

# Russia's justification for using its veto on Syria is pure fiction

Thank you, Madam President.

The use of the veto is a heavy responsibility. It is, therefore, one that should not be used lightly. It is 50 years since the United Kingdom last vetoed a Security Council resolution unilaterally.

When we negotiate resolutions our objective is to reach agreement, and where necessary, win arguments in votes, rather than use our veto to block Council action.

Unfortunately, the same is not true of Russia. Russia has now used its veto 17 times since 2011 to block the Council's efforts to protect the Syrian people. This is in addition to the numerous other times they've used it, including to protect themselves following their illegal invasion of Ukraine.

These 17 vetoes are a significant cause of the international community's failure to protect the Syrian people from the Assad regime – a failure that has undermined and weakened the Council, and which should weigh heavily on our collective conscience.

The unilateral Russian use of its veto to block a humanitarian resolution for a mechanism upon which 2.4 million people rely is particularly egregious.

Humanitarian need in Syria is the highest it has ever been. We heard repeatedly from the UN and NGOs that renewal of the cross-border mechanism for 12 months was necessary to provide the operational certainty to meet humanitarian needs.

The explanation we heard from Russia today is pure fiction. This includes their farcical suggestion that the UK, alongside the US and France, blocked their proposed text. Let us be clear on the facts – their proposed text was supported by only one other Member of the Council. Two votes in favour is far from the nine required to pass. No amount of disinformation can change the fact that only one Member of the Council chose to politicise this issue. The UK approached this negotiation as we have every year since 2014 – on the basis of humanitarian need, and humanitarian need alone.

We commend the penholders, Norway and Ireland, for their efforts to secure a resolution that would maintain this vital humanitarian lifeline in the face of Russian intransigence – and which achieved 13 votes in favour. And we should be clear, under resolution 2642 the intent of the Council is to maintain this mechanism for 12 months.

The UK will continue to support the UN's efforts to deliver its Humanitarian Response Plan, and we call on other UN member states to do likewise.

Finally, as we have said many times before, a genuine political process is

the only sustainable means of ending suffering in Syria.

Thank you.