

UN Human Rights Council 51: UK statement on Syria

Thank you, Mr President,

I have the honour to present draft resolution L.18 on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of a group of states: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Mr President,

Month after month, year after year, the situation on the ground in Syria continues to deteriorate before our very eyes. Human rights violations remain widespread and systematic. The now critical humanitarian situation is exacerbated by the insecurity which the regime and its backers continue to provoke.

The Commission of Inquiry recently warned this Council that we risk further dire consequences if this trajectory continues.

In our draft resolution, we specifically focus on developments in Syria over the last six months.

Targeted attacks on civilians, in their homes, at markets, have killed innocent women and children.

Civilians are being deprived of food, water, and the basic needs required simply to survive.

Those in detention continue to suffer appalling conditions, ill-treatment and torture.

Meanwhile families endure a different type of torture, that of not knowing if and when they will see ever their loved ones again.

Mr President,

This Council cannot turn away, cannot stay silent, when it comes to the regime's blatant disregard for the rights and lives of its people.

The resolution put forward today condemns the lethal violence inflicted on the Syrian people; demands that critical humanitarian aid is delivered without hindrance; and calls for further support for those seeking the fate of their loved ones, in the face of very real threats to their safety and their livelihoods.

Let me, Mr President, thank all those delegations who have engaged constructively in the informal consultations on this resolution.

Given the lives lost, the suffering endured and the unwillingness of the regime to protect the Syrian people, the very least this Council can do is to adopt this resolution. Together, we can send a message that the world has not forgotten the people of Syria.

If a vote is called on this resolution, I urge our fellow members of this Council to vote in favour of it.

Joint Communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

The Government of Ireland was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Simon Coveney TD, and the Minister for Justice, Ms Helen McEntee TD. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was represented by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Chris Heaton Harris MP, and the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Steve Baker MP.

The Conference was established under Strand Three of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement “to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of the UK and Irish Governments”.

The Conference discussed the following:

British-Irish Cooperation

The Irish and UK Governments agreed on the importance of strong British-Irish relations to address present day global challenges and unlock the significant economic potential of both countries.

The Conference discussed the ongoing work to enhance relations between the UK and Irish Governments. Attendees identified a range of high-value areas for deeper cooperation, with particular focus on cyber, energy, research and innovation.

Political Stability

The UK and Irish Governments reaffirmed their commitment to doing everything possible to facilitate the re-establishment of the Executive by 28 October and the full functioning of all of the political institutions established by the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement including the North South Ministerial Council. They agreed on the importance of respecting the Agreement in totality. They agreed this is what people in Northern Ireland expect and deserve. The Conference noted the ongoing discussions to address issues around the Northern Ireland Protocol and to find an agreed way forward. The

Conference noted that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would come under a legal duty to call further elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly if the Executive is not restored by 28 October.

The Conference agreed to continue close co-operation in accordance with the three stranded approach established in the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement.

Security Co-operation

The Conference examined the current security situation in both jurisdictions. Both the UK Government and the Irish Government noted the importance of the ongoing high level of co-operation in tackling terrorism, paramilitarism and associated criminality. It considered the fourth report of the Independent Reporting Commission and its recommendations. The UK and Irish Governments expressed their thanks to the Commission for their ongoing work.

Rights and Citizenship Matters

The Conference discussed the Common Travel Area protections in the context of policy and legislative developments. The UK and Irish Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the reciprocal rights and privileges provided to UK and Irish citizens under the Common Travel Area.

The Conference also discussed recent developments and legislation relevant to the implementation of the rights and citizenship provisions of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement. An update was also provided on the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act.

Legacy

The Conference discussed the approach to the legacy of Northern Ireland's past and the value of further engagement on this crucial issue, in particular the Irish Government's concerns with the UK Government's proposed legislation and how those concerns might be addressed. The UK and Irish Governments also discussed issues of concern in respect to a number of individual legacy cases.

25th Anniversary of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement

The Conference noted the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement next year and agreed on the importance of collectively marking this historic moment.

Future Meetings

It was agreed that the Conference should meet again in January 2023.

BEEP doctors boosted by Sellafield Ltd donation

News story

Sellafield Ltd has donated almost £90,000 towards emergency care services in Cumbria.



Sellafield Ltd CEO, Martin Chown and head of community and development, Gary McKeating with BEEP doctors and their new vehicles.

Sellafield Ltd is helping to save lives in Cumbria following a donation of almost £90,000 towards emergency care services in the region.

BEEP Doctors (BASICS) Cumbria, a charity providing skilled volunteer doctors who can rapidly respond to accidents and emergencies, received the donation via our Social Impact Multiplied (SiX) programme earlier this year.

The funding has enabled the charity to buy two brand new vehicles that will be used by BEEP Doctors in Allerdale and Copeland to respond to emergencies such as road traffic collisions or domestic accidents.

Cumbria's team of 12 volunteer doctors work 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide enhanced pre-hospital emergency care and surgical procedures that are not normally possible until a patient reaches hospital.

Until now BEEP Doctors in West Cumbria had used their own vehicles to reach incidents, but they now have two fully marked emergency vehicles with 'blues and twos' and unmissable BEEP Doctors branding.

The BEEP Doctors paid a visit to Sellafield recently to showcase the new vehicles.

Dr Theo Weston MBE, BEEP doctors Cumbria chair, said:

The new vehicles should allow us to reach patients quicker because

they're more visible and reliable.

They also have a much larger boot space so we can carry more specialised kit and provide vital interventions.

This will really improve our ability to respond quickly and effectively, and potentially save more lives.

Gary McKeating, Sellafield Ltd's head of community and development said:

The BEEP Doctors do amazing work in our communities and we are thrilled to be able to provide funding for the charity to purchase two new vehicles.

Targeted support for services that enable crisis care for the local community is a key strand of our social impact programme and I'm proud that our funding will help the BEEP Doctors save even more lives across our region.

You can find out more about the work of the BEEP Doctors and make a donation at www.beepdoctors.co.uk

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One of the largest areas of lowland heath in the country set to receive national protection

A historic moorland landscape in west Cornwall, immortalised in the Poldark novels, has today (7 October) been notified as a Site of Special and Scientific Interest (SSSI) in recognition of its national importance for wildlife.

Penwith Moors is at the most south-western extreme of mainland Britain and offers a unique and extensive mosaic of lowland heath, grassland, acid fen and pockets of woodland. The SSSI will protect an ancient landscape shaped over centuries through the careful stewardship of generations of land managers. The designation will recognise the resulting special features of 59 parcels of semi-natural habitat and farmland spanning over 3,100 hectares, stretching from St Just to St Ives.

The site is home to rare and endangered plants like coral-necklace, pale dog-

violet, pillwort and Cornish moneywort which are found amongst the collection of habitats. Rare lichens grow on the outcrops of granite rock, with the song of Dartford warblers drifting across the landscape's heathlands. The area also supports a rich diversity of invertebrates nestled in the heathland.

The site dates back to prehistoric times and has a greater concentration of archaeological and heritage sites than any other comparable area in Western Europe. Standing stones, circles and quoits adorn the landscape alongside more recent mining structures reflecting the Cornwall's illustrious tin, gold and copper mining history.

Wesley Smyth, Area Manager at Natural England said:

An incredible variety of rare plants, insects and birds thrive in the rich tapestry of the Penwith Moors landscape.

This SSSI designation will help protect and restore sites of national importance to wildlife, with farming and nature continuing to co-exist and shape the landscape. We will continue to support farmers and the local people who live, work and visit the Penwith Moors to drive nature recovery and support sustainable uses for this site.

Penwith Moors also has a long history of agriculture and livestock grazing, with many of the 4000 year old field systems still used for their original purpose. Natural England recognises these deep traditions and will continue to work in partnership with local landowners, farmers and the community to promote sustainable farming and nature recovery.

Stunning landscapes such as Penwith Moors are a huge asset for the Cornish economy, drawing in investment from the national and international tourism sectors. Much of the SSSI benefits from public access meaning local communities enjoy access to high quality nature rich spaces for health and well-being as well as the fun and relaxation such spaces inspire.

The decision to notify this area as an SSSI follows extensive assessments by Natural England of its habitats and species, including specially commissioned wildlife experts, which highlighted the importance of the moors for wildlife.

The designation will support landscape scale conservation, to restore habitats in unfavourable condition where wildlife is declining. The protections created by the SSSI designation will prevent damaging activities from taking place, and also promote sustainable land management practices which benefit habitats and species.

Paul St Pierre, Conservation Officer at the RSPB said:

Building on significant public investment through partnerships with landowners and managers, this proposed designation will give important heathland habitats and their unique wildlife, like

Dartford warbler the protection they deserve, in one of their largest remaining unprotected areas in southern England, and put this iconic area on the map as a place to invest in nature. This is an action we very much welcome.

The government has laid out its ambitions in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) for a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife, and has committed to a legal target to halt the decline of nature by 2030 underpinned by the Environment Act.

Following the notification, a four-month period of consultation will open during which anyone may comment on, or object to, the notification. The SSSI designation will then be confirmed, amended or withdrawn within nine months of the notification.

To respond to the consultation, visit: [Penwith Moors SSSI – Defra – Citizen Space](#)

Further information:

- Natural England is the government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is one of the country's very best wildlife and/or geological sites. SSSIs include some of the most spectacular and beautiful habitats: wetlands teeming with wading birds, winding chalk rivers, flower rich meadows, windswept shingle beaches and remote upland peat bogs, as well as much loved woodlands, meadows, heathlands and wetlands.
- Natural England has a duty under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to designate any area of land which in its opinion is of 'special interest' for its wildlife (flora and fauna), geology or landform
- As of 7 October 2022, the SSSI has been formally notified to landowners and occupiers and other interested parties. There will be a 4-month period in which anyone can make representations or object to the notification. If all objections are resolved or none are submitted, the designation will be confirmed. If there are unresolved objections the Natural England Board will hear all of these; they must then decide whether to confirm the designation (with or without reductions). If the notification is not confirmed within 9 months of the date of notification, the notification falls.
- Once notified, farmers and other land managers must apply to Natural England for consent to carry out certain activities on the land. Natural England may grant consent, with or without conditions, or refuse consent. If refused or conditions are imposed, land managers have a right of appeal.
- The SSSI is close to, and in some locations adjoining, two extant SSSIs: Aire Point to Carrick Du SSSI (598 ha); and Lower Bostraze and Leswidden SSSI (2.28 ha).

- The area in Cornwall forms a core part of the West Penwith NCA and overlaps with parts of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding National Beauty and Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.
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UN Human Rights Council 51: UK statement on Russia resolution

Thank you, Mr President,

What a timely moment to be debating this resolution as others have noted the Nobel Committee has recognised the work just this morning on the memorial of Ales Bialiatski and for the Centre of Civil Liberties and I quote their phrase in so doing that they recognise their “outstanding effort to document war crimes human rights abuses and abuse of power”. Yes, indeed.

We would like to thank our 26 European allies for showing leadership on this issue and bringing a resolution to the Council that is a measured, proportionate and necessary response to the alarming human rights situation in Russia. The truth is that President Putin uses repressive legislation to restrict freedom of speech and assembly; he crushes dissent through arbitrary detention and violence; and he has created a climate of fear and intimidation in order to deter civil society and activists from speaking out against the authorities.

Since Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine, repression and attacks against individuals exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms have only increased.

Repression at home enables aggression abroad. Putin’s Government tries to silence those who speak out against the war and detain those who try to avoid being abroad to die in the towns and fields of Ukraine. The increasing violence abroad in turn necessitates more brutal repression at home.

We have heard arguments in this house today that the response proposed in this resolution is somehow disproportionate, or that steps should be ‘more incremental’. But the reality is that the action being proposed in this Council in response to the human rights crisis in Russia is considered; it is deliberate; and it is entirely appropriate.

Mr President, as Russia increases repression against its own citizens, the countless number of Russian people who have suffered – and continue to suffer – are looking to us, in this room, right now, to demonstrate that we stand in solidarity with them. To demonstrate that we will not ignore their struggle, or their grief. And that this Council can help them to establish the truth and provide hope to those working to protect human rights.

For these reasons the United Kingdom will vote Yes on the draft resolution before us, and we urge our fellow members of this Council to do the same.