

Responding to emerging challenges in North East Syria

Thank you Madam President and thank you to Under Secretary-General Voronkov for his briefing. The evolving situation in North East Syria over the last week demonstrates how, even without territory, Daesh and its poisonous ideology continues to pose a threat in Syria, Iraq and the wider world. The international community must remain firm in its determination to counter and defeat it.

Yesterday, we welcomed the news that the Syrian Democratic Forces had re-taken control of Ghwayran prison in Hasaka. We pay tribute to the courage and sacrifices made by the Syrian Democratic Forces in their efforts against Daesh and offer condolences to the families of SDF fighters killed.

To safeguard long term stability in North East Syria, the Council should work together, and with the wider international community, to explore options to ensure we are coordinated in responding to these emerging challenges.

The murder of four women in the Al Hol camp in December highlights increasing threats against residents in the camps, especially women and girls, who remain vulnerable to exploitation, prostitution and kidnapping. We are deeply concerned about reports that children were put at risk by Daesh during the attack in Hasaka.

It is vital that humanitarian actors are able to deliver assistance safely and for the camp administration, security forces and humanitarian agencies to agree urgent steps to improve the situation to protect all residents, especially women and girls.

We will continue to work with international partners in seeking justice and accountability for those who have fought alongside Daesh. Any such justice mechanism must respect human rights and the rule of law as well as ensure fair trials and due process.

As a leading member of the Global Coalition Against Daesh, the UK continues to support the Syrian Democratic Forces and we continue to monitor closely the situation. Our work as part of the Coalition fighting the enduring threat posed by Daesh will continue.