the decisions adopted at the Special Conference of States Parties in June. And for our part, the United Kingdom looks forward to arrangements being put in place swiftly so OPCW can begin its work on attribution of chemical weapons attacks in Syria. And we call on all states who will be meeting in The Hague later this month to respect the decision that was taken by an overwhelming majority in June. We look to all international partners to engage constructively in discussions on the future work of the organization in Syria and elsewhere.

And on the funding point it's in all our countries interest for the OPCW to receive the funding it needs to continue to uphold the global norms against chemical weapons.

On other issues Mr President, I just want to endorse what others have said about the importance of the political settlement and the importance of getting the constitutional committee established as within the Istanbul Summit Declaration which we very much welcomed at the time. And on Idlib of course we want that agreement to hold. It is the key to so much about the

future of Syria and the future of the people in Syria.

I want to close Mr President by just addressing the White Helmets allegations. We keep hearing these allegations, and again it beggars belief that we should have to take the floor to defend some of the bravest volunteers working in Syria. They have confirmed, Syrian Civil Defense have confirmed, that none of their volunteers were involved, let alone killed, in the alleged incident referred to by the Syrian authorities in their recent correspondence, contrary to those authorities' fabrications and repeated allegations that the UK and our allies are preparing a chemical weapons attack are malicious. They're absurd and they are simply an attempt to distract and deflect attention from the real situation on the ground in Syria.

But I want to end by echoing what the French Representative said about we will respond appropriately if there is a chemical weapons attack and that attack won't come from us. Thank you Mr President.

[Speech: Renewed Libya Sanctions Regime](#)



Thank you Mr President.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Security Council's agreement to renew the

Libya sanctions regime. In particular, we welcome the fact that the Council has taken an important step by expanding the designation criteria to include gender-based violence. This sends a powerful signal that the international community will not tolerate such crimes.

Sanctions remain an important tool for this Council and our work to support the Government of National Accord and to stabilize Libya. However, they can only be one part of the solution, which requires full political reconciliation. We reiterate our support to the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, headed by Prime Minister al-Sarraj, as the legitimate executive authorities under the Libyan political agreement. The Council needs to be ready to take swift action against spoilers who continue to obstruct the peace, security, and stability in Libya.

We welcome the tireless efforts of special representative Ghassan Salamé and UNSMIL to reach an inclusive political settlement within the framework of the Libya political agreements, and we look forward to the SRSG's briefing to this Council on Wednesday.

Thank you.

Published 5 November 2018

[Press release: Statement regarding Grenfell Tower video](#)



We are aware that a video is trending on social media showing an effigy of Grenfell Tower being burned on a bonfire. The government condemns this video in the strongest terms.

Secretary of State for Communities, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

At a time when the bereaved and survivors are giving testimony to the Grenfell Inquiry and reliving the unimaginable horror of that

tragedy, it beggars belief that anyone should do this.

Those responsible for this repugnant material are beneath contempt. I know that the police have been made aware of this video and will work to establish whether any offences have been committed.

I would urge people not to continue to share this video.

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Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form
<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email

newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

Please use this number if you are a journalist wishing to speak to Press Office

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Press release: Prime Minister hosts reception for the MS Society in Downing Street

The Prime Minister welcomed over 150 volunteers, ambassadors and supporters of the charity as well as its chair Nick Winser to the event at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister also presented one of the charity's volunteers, David Allen, with a Points of Light award. David has transformed his local branch of the MS Society into one that helps hundreds of people every year. He has also been instrumental in some of the charity's national campaigns including 'Treat Me Right', aiming to improve early access to treatment. This hard work earned David the charity's Volunteer of the Year award only a year after his own diagnosis with MS.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I know from my own family's experience how incredibly tough living with MS can be and how it changes lives profoundly. The work that the MS Society does not only improves the lives of those diagnosed with the condition through funding new research but also provides much needed support for them and their loved ones. They are only able to do this through the tireless dedication of their incredible volunteers such as David and I am delighted to be able to present him with a Points of Light award.

Points of Light winner, David Allen said:

When I started volunteering for the MS Society over 15 years ago I had no idea where the role would take me. I volunteer to help bring about vital change for people affected by MS and will continue to share my experience of the condition to help others. If I'm honest, I'm gobsmacked I've won an award. It is truly an honour and privilege to be recognised in this way and it is really humbling to know people notice.

Patricia Gordon, Acting Chief Executive at the MS Society, said:

David has made a huge contribution to the MS Society over the last five years, and his continued support and dedication is invaluable. It was fantastic to see him presented with a Points of Light Award by the Prime Minister at an event to celebrate our volunteers and advancements in MS research. It was a great way to thank him for his work, and something we will all remember for a very long time.

We're driving research into more – and better – treatments, and David's unwavering dedication and passion will help us every step of the way. Together, we're strong enough to stop MS.

More than 5,000 people around the UK volunteer for the MS Society, and last year alone gave more than 700,000 hours of their valuable time to support people affected by MS.

The Points of Light awards honour outstanding volunteers across the UK. Every weekday, the Prime Minister recognises a different individual with the award as a tribute to the incredible impact they have had in their communities.