

Press release: Joint FCO/DfID statement on Eastern Ghouta and White Helmets

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, and International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, said:

The situation in Eastern Ghouta is heart-breaking. Assad's regime, backed by Russia, is progressively laying waste to opposition-held areas. Tens of thousands of people have fled. And with no independent monitoring or provisions for civilian safety, those fleeing are vulnerable and at risk of mistreatment and abuse by the regime, including being detained, disappeared or separated from their families.

Appallingly we have seen this happen time and time again in the Syria conflict. Humanitarian and health workers, including the heroic White Helmets, report that the regime is deliberately targeting them. Those who support the regime in carrying out these atrocities and vile murders have lost their moral compass entirely.

Evacuations from the hell on earth that is Eastern Ghouta must be safe, voluntary, and independently monitored. Whether civilians choose to stay or leave, they must be protected against attack and have access to basic supplies to survive.

The security, safety and dignity of the population, including humanitarian and medical personnel, must be guaranteed at all stages. And the UN is ready to provide assistance to these people, whether they choose to stay or leave.

The regime and its backers must immediately implement UN Security Council Resolution 2401, allowing humanitarian agencies to provide the help that is so desperately needed and evacuate those who urgently need medical attention.

Press release: PM trilateral with President Macron and Chancellor Merkel: 22 March 2018

Prime Minister Theresa May today met with President Macron and Chancellor Merkel on the fringes of the European Council in Brussels.

The Prime Minister provided the President and Chancellor with a detailed update on the investigation into the reckless use of a military nerve agent, of a type produced by Russia, on the streets of Salisbury.

She said there had been a positive identification of the chemical used as part of the Novichok group of nerve agents by our world leading scientists at Porton Down.

The Prime Minister also outlined our knowledge that Russia has previously produced this agent; Russia's record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations; and our assessment that Russia views some defectors as legitimate targets for assassinations.

The UK, Germany and France reaffirmed that there is no plausible explanation other than that the Russian state was responsible.

The leaders agreed on the importance of sending a strong European message in response to Russia's actions and agreed to remain in close contact in coming days.

On Iran, they reaffirmed their commitment to the JCPOA and agreed to hold further discussions in April.

Speech: British Ambassador to Russia briefing on the Salisbury attack: 22 March 2017

Thank you very much for coming along to attend today's briefing.

And, like I think many people in this room, we were all represented, I hope, at yesterday's briefing in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Skripal incident. I was not there. That was a decision on our side that it would not be appropriate for me to attend. I do though know from the member of my team who did attend what sort of event it was; including a rather unpleasant barrage in some cases of personal insults and disinformation.

What we would like to do, what I would like to do today, is to set out some of the facts as we see them and to answer any questions or comments that you might wish to make.

So to start with the facts. There was an attempted murder in Salisbury a couple of weeks ago of 2 individuals, Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using a nerve agent of a type that we know was developed in the Soviet Union, kept by the Russian Federation, and not declared under the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) as the Russian Federation was obliged to do.

We [asked for an explanation](#) of the Russian Federation as to how this had come about. That explanation was not given and then events took their course. We [announced a number of measures](#) that we would take including the expulsion of 23 undeclared intelligence officers from the United Kingdom working in the Russian embassy, and as you know 23 of my staff will be leaving this embassy later this week as required by the Russian Federation.

So I'll set out a timeline of events and then say a bit about why we think the evidence points towards Russian involvement in this attack and also about what the UK is doing in a bit more detail.

So first the timeline. On the 4th of March Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found on a park bench in Salisbury, they were slipping out of consciousness. They were taken to a hospital by our emergency services. They are still in hospital. They remain in a very very serious condition.

When we established that a nerve agent had been used we immediately informed the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that chemical weapons had been used in the United Kingdom.

Four days later the analysts at Porton Down, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory in the UK, established and made clear that this was a military-grade chemical weapon. One of the Novichok series; a nerve agent as I said produced in Russia. Porton Down is an Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons accredited and designated laboratory.

On the basis of the information we had, we concluded that there were only 2 plausible explanations for how this material had been used in the United Kingdom. Either it was a direct act by the Russian state against our country or the Russian government had lost control of this catastrophically damaging nerve agent and allowed it to get into the hands of others.

We summoned the Russian ambassador to account for the use of a Russian military-grade nerve agent on the 12 of March, giving Russia until the end of the following day to provide an account of what had happened. There was then no credible explanation or response from the Russian government. So our [Prime Minister set out the UK's response](#). On the 18th of March Russia announced its retaliation.

I'll now set out why we've concluded that it is highly likely that Russia was responsible for the attempted murder of Sergei and Yulia Skripal.

First, there is no doubt that the weapon used in the attack was the military-grade nerve agent from the Novichok series. This has been confirmed by specialists, our specialists. An [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons mission is in the UK](#) now to independently confirm this analysis.

There is also no doubt that Novichok was produced in Russia by the Russian state. It is not a weapon that can be manufactured by non-state actors. It is so dangerous it requires the highest grade state laboratories and expertise to produce it.

The existence of the Novichok programme has been confirmed by a number of

scientists who worked on the programme of the time. The Russian scientist Vil Mirzayanov has testified that Novichoks were developed as part of the Soviet Union's offensive chemical warfare programme and inherited by the Russian Federation. Vladimir Gutenev, a Duma member and member of Russia's Commission for Chemical Disarmament has confirmed that the Novichok programme existed. Yesterday, Vladimir Uglev, a scientist who worked on the programme in the 1970s and 1980s, confirmed that the Soviet Union developed hundreds of new generation Novichok-group nerve agents.

We also have other information that supports that conclusion. The Foreign Secretary made clear on Sunday, last Sunday, that we have information indicating that within the last decade Russia has investigated ways of delivering nerve agents likely for assassination purposes. Part of this programme has involved producing quantities of Novichok agents.

Russia's claims that Novichok could have been produced elsewhere have no credibility. We have no information to indicate that this agent could have been produced anywhere else except in Russia. So we have no doubt that the nerve agent was produced in Russia.

With that in mind we asked the Russian government to explain how it came to be used in the UK. As I said, Russia offered no explanation and yesterday's briefing demonstrated Russia has instead offered disinformation, distraction and accusations. We have, as of yesterday, counted over 30 lines of disinformation which go back to the Russian state – which include the possibility that the United Kingdom did it, Ukraine was responsible, the materials were made in Sweden, or that it was Skripal's mother-in-law who attempted to kill him.

Russia has therefore offered no explanation of how this agent came to be used in the UK, and has offered no explanation either as to why Russia has an undeclared chemical weapons programme in contravention of international law.

I should just remind you that under the Chemical Weapons Convention all signatories to the Convention are required to declare all capabilities that go back to 1946. Russia is the successor state of the Soviet Union and therefore is obliged to declare that capability. It has not done so.

We also know that an assassination attempt of this kind is consistent with Russian state behaviour in recent years. Russia has a record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations in Russia and overseas, including in 2006 the assassination of Litvinenko using the radioactive substance Polonium-210. We also know from public statements by Russian officials that Russia views defectors as legitimate targets for assassination.

So the fact that the Novichok was produced in Russia, the fact that Russia has a history of state-sponsored assassinations, and the fact that Russia has responded with the usual playbook of disinformation and denial left us with no choice but to conclude that this amounts to an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the United Kingdom.

This is the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second

World War and is a violation of the fundamental prohibition on the use of chemical weapons – [Article 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention](#). Since the attack Russia has attempted to undermine the UK's position, accusing us of not following the OPCW conventions and refusing to provide any evidence. These accusations are designed to confuse and to weaken our resolve and that of the international community.

All of the UK's actions have been fully consistent with our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. There is for example no provision in the Chemical Weapons Convention that requires the UK to share samples with Russia of the agent that was used in Salisbury. Russia's history in other spheres, in particular for us the Litvinenko case, makes it entirely clear that we have no reason to work with or to trust the Russian state to provide credible or independent analysis on issues where its interests might be affected.

As I said earlier we are facilitating independent analysis of the material used in Salisbury. An [OPCW team arrived at our request](#) in the United Kingdom on the 19 of March. They are meeting officials from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down and the police to discuss how to collect samples. These samples will then be sent to 2 highly reputable international laboratories selected by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for testing, and we expect to see the results in the next couple of weeks.

At the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday Russia said it would not respect the conclusions of that independent OPCW analysis. Russia has also claimed that the UK has not followed its legal obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, especially [Article 9](#). This is simply not true. The Chemical Weapons Convention makes clear that the UK has the right to lead our own response, engaging the OPCW and others as appropriate. The 10-day window for consultations Russia refers to is a right, our right, not an obligation. Article 9 contains nothing prohibiting states from seeking a rapid response to their immediate and urgent concerns from another state party, which is exactly what we did on the 12 of March when we asked Russia to account for what had happened.

Novichok is a horrific weapon. It is a weapon of war. It was used with tragic consequences for Sergei Skripal and his daughter. It also affected a policeman, Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey, who was one of the first to respond to the incident, and it affected a large number of UK citizens. 51 people have been assessed or treated in hospital. 131 civilians have been put in potential contact with this nerve agent.

The events on the next slide I think need no explanation. They are about a pattern of behaviour specifically on chemical weapons. Russia has blocked action against President Asad's use of chemical weapons in Syria, including multiple vetoes of Security Council resolutions designed to bring that use to account – following particularly the attack using sarin gas on Khan Sheikhoun in 2017. This undermines the international non-proliferation regime on which all countries, including Russia, depend for their security.

I'll say a few words now about the UK response. As you know we have expelled a number of Russian diplomats. There has been a Russian response.

The underlying point though here is that we were compelled to move to protect our national security in this case. We have dismantled the network of Russian undeclared intelligence operatives working out of the diplomatic mission in the UK. We have enhanced border controls and we are tackling criminality and corruption by individuals linked to the Russian state in the UK. We of course have further options if we need them. But our chief aim as I said is to protect our national security.

Finally, before I throw the floor open to questions I'd like to thank all of our partners for the solidarity in recent weeks. Russia's modus operandi here is to divide, confuse and sow the seeds of doubt. Your support in the coming months in taking action to protect everybody's security, the global security regime, will be essential to demonstrate that Russia must be held to account for what has happened here.

As my [Prime Minister made very clear in Parliament](#) last week, this is a dispute between governments, not between the peoples of our countries. A very large part of what my embassy is here to do and will continue doing is to develop mutually beneficial relations with Russia in all the areas that have been so successful over the last 25 years. Trade, education, people-to-people links, science and technology links. That remains as important today as we go forward as it has ever been. Thank you.

[Speech: A Sustainable Peace Approach to the Lake Chad Region](#)

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank you and your delegation for organising this briefing and for giving us the opportunity to discuss the situation in the Lake Chad Basin one year after we visited the region and adopted Resolution 2349, which was unique in its comprehensive approach integrating development, human rights and security.

I would also like to thank our briefers for their reflections on the humanitarian and security situation and for their suggestions on next steps to address the root causes of the conflict. They've already made a number of concrete proposals and I hope careful note has been taken by the Secretariat. We look forward to discussing some of these ideas later with other Member States.

Mr President,

The security situation in the Lake Chad Basin continues to be of great concern. On 2 March, this Council condemned the attack on humanitarian workers in Rann, and the attack on Dapchi in which a large number of schoolgirls were abducted.

The humanitarian crisis remains as dire as when we visited the region a year ago. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance remains at 10.7 million and 5.8 million people are now experiencing severe food insecurity. We call upon donors to keep up the momentum of the response, including fulfilling the financial requirement of \$1.6 billion for 2018. And we call on all parties to the conflict to grant safe, timely and unimpeded access to humanitarian organisations in line with International Humanitarian Law.

From the humanitarian and security situation, it is clear that the international community, and this Security Council, must remain fully engaged in this crisis. On 21 March, the United Kingdom opened a diplomatic office in Chad to facilitate efforts to stabilise the region and address the root causes of insecurity.

Mr President, we welcome the steps taken by the governments of the region, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), to tackle the terrorist threat. And I welcome today the presence of the distinguished representative of Nigeria around our table. I take the opportunity to acknowledge his country's determination and leadership in fighting terrorism, and to salute the partnership that the United Kingdom and Nigeria have formed on this and other vital issues.

Although the military approach has an important role to play in stabilising the region, the solution to this crisis cannot be solely military. As recognised by Resolution 2349, to achieve sustainable peace, it is vital that the root causes of regional instability are understood and addressed, including poverty, climate change, inequality and violent extremism.

We recognise ongoing efforts of the countries of the region, including Nigeria, both individually and jointly through Lake Chad Basin Commission, towards the achievement of this aim. We need to see regional governments demonstrate stronger leadership, in particular on demobilisation, de-radicalisation and reintegration of former combatants.

The international community, and we in the United Nations, must support these efforts through robust strategies on prevention and sustaining peace. The Deputy Secretary-General has shown great leadership in bringing together the diffuse activities of many UN development agencies in the Sahel strategy, linked to wider security efforts. And we need to apply those lessons and that approach to the Lake Chad Basin region.

Special Political Missions, in particular, UNOCA and UNOWAS, must work to ensure their efforts are coherent and that regional strategies are mutually supportive. And I fully agree with the Representative of the Lake Chad Basin Commission that a comprehensive analysis should be included in UNOCA and UNOWAS's future briefings to this Council.

The United Nations' strategy must be based on accurate information so future crises can be predicted, and this Council, the UN and regional governments can take preventative action, in line with the Secretary General's own focus on prevention.

And on this World Water Day, let us remember that climate and ecological changes are a major root cause of this conflict. If we want to build sustainable peace and promote sustainable development, we must support efforts to build livelihoods that are resistant to climate change, including through adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies.

It is also vital that the UN and regional governments take the particular concerns of women and children into account in stabilisation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, in accordance with Resolution 1325. The United Nations could support this through a stronger, more consistent in-country presence.

Mr President,

As the UK's Representative said when we adopted resolution 2349, "We will fail the people of the region if we do not respond to what we saw." When we travelled to the region, we saw the root causes and the serious consequences of this conflict. And we must respond.

The Lake Chad Basin is a region that requires a sustaining peace approach and we encourage the Secretary-General to demonstrate the UN's support by visiting the region as set out in resolution 2349.

Thank you Mr President.

[News story: Tackling charity fraud: new resources](#)

All trustees and managers should have the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs of fraud and then shape an effective and proportionate response.

[Tackling charity fraud: prevention is better than cure report](#) summarises the main lessons and messages from the national charity fraud conference and charity fraud awareness week. It provides pointers to additional expert sources of information, support and best practice.

The Fraud Advisory Panel, supported by the Charity Commission and audit partner, Crowe Clark Whitehill, have also developed [a range of new resources](#) to help you tackle fraud.

Building a fraud-resilient charity is a job for everyone, everywhere, and at

every level. You can find out more about how you can [protect your charity from fraud](#) on GOV.UK