

Russia's deeply irresponsible veto will have a tragic impact on 4.1 million Syrians

Thank you President.

I'd like to start by expressing the UK's deep condolences following the deaths of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former President José Eduardo dos Santos.

I'd like to start by thanking Ireland and Norway for their sterling efforts and masterful diplomacy as penholders to find a reasonable compromise on this text.

It is deeply regrettable that Russia has yet again vetoed a humanitarian resolution on Syria. This is a deeply irresponsible veto that will have a tragic impact.

The UN and humanitarian organisations have repeatedly described a 12-month renewal as essential, not least to provide operational hope for the 4.1 million Syrians who desperately rely on the support provided by the cross-border mechanism.

The penholders consulted Council members extensively and their balanced text also provided important support for early recovery, resilience and livelihoods planning, reflected in the widespread support it received.

A renewal for six months will create significant operational challenges for frontline NGOs – to their planning, their procurement, their hiring of staff and ultimately their sustainability.

We will not support the resolution tabled by the Russian Federation, which simply serves to slice in half the fragile certainty we are giving to humanitarian operations, and to bolster the Assad regime.

We do need to find a way forward to preserve this vital humanitarian lifeline and the penholders have our full support as they seek to do that.

Thank you Mr President.