

Speech: Eyes on Idlib

Thank you very much Madam President. Thank you to the Special Envoy. Thank you very much to John Ging, and thank you Minister for being with us today.

This is a terrible situation and I think what we're hearing today is very strong support for the primacy of the political process, but also a very strong appeal for there not to be an all-out military offensive against civilians in Idlib and I'd just like to echo those two things right up front before I go into the bulk of my remarks. And I think the French Representative put it very well when he talked about the importance of this issue for international peace and security.

I wanted to begin again by thanking the Special Envoy and his team for everything they do and obviously OCHA. We're very grateful to those humanitarian organizations and workers who are making tireless efforts in the most difficult circumstances to provide aid to people across Idlib. And once again we're reminded of the importance of cross-border assistance as a critical lifeline for civilians who otherwise cannot be reached.

We very much support the urgent diplomatic efforts being made by Turkey and the UN to deal with Idlib, both on the civilian side and on the humanitarian side. The fate of nearly 3 million people is at stake and we would very much appreciate, Madam President having a briefing on Astana. I suspect that's not possible today, but if it were possible to get a briefing from DPA, we hope – indeed we urge – Russia and Iran to use their influence to live up to their commitments to uphold the de-escalation arrangements they have agreed and to reach a negotiated way forward with Turkey. And if there is anything that my government can do to assist in that process then we will happily do it.

On the military situation, like other speakers, we're very concerned at the reports in the last few days of dozens of Russian air strikes against areas of Idlib. Local monitoring organizations have reported 38 civilian casualties as a result of these strikes on 4 September alone. I've already said that nearly 3 million civilians are at risk of their lives in Idlib. The UN estimates that there are at a maximum 15,000 fighters for the terrorist groups, which is 0.5 percent of the total population. So we too in Britain know what it's like to suffer from terrorism, but those figures are very small, as the Minister said about the doctrine of proportionality, discrimination and precaution.

The Secretary-General has been clear that the systematic use of indiscriminate weapons in populated areas may amount to war crimes. We should be crystal clear about this. There are more babies in Idlib than there are terrorists. And I think that should give those engaging in military action pause for thought. Last time we discussed this issue, Madam President, the military side, we were in the Consultations Room and then I read out our understanding of which Syrian military units are in the vicinity of Idlib. And echoing the Secretary-General's call, I'd like to read these units out in the Chamber and I'd like to make very clear that if there is a major

offensive against civilians with massive civilian casualties in Idlib, then these are the people that the international community will be holding accountable for those abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Our understanding is that the overall head of the Syrian army is the Minister of Defence General Ali Abdullah Ayyoub, but the primary unit deployed to the Idlib area are the Fourth Armoured Division to the west side of Idlib and Mahir-al-Asad is the overall commander of that unit, but we believe that Major General Ali Mahmoud is the Deputy Commander. We understand the Republican Guard are probably deployed to the east side around Abu Duhr and their commander is Major General Talal Mahkluf. Tiger Forces are likely deployed to the southeast side and their commander is Brigadier General Suhayl 'Tiger' Hasan. And then we think that there are also 2nd Corps and 5th Corps units in the area and the commander we know about for that is Major General Aous Aslan. So as I say Madam President there is a major offensive against Idlib. Then, in addition to the Syrian regime, these commanders, these units will be held accountable by the international community.

If I may, Madam President I'd like to say a word about the aid package for Idlib. The United Kingdom has announced an additional aid package to ensure that the most vulnerable can get medical treatment, food, water and support that they desperately need. \$15 million of new aid includes support medical centres and mobile clinics and psychological support. And we are also backing a new technology which provides civilians with early warnings in the hope of saving lives in communities bombarded by airstrikes. Thanks to this we believe we've been able to warn more than 2 million people and to have reduced casualties by up to 27 percent in areas and the heavy bombardment. But really donors should not have to do this, Madam President. Donors are not a substitute for the Syrian regime with Russian support stopping their campaign against their own civilians.

And I'd like to conclude by just saying once again that we support Turkey's efforts to reach a peaceful solution and avert a humanitarian catastrophe. We call on Russia to do more to restrain the Syrian authorities from attacking Idlib and to bring about de-escalation and we call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law.

I won't touch on chemical weapons because we dealt with that in this chamber yesterday, but I did want to end by echoing what the Equatorial Guinea Representative said about the primary importance of the political process bringing an end to this cruel war. Thank you Madam President.

[Press release: The Family-run Fake Pill Factory: trio busted following](#)

drugs raid

Daniel Hackland, wife Jenna and his brother Matthew Hackland pleaded guilty to 7 counts between them of producing and supplying unlicensed class C drugs, unlicensed medicines and money laundering. Daniel and Matthew were given 4.5 and 3 years custodial sentence respectively. Jenna Hackland received 18 months in custody (suspended for 2 years) and 100 hours of unpaid work.

The defendants ran an online business that sold supplements to the body building community, however, many of these products included powerful drugs used to treat conditions ranging from severe acne to cancer.

In addition to importing medicines and supplements illegally, they also produced home-made drugs in a cement mixer which were then sold to unwitting and potentially desperate customers who were unaware of the poor conditions in which these drugs were made.

More than 112,090 tablets and 1,884 bottles of injectable liquids were seized from a rented office where MHRA enforcement officials found pill pressing equipment and dyes imported from China.

Suspicious arose when it was apparent that the Hacklands had unexplained wealth. Despite Daniel Hackland declaring no employment with HRMC between 2008 and 2013, watches worth £17k and cars worth more than £60k were owned by the family and approximately £49,000 was hidden in a safe in the loft.

Daniel showed no remorse when arrested by officers, simply stating 'I knew this was going to happen eventually'.

Alastair Jeffrey, MHRA Head of Enforcement, said:

This is an example of how criminals are willing to put the health of others at risk to make money. Selling medicines outside of the regulated supply chain is a serious criminal offence and we continue to work with other regulatory and law enforcement colleagues to identify and prosecute those involved in this type of activity.

If you purchase medicines outside of the regulated supply chain you may well be buying products that have been made and stored in unsanitary conditions and which could cause significant harm.

MHRA is currently running the #FakeMeds campaign to warn people against buying potentially dangerous or useless unlicensed medicines sold by illegal online suppliers. Visit www.gov.uk/fakemedes for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.

[Press release: Console Suicide Prevention Limited: notice of intention to order charity to wind up](#)

The Commission is today giving [public notice](#) of its intention to issue an order to direct the winding up of [Console Suicide Prevention Limited](#).

In July 2016 the Commission opened a [statutory inquiry](#) into the charity due to concerns that the assets of the charity may be at serious and significant risk of harm.

On 20 July 2017 the trustees of the charity advised the Commission of their decision to wind up the charity, however the Commission is not satisfied that they have taken sufficient steps to do so.

Section 84B of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to issue an order to direct the winding up of a charity if it is satisfied that a charity does not operate, or its purposes can be promoted more effectively if it ceases to operate; and exercising the power is expedient in the public interest.

The Commission's summary of reasons is set out in the [Public Notice of Intention to Exercise Powers: Console Suicide Prevention Limited](#).

In accordance with section 84B(4) of the Act the Commission is inviting representations to be made in relation to its intention to make the Order. Representations must be made to the Commission within 30 days of the date of this notice.

Further information is available [here](#). Representations can be emailed to IAEInvestigationsCRM@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk marking it 'Representations to the Public Notice – Console Suicide Prevention Limited – 1153096'.

The Commission will consider any representations received within 30 days of this notice. The Commission may (without further public notice) issue the order (with or without modifications) on 2 November 2018, 60 days after the 1st day of this notice.

The Commission's inquiry is ongoing. It is our intention to publish a report setting out our findings on conclusion of the inquiry.

Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](#).

[News story: Win in Ping golf clubs case sends clear online retail signal](#)

This landmark case sends an important signal that attempts by manufacturers to impose absolute bans on selling their products online are not permitted by law.

The Tribunal's judgment dismissed an appeal by the golf club manufacturer against the CMA's decision to fine it for breaching competition law and imposed a revised fine of £1.25 million.

In August 2017, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that Ping had [breached competition law](#) by preventing 2 UK retailers from selling its golf clubs on their websites.

The Tribunal said today it was of the "clear view" that "The potential impact of the ban on consumers and retailers is real and material. It significantly restricts consumers from accessing Ping golf club retailers outside their local area and from comparing prices and it significantly reduces the ability of, and incentives for, retailers to compete for business using the internet."

Taking various factors into account, the Tribunal lowered the CMA's original penalty by £200,000 to £1.25 million.

The CMA had accepted that Ping was pursuing a genuine commercial aim of promoting in-store custom fitting, but found that it could have achieved this through less restrictive means.

Following today's judgment, Ping must allow retailers to sell online, though it may require them to meet certain conditions before doing so.

Ann Pope, Senior Director for Antitrust Enforcement, said:

Today's judgment sends a clear message to companies that try to stop customers shopping online for their products – they could be breaking the law. This matters because it removes a barrier to customers shopping around for more affordable goods.

The internet is an increasingly important sales channel and retailers' ability to sell online, and reach as wide a customer base as possible, should not be unduly restricted by manufacturers.

Find out more about the CMA investigation on the [case page](#).

News story: Government supports study into potential of new Yorkshire bypass

Shipley residents and businesses could benefit from a new road to ease town centre traffic, following a government-funded study to explore the impact of a bypass.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced today (7 September 2018) £300,000 for Bradford Metropolitan District Council to carry out the study on a bypass around the east of Shipley.

The funding was revealed during a meeting at engineering firm Produmax, where the Transport Secretary met business leaders to discuss how an eastern bypass could have positive effects on the area's economy.

He also announced that Highways England will spend £500,000 on improvements to the A1 at junction 47 near Harrogate, helping to increase capacity on the road, reduce queuing and improve journey times.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

This government is investing record amounts in our roads, spending £6 billion on improving journeys in our towns and cities and boosting local economies.

We are spending £3 billion on making journeys in the north of England faster and more reliable, and tackling congestion.

I'm pleased to announce funding for this feasibility study which will provide clarity on whether an eastern bypass can deliver tangible benefits for the area, as well as improve the lives of people in and around Shipley.

The upgrades to the A1 will be carried out by North Yorkshire County Council, supporting the creation of new jobs at the planned Flaxby Green Business Park.

The money comes from Highways England's £100 million fund to help local growth and housing schemes get off the ground.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

Our roads are vital for the country and its economic success; they connect businesses and communities and support employment and new homes.

These improvements on the A1 will ensure our roads continue to

improve journeys and unlock the potential for new jobs and homes.

The Shipley bypass feasibility study could uncover evidence of the wider benefits of a new bypass to the town; for example, by cutting congestion in the town centre by moving traffic onto an alternative road.

It will also explore how a route around the east of the city could improve air quality and remove barriers to economic growth.

If found to be viable, a relief road would provide a second crossing of the River Aire at Shipley and potentially create access to future development opportunities, including new housing.

Any future decisions on whether a bypass is built will depend on the outcome of the feasibility study.