

UN Human Rights Council 45: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria

Thank you, Mr Pinheiro, Commissioners,

The UK reiterates its strong support for the Commission's work and shares its concern about the dire human rights situation in Syria.

The report highlights the continued patterns of killings, arbitrary detention, and sexual and gender based violence committed by the regime. Such repression was exactly the catalyst for protests prior to the conflict. Despite nearly ten years of war, the regime has not mended its ways, and continues to violate international humanitarian law, and international human rights law.

The Commission's findings that the Syrian National Army and affiliated armed groups abused human rights in northern Syria are concerning. There is a disturbing pattern of looting, property confiscation, detention, torture and gender based violence against the local population. Furthermore, as the Commission states, destruction of UNESCO heritage sites and other cultural property violates international humanitarian law.

Reducing the number of humanitarian aid cross border entry points has exacerbated the needs of the Syrian population. This, coupled with the rise in Covid cases, is of grave concern. We agree with the Commission that all parties must allow humanitarian access, abide by international law and respect current ceasefires.

Commissioners,

The situation of human rights across the whole of Syria remains appalling. As we approach the tenth anniversary of this conflict, it is imperative to support an inclusive political settlement and end the suffering of the Syrian people.

Thank you.