Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

"Our task is to pressure the regime in Damascus into implementing Kofi Annan’s Six-Point Plan in full and without any further delay"

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During his intervention the Foreign Secretary said:

“I thank the Government of Turkey for convening this meeting, and Prime Minister Erdogan for his warm welcome.

I also commend the Secretary General Nabil El Araby and the Arab League for leading the world’s response to the Syria crisis.

The longer the violence continues, the more the work and resolve of this group matters.

There has been important diplomatic progress since our last meeting, including the work of Kofi Annan; the UN Security Council Statement endorsing his plan to end the violence; and tough new sanctions from the EU.

But the situation in Syria is dire. People are dying every day at the hands of their government.

Our urgent objectives are an end to all violence in Syria, the withdrawal of Syrian forces to their barracks, the release of all political prisoners and a political transition led by Syrians themselves to a plural, democratic government with free and fair elections.

Until Syria has this transition its people will be threatened, and the country will face all the dangers of civil war or the violent and disorderly collapse of the regime.

Our task is to pressure the regime in Damascus into implementing Kofi Annan’s Six-Point Plan in full and without any further delay.

It is now five days since the Syrian regime said that it would do so. But their military response has continued unabated.

So we must send an unequivocal message to Damascus today that we will not accept the status quo in Syria. There is an opportunity to change what is happening in the country if the Annan plan is implemented in full. But we will not be party to attempts by Bashar Al Assad

and those closest to him to cling to power, steeped as they are in the blood of nearly 10,000 Syrians. There is no way back for Assad and those around him.

To Bashar Al Assad we must say: you may think you can cling to power or shore up your rule through yet more murder, torture and the incarceration of your opponents. But you have forfeited all right to lead in the eyes of the world and of most Syrians. We will not turn a blind eye to what you have done to them. Until you accept a transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people the diplomatic and economic stranglehold will tighten. We will increase sanctions and pressure for as long as it takes.

To that end, I hope every nation represented here will adopt the sanctions that the European Union, United States and others have already imposed. If all of our countries adopted these measures, in particular asset freezes, ending purchase of Syrian hydrocarbons and supplies for the Syrian military the impact would be very great.

I hope others will also help to hold the regime to account: warning those who are committing violations now, and supporting a democratic future for Syria in which justice and reconciliation will be needed.

So I call on all countries to respond to the UN Commission of Inquiry's requests for information and evidence about violations.

Britain will work alongside the United States and other international partners to establish a Syria Accountability Centre to support those documenting atrocities committed in Syria.

And above all I call on Syria's opposition groups to develop a vision that will reassure all Syria's communities, and encourage the diversity of opinion and affiliation that is the essence of democracy.

It is a time for disagreements to be put aside in the interests of Syria's future - since democracy is the best way of openly, equally and legitimately accommodating different views. The opposition meeting in Istanbul last week was a significant step in the right direction.

In Britain we have doubled this week the amount of assistance we offer to the Syrian opposition. This includes agreement in principle to provide non-lethal assistance to Syria's hard-pressed political opposition. We will also increase our support for valiant human rights organisations and civil society groups - helping them to gain access to the skills and resources they need.

By continuing our support for the people of Syria, by intensifying the economic and political pressure on the regime, by ensuring that there will be no impunity for crimes committed, by working with the Arab League and by insisting on the full implementation of the Kofi Annan plan, this Group of the Friends of Syria can increase the prospects of the peaceful transition

in Syria that the country so desperately needs, and I trust that this is what we can all resolve to do today.”

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/our-task-is-to-pressure-the-regime-in-damascus-into-implementing-kofi-annan-s-six-point-plan-in-full-and-without-any-further-delay