

UN Human Rights Council 51: UK statement for the Item 4 General Debate

Thank you, Mr President,

The former High Commissioner's report found that possible crimes against humanity have taken place in Xinjiang, China. It found evidence that Muslim women are being forcibly sterilised. That Uyghurs are not allowed to practice their religion or speak their own language. That people are being detained and tortured— merely because they belong to a minority group. We cannot ignore such severe and systematic breaches of human rights. This Council must not, cannot, stay silent.

We have oft spoken in this Chamber of Putin's flouting of international law through his military aggression against Ukraine.

The sham referendums currently being held in Ukraine can have neither legal effect nor legitimacy. Russia can't change the borders of another sovereign state. It's a clear breach of the UN Charter.

We have also repeatedly heard the harrowing reports of Russia's violations of human rights in Ukraine, including of those subjected to Russia's so-called filtration operations. Aggression overseas is accompanied by repression at home as those brave Russians who dare to speak out against Putin's war are detained in their thousands.

Mr President,

The death of Mahsa Amini in Iran, following her arrest, has shocked the world. We call on Iran to carry out independent, transparent investigations into her death and the excessive violence used against subsequent protests.

In Ethiopia it is crucial that the truce is reinstated and that peace talks begin to avoid a repeat of the atrocities including extrajudicial killings and sexual violence seen earlier in this conflict.

Finally, ahead of COP 27 – we urge Egypt to ensure that independent civil society, human rights defenders, and the media can operate freely. The success of the conference – as we saw in Glasgow – depends on vibrant civil society participation.

Thank you