

Urging the Syrian regime to improve its appalling human rights record: UK statement at UN

Thank you very much Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom strongly reiterates its support for this resolution and welcomes other co-sponsors. This language sets out the international community's shared concerns and urges Syria to improve its appalling human rights record.

15 March 2022 saw the 11th anniversary of the conflict in Syria, marking over a decade of atrocities in Syria. The UK condemns these acts and strongly supports efforts to hold perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity to account.

The UK remains deeply concerned by the situation over the past 12 months. The Syrian regime continues to commit crimes against humanity, war crimes, and human rights violations against the Syrian people, including the use of sexual violence, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, and torture.

Tens of thousands of Syrians have been forcibly disappeared and detained during the conflict. Thousands of families wait to hear about loved ones. It is crucial that Syrians receive information about these disappeared persons, and that efforts are increased to deliver answers and accountability for victims of the regime. The regime must provide answers.

The humanitarian situation has worsened dramatically since cross-border access was reduced. An estimated 14.6 million people need humanitarian assistance and approximately 12 million people face acute food insecurity. It is vital that life-saving cross-border access continues, particularly in the harsh winter months, and with a Cholera outbreak spreading in the region.

The UK also defends the use of country-specific resolutions in the Third Committee. The Committee's remit focuses on the examination of "human rights issues that affect people all over the world". Such resolutions are only tabled for the most serious or prevalent violators.

The Syrian people must not be forgotten and must not be left to resolve this crisis alone. Through the adoption of this resolution, the international community can hold the Syrian regime to account and help ensure it fully complies with its international legal and human rights obligations. Therefore, we would urge all states to vote for this resolution.

Thank you.

The Iranian people have suffered enough: UK statement at UN

Thank you Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom wishes to thank Canada for bringing forward this timely resolution.

In recent months, the human rights situation in Iran has continued to deteriorate. Two months ago, we witnessed the tragic death of Mahsa Amini: a shocking reminder of the repression faced by women in Iran. We deplore the violent suppression of women's rights, and enforcement of the mandatory hijab and chastity law by Iran's so-called Morality Police.

We also find Iran's response to the protests movement that followed Mahsa's death truly abhorrent. Over 326 Iranians have lost their lives and over 14,000 have been arrested. The death sentence announced last week, for a protestor, signifies a shocking worsening of the situation.

It is for these reasons that we welcome Germany and Iceland's efforts to call a Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 24 November, which we hope will mandate a robust investigation into protest-related human rights violations in Iran.

Sadly, such repression remains systematic in Iran. In the first six months of 2022, Iran executed at least 251 people. The UN also called out Iran for executing a juvenile offender in November 2021.

The UK supports the essential work of the Special Rapporteur in shining a spotlight on Iran's human rights violations. We welcome his efforts to expose the systematic repression of minority groups, as well as continued restrictions on media freedom and internet access.

Mr Chair, the Iranian people have suffered enough. It is time their fundamental freedoms were upheld, including the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and speech both online and offline. Iran's leaders must choose another path. Now is the time to stop blaming external actors, to hold up the mirror and start listening to the voices of their people. Yet Iran continues to suppress the voices of civil society, and report of Member States attempting to block NGO access to the room today are a further concern. The UK encourages all Member States to now join us in voting yes on this resolution.

Thank you.

For people in Crimea, the story of untold suffering began eight years ago: UK statement at UN

Thank you Mr. Chair.

The United Kingdom reiterates its support for this resolution and welcomes the significant number of co-sponsoring states.

This year, we have looked on in horror as Putin launched his unprovoked, illegal war, bringing untold suffering to the innocent people of Ukraine. But we are acutely aware that for people in Crimea, this story began eight years ago, in 2014.

Since then, they have endured a brutal and systematic campaign of human rights violations and abuses at the hands of the Russian authorities: arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, and unjustifiable restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of movement, expression and religion or belief. Many of these measures have been disproportionately targeted at ethnic and religious minorities, in particular Crimean Tatars.

Since Russia's invasion this February, the human rights situation in Crimea has only further deteriorated. This resolution highlights that Crimea has become both a base from which to launch attacks on the rest of Ukraine, and a blueprint for further Russian human rights abuses in Ukrainian territory. We condemn the conscription and mobilisation of Ukrainian civilians in Crimea into Russia's Armed forces, and the forced imposition of Russian legislation further limiting freedom of expression, including the freedom to speak out against Russia's brutal war.

And we regret that – despite this Committee's repeated requests – Russia continues to deny access for international monitoring missions to Crimea and other regions of Ukraine under its temporary control.

Russia will undoubtedly accuse us of politicising this Committee. But the UK strongly defends the use of country-specific resolutions, which complement the work of the Human Rights Council and other fora in providing scrutiny of adherence to human rights obligations.

Indeed, on 4 November this year, this Committee adopted a resolution that noted with alarm that Russia has sought to justify its territorial aggression against Ukraine on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism.

By failing to make even the weakest case against this language, Russia tacitly acknowledged what we all know: It has no justification for its aggression against Ukraine

Adoption of this resolution today will underline the international community's support for Ukraine in their fight against that aggression, and their resolve to maintain pressure on Russia to bring an end to its systematic abuse of human rights in Ukraine.

Thank you.

[Attorney General sworn in](#)

News story

The Rt Hon Victoria Prentis MP has been sworn in as Attorney General following her appointment last month



The Rt Hon Victoria Prentis MP was sworn in as Attorney General for England and Wales and Advocate General for Northern Ireland at the Royal Courts of Justice today.

Speaking after the ceremony, the Attorney General the Rt Hon Victoria Prentis MP said:

I am honoured to be sworn in as Attorney General for England and Wales and Advocate General for Northern Ireland. As the Government's chief legal adviser, my focus will be upholding the rule of law and strengthening our justice system.

There are important responsibilities that come with this unique role which has been part of our constitution for centuries, and I look forward to working with the Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP to play my part in upholding the rule of law and carrying out the public interest functions of the Attorney General's Office.

Following the ceremony, the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Rt Hon Dominic Raab, said:

I congratulate Victoria as she takes on the vital and historic role of Attorney General.

Victoria's extensive background in law will strengthen the advice provided to government on all legal matters, and I look forward to working together to support our justice system.

The Attorney General is the Government's chief legal advisor and also attends Cabinet. As well as providing advice to government, the Law Officers (the Attorney General and Solicitor General) oversee the Law Officers' Departments which include the Crown Prosecution Service, Serious Fraud Office, Government Legal Department and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

The Law Officers carry out a number of functions in the public interest, such as considering unduly lenient sentences and taking action when there has been a contempt of court. These functions are carried out independently of their role as government ministers.

The Rt Hon Victoria Prentis was appointed Attorney General on 25 October 2022.

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[Ukraine Defence Minister visits Defence team securing vital military aid](#)

Press release

Volodymyr Havrylov, Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister, visited the UK today to see the support being provided to assist his country's armed forces.



The visit took place at MOD Abbey Wood near Bristol. Abbey Wood is the base of Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the part of the MOD responsible for procuring much of the military support that the UK is sending to Ukraine.

The UK was the first European country to provide weapons to Ukraine and has so far provided over £2.3 billion worth of military aid, including hundreds of armoured vehicles, thousands of anti-tank weapons, and Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) which have been able to strike targets on the battlefield with pinpoint accuracy.

While at Abbey Wood, the Minister saw the ongoing efforts to ensure the UK's support is aligned with Ukraine's requirements and military priorities.

Also today, Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey joined a call with counterparts from the US-led Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG). The UDCG is made up of around 50 countries from around the world who discuss and pledge support for Ukraine in line with their requirements and needs.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey MP said:

The Ukrainian people have no closer friend in their heroic fight than the United Kingdom. The military aid we have provided so far has made a real difference on the battlefield. My continued engagement with Volodymyr and with international partners through organisations like the Ukraine Defense Contact Group have allowed us to support Ukraine's requirements for the coming winter and beyond.

Andy Start DE&S CEO said:

I'm immensely proud of the work the teams at DE&S have done to support our Ukrainian allies to date. This has been a huge team effort involving different parts of government, and companies right across our supply chain.

While in the UK, the Ukrainian Minister also visited the UK-led programme to train the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the UK, as well as discussions with UK industry partners.

It comes the week after the UK announced it was providing Ukraine with equipment to support its armed forces through [harsh winter conditions](#), as well as [1,000 more surface-to-air missiles](#) to counter threats to Ukrainian infrastructure.

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