Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary statement on the UNSC vote on Syria

2017-04-12

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Last week in Syria, a barbaric attack was committed.

Today, British scientists have completed an analysis of samples obtained from the site of the attack and concluded that sarin, or a sarin-like substance, was used. Our assessment, like that of the US, is that it is highly likely the Asad regime was responsible.

This afternoon in New York, the international community sought to make clear that any use of chemical weapons by anyone anywhere is unacceptable and that those responsible will face consequences.

So I am dismayed that Russia has once again blocked the UN Security Council and in so doing refused to condemn the use of chemical weapons or support a full UN investigation into the attack.

This puts Russia on the wrong side of the argument. But it doesn’t have to be this way.

Today, Rex Tillerson has been in Moscow with a clear and unanimous message from the G7 that we stand ready to work with Russia to bring an end to violence and to find a political solution. As part of this political solution, the G7 is unanimous that Asad has no long term future in Syria. I agree with Rex Tillerson when he says that the Asad family’s reign in Syria is coming to an end.

So Russia faces a choice: it can continue acting as a lifeline for Asad’s murderous regime, or it could live up to its responsibilities as a global power, and use its influence over the regime to bring six long years of failed ceasefires and false dawns to an end.

We stand ready to work together and I will be talking to my G7 partners in the coming days about how we can continue to strive for a political solution that brings an end to the suffering of the Syrian people.

Further information

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