

Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on strikes in Syria

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The European Union reiterates its strongest condemnation of the repeated use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, as confirmed by the OPCW/UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and as reported continuously in recent months in Eastern Ghouta and other areas in Syria, including the most recent reports of a devastating chemical attack on Douma.

In this context, the EU was informed about targeted US, French and UK airstrikes on chemical weapons facilities in Syria, these specific measures having been taken with the sole objective to prevent further use of chemical weapons and chemical substances as weapons by the Syrian regime to kill its own people.

The EU is supportive of all efforts aimed at the prevention of the use of chemical weapons. It finds it deeply shocking that the international community is still confronted with the use of chemical weapons, as confirmed by the OPCW Fact Finding Mission. The reports of the Declaration Assessment Team show that the Syrian declaration cannot be fully verified as accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Accountability is a must. The use of chemical weapons or chemical substances as weapons is a war crime and a crime against humanity. Perpetrators will be held accountable for this violation of international law. Therefore, the EU deeply regrets that the mandate of the JIM, established by UNSC Resolution 2235 (2015) to identify perpetrators of chemical attacks, has not been renewed in November 2017. In this respect, it is highly regrettable that the UN Security Council has so far failed to adopt a strong resolution re-establishing an independent attribution mechanism to ensure accountability for perpetrators of chemical weapons' attacks in Syria.

In July 2017 and in March 2018, the EU imposed additional restrictive measures on Syrian high-level officials and scientists for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons and is always ready to consider imposing further measures as appropriate.

The EU calls upon all countries, notably Russia and Iran, to use their

influence to prevent any further use of chemical weapons, notably by the Syrian regime, and supports the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

The EU reiterates that there can be no other solution to the Syrian conflict than political. We have a common goal in preventing any escalation of violence that could transform the Syrian crisis into a wider regional confrontation, with incalculable consequences for the Middle East and indeed the whole world. The EU calls upon all parties to the conflict, especially the regime and its allies, to implement immediately the ceasefire, and to ensure humanitarian access and medical evacuations as unanimously agreed in UNSC Resolution 2401. The EU repeats that any sustainable solution to the conflict requires a genuine political transition in line with UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué negotiated by the Syrian parties within the UN-led Geneva process.

The Second Brussels Conference on Syria which will be held on 24-25 April 2018, co-chaired by the EU and the UN, will be the opportunity for the entire international community to relaunch its consistent support for the political process and commit new pledges to help the main victims of this ongoing conflict, namely the Syrian people inside and outside Syria.

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Mhairi Hunter: My Mum, Auntie Allison, helped make the SNP a driving force in Scottish politics

As part of our #Vote100 Project, we spoke to Mhairi Hunter about women in politics and her inspiration – her Mum Allison Hunter.

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Author:

Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool

temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (April 14) that Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool in Sha Tin District has been temporarily closed for cleaning and superchlorination following the discovery of a small amount of faeces in the pool.

It will be reopened at 6.30am tomorrow.

The department appeals to swimmers to be considerate and to keep the swimming pools clean. They are advised not to swim after a full meal and should use the toilet facilities if necessary before swimming.

Hong Kong harvests top awards at the International Exhibitions of Inventions Geneva (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Berlin (HKETO Berlin), together with the Hong Kong Federation of Invention and Innovation (HKFII), hosted a reception at the 46th International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva to support the exhibitors from Hong Kong yesterday (April 13, Geneva time).

This exhibition is recognised as the most important specialist event of its kind in the world. It attracts hundreds of exhibitors from around the globe every year to put their inventions and innovations on display. Participants and visitors include business enterprises, research institutions, universities and investors.

Representing a city with strong focus on innovation, HKFII brought a delegation of more than 100 people from Hong Kong, and showcased a total of 98 projects in the exhibition. They ranged from microbial technology that turns food waste to biodegradable plastic bags to lip password for access control. Out of 800 entries from around the world, Hong Kong Polytechnic University's invention of spectacle lens for retarding the progression of shortsightedness in children was awarded the grand prize – the top honour of the event. Other exhibition projects from Hong Kong were also awarded with a total of 25 gold medals (with the congratulations of the jury), 47 gold medals and 26 silver medals.

“Hong Kong has strong research and development (R&D) capabilities and talent, excellent technological infrastructure, world-class universities and academics, a sound legal system and a robust intellectual property protection regime,” highlighted by the Director of the HKETO Berlin, Ms Betty Ho, at the reception. Given Hong Kong’s favourable location in the heart of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (Bay Area), Ms Ho added that the city would continue to step up collaboration in innovation and technology with the talent pools from other economies and capture the unprecedented opportunities together.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) is putting great effort in turning Hong Kong into a knowledge-based economy and a technology and innovation hub, developing technology and its application in the Asian region. The city’s aim is to use innovations to develop a high value-added and diversified economy, as well as to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Bay Area development for generating new impetus for the growth of various industries in Hong Kong. To this end, the HKSARG is introducing a series of measures to create a favourable ecosystem in Hong Kong, which includes a substantial increase in R&D resources, a super tax deduction for R&D expenditures and continued expansion of R&D infrastructure.

About HKETO Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official HKSARG representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Switzerland as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.



May should have sought Parliamentary

approval

Riding the coattails of an erratic US President is no substitute for a mandate from the House of Commons.

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