Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

7 years of conflict in Syria: Statement by International Development Secretary and Foreign Secretary

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The International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, and Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, have issued a statement to mark seven years of the Syria conflict.

They said:

Today the Syria crisis enters its eighth year. It has become one of the longest and bloodiest wars in recent history. The impact on Syrians, above all civilians, has been devastating with an estimated 400,000 dead and 13 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

The Asad regime and those who back it bear overwhelming responsibility for the destruction of the country, its infrastructure and the lives of its people.

Despite promises of de-escalation, the violence continues and the civilian death toll continues to rise. Last month the UK supported UN Security Council Resolution 2401 calling for a ceasefire. Yet in Eastern Ghouta – which Russia itself declared to be a de-escalation area – the regime, with Russian support, has continued to bombard and besiege the population, turning it into a hell on earth. Over 1,100 people are estimated to have been killed there since 18 February alone.

We find it utterly abhorrent that the regime is using food and medical supplies as a weapon of war. Civilians continue to be deliberately and indiscriminately targeted by military strikes, and despite promises made by Russia to ensure Syria would abandon all of its chemical weapons in 2013, international investigators have confirmed that the regime has since used chemical weapons in four separate attacks – which Russia has gone to great lengths to conceal. The UK is committed to ensuring that all those responsible for chemical weapons use and other violations of international law in this conflict are held to account.

The UK has always been at the forefront of the response to the crisis. More than 13 million people in Syria and in neighbouring countries are still in need of assistance. We will continue to help innocent people survive the toughest situations imaginable and, ultimately, help them to rebuild their lives.

The suffering will only end when there is a political solution to the conflict. We will continue to use our position on the UN Security Council to pursue this, as well as to unlock humanitarian

access and protect civilians. The UN is ready to mediate a settlement. The opposition have declared their readiness for negotiations without preconditions. But the regime continues to obstruct progress. The international community must commit to a ceasefire and a political process that ends this conflict for good.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/7-years-of-conflict-in-syria-statement-by-international-development-secretary-and-foreign-secretary