

Addressing the Syrian government's persecution of its own people

Thank you very much indeed, Madam President. Thank you to the Under-Secretary-General and thank you very much to our two briefers from civil society.

I think we join others in welcoming the fact that this long overdue subject is now being debated in the Security Council. And it is worth recalling that the arbitrary detention of civilians by the Syrian regime is one of the factors that catalysed protests in 2011. And as others have noted, more than eight years later, this repressive practice is still ongoing. Tens of thousands of Syrians have been detained, tortured, subject to sexual violence and killed in detention centres by the regime since the start of the conflict. This is not to underplay, Madam President, what Da'esh has done. We agree there is a very clear need for those who have committed appalling crimes for Da'esh also to be brought to justice. But today's debate is about government's persecution of its own people.

This year, after waiting for years, thousands of families were informed that their loved ones had died in the detention centres with no explanation, no accountability. And many more are still waiting to find out if their relatives are alive or dead, which is unbelievably cruel. Other speakers have made reference to Resolution 2474, and in line with that resolution, the families must be informed of what has happened to their loved ones.

So I'd like to echo the call of the US representative today, Madam President, in calling for the release of all those arbitrarily detained. That is quite a dramatic step. It is important. It is important it happens soon. It is an important element of any political process. But I wanted to pick up on the calls from the civil society briefers for an immediate step that the Syrian authorities could do straight away, Madam President. They could agree to give the UN and the Commission of Inquiry access to detention facilities. And they could agree to provide a list of names of all the detainees and their location. Those are easy steps. And I look to the Syrian representative to undertake to transmit these requests to his government. And I would suggest that he lets you, Madam President, on behalf of the Security Council, have an acknowledgement from his government this week that those lists will be provided. And I would like to include access to burial grounds amongst that list.

Madam President, the United Kingdom is the penholder for the Syria Human Rights Council resolution. And we will continue to call for the release of the detainees and for access by independent monitors to detention facilities in the Human Rights Council in Geneva. And I'd like to use this occasion also to pay tribute to the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry, as well as to the brave journalists and NGOs that continue to document the violations and abuses. A number of people have mentioned the importance that the Special Envoy attaches to this issue and we too support all his efforts. And we

welcome the continued facilitation by Turkey and Russia of prisoner swaps between regime and opposition armed groups, including those released ahead of the Astana meeting on 1 August. This is not the same though, Madam President, by no means the same as the wholesale release of arbitrarily detained persons that the Council has demanded in various resolutions.

A wider point, if I may: delivering justice for the families of those detained is not only the right moral thing to do, it is also necessary if we are to tackle the drivers and root causes of serious conflict. A credible, substantive and genuine political settlement will need to address the issue of political detainees. And all Syrians, all Syrian citizens, need to be able to live free from fear of arbitrary arrests, torture and execution.

As we have said several times in this Council, Madam President, if Syria cannot resolve the issues that led to the original conflict in 2011, she has no hope of internal rehabilitation and reconstruction and no hope of rehabilitation into the international community of nations.

Thank you.

Anglers urged to protect fish stocks in warm weather

The Environment Agency has linked up with Angling Direct for a trial scheme to beam live water temperature data from a water quality device in the Broads to Angling Direct's tackle shop in Wroxham.

Shop staff can then use this information to help advise customers on safe periods to fish for pike in the Broads and some of the alternative fishing experiences available when conditions are too warm for pike. It is hoped this will also be available online, with a view to expanding coverage if the trial is successful.

Environment Agency officers have also produced posters to highlight the risks associated with warm water fishing for pike, which are being displayed in local tackle shops.

Prolonged hot weather can cause problems in rivers, lakes and drains such as low oxygen levels, low river flows, elevated water temperatures and algal blooms, which in turn can lead to increased levels of stress on fish populations and even fish deaths in extreme conditions.

Steve Lane, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

This is an important step for pike conservation in the Broads.

Here in the east of the country, the shallow waters of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads can be surprisingly warm in the summer months, which can lead to problems for pike, an iconic and popular predatory fish.

Coupled with an increase in fishing pressure associated with large numbers of holiday makers visiting the area to go fishing, this means Broads pike are often under increased pressure in summer months. Pike anglers have long been concerned about a perceived decline in pike numbers on the Broads and this is one of a range of factors that could be contributing to pressure on pike stocks.

We're asking anglers to take particular care while fishing as the dry weather continues to help us protect fish stocks.

Please return fish to the water as quickly as possible and avoid using keepnets if practical to do so, particularly on lakes, the Broads and rivers with low flows.

The initiative is a partnership project between the Environment Agency, the Broads Angling Services Group (BASG), the Pike Anglers Club (PAC) and Angling Direct. It builds on recent national guidance for anglers and a scientific literature review commissioned by the PAC, which advises anglers not to fish for pike when water temperatures in the Broads are at or above 21 degrees Celsius.

John Currie, general secretary of the PAC and director of BASG, said:

This is a very simple initiative that has been very successful. It allows the beginner and experienced angler to make an informed decision based on scientific evidence to decide if it is dangerous for pike welfare to fish for them.

A glance at a screen tells you all you need to know. I would hope anglers realise the 21 degrees Celsius water temperature cut off point should be seen as the maximum temperature anyone should be fishing for pike, but 20 degrees Celsius is not much safer. In these extremes we really should not be fishing for pike at all.

Phil Gray, Angling Direct's Wroxham store manager, said:

We are pleased to be helping the Environment Agency and PAC with their initiative to protect pike stocks through the warmer months.

We now have the visual tool to advise our customers of the risks involved in warm weather piking. We see a huge amount of holiday anglers fishing for pike in the summer and want to help create a

more sustainable fishery by advising customers of other species that provide superb sport throughout the summer.

Any signs of dead or distressed fish, pollution or illegal fishing should be reported to the 24 hour Environment Agency incident hotline number on 0800 80 70 60.

For further advice and guidance on this issue contact the [Pike Anglers Club](#).

[NATO statement on the collapse of the INF Treaty](#)

Russia today remains in violation of the INF Treaty, despite years of U.S. and Allied engagement, including a final opportunity over six months to honour its Treaty obligations. As a result, the United States decision to withdraw from the Treaty, a decision fully supported by NATO Allies, is now taking effect.

Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty. We regret that Russia has shown no willingness and taken no demonstrable steps to return to compliance with its international obligations. A situation whereby the United States fully abides by the Treaty, and Russia does not, is not sustainable.

NATO will respond in a measured and responsible way to the significant risks posed by the Russian 9M729 missile to Allied security. We have agreed a balanced, coordinated and defensive package of measures to ensure NATO's deterrence and defence posture remains credible and effective.

Allies are firmly committed to the preservation of effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Therefore, we will continue to uphold, support, and further strengthen arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security, taking into account the prevailing security environment. NATO also continues to aspire to a constructive relationship with Russia, when Russia's actions make that possible.

Watch this [FCO explainer video](#) on the collapse of the INF Treaty.

Government provides £1.1 billion cash boost to creative sectors

Britain's celebrated and world-leading creative and arts sectors have flourished in the last year thanks to £1.1 billion of support from Government, official statistics showed today.

The award-winning TV series Killing Eve and the critically acclaimed film Phantom Thread are among the productions to have benefited from High-End TV and Film Tax Reliefs respectively.

Since these tax reliefs were introduced, 2,955 films, 485 TV productions and 1,075 videogames have benefited and, for the first time, museums and galleries exhibition tax relief has helped to showcase 300 exhibitions across the UK.

In 2016, the screen sector contributed almost £8 billion to the UK economy. In 2016, the film sector alone contributed over £1.71 billion of UK exports.

Jesse Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The arts and creative industries make a vital contribution to the UK economy. These tax reliefs have helped support some astonishing and exciting work again this year, celebrating the very best of British culture.

Creative Sector Tax Reliefs were introduced to help UK businesses in these highly skilled and innovative sectors thrive at home and abroad. The reliefs support jobs and economic activity in all parts of the UK.

Amanda Nevill, CEO at the BFI, which administers cultural tests for the screen sector tax reliefs, said:

The BFI's Screen Business report 'How screen tax reliefs power economic growth across the UK' demonstrated how they are helping to drive one of our fastest-growing sectors, creating jobs across the UK, investment in innovation and delivering a strong return on investment to the UK economy with close to £8 billion spent annually on production.

UK-made films, television programmes and video games are international award-winners and are enjoyed by audiences at home and abroad.

The combination of an explosion in global demand for high-quality productions, our creative and technical excellence, and the UK's supportive fiscal environment creates huge opportunities for our

sector to grow further and boost the future prosperity of the UK.

Additional information

Full annual tax relief statistics available [here](#).

Table 1: Creative sector tax reliefs awarded in 2018/19

Relief	Number of projects	Amount of relief paid (£m)
Film	705	595
High-End Television	210	246
Animation	95	16
Video Games	535	103
Children's Television	115	16
Theatre	3,380	78
Orchestra	555	16
Museums and Galleries	300	4

PM call with Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan: 7 August 2019

The Prime Minister received a call from Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan today to congratulate him on his new role.

The leaders discussed the serious situation in Kashmir and agreed on the importance of maintaining dialogue.

And they underlined their continued commitment to the bilateral relationship between the UK and Pakistan.