Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Baroness Anelay welcomes conclusions of UN Human Rights Council

2015-07-03

Baroness Anelay said:

After three weeks of intense efforts to protect and strengthen the promotion of human rights, today the Council draws to an end. Much has been achieved in this session.

Once again the Council adopted a resolution on Syria. In its fifth year, the Syrian conflict continues to be the world`s worst humanitarian and security crisis. A negotiated political transition remains the only way to end the conflict and defeat extremism. The resolution states that responsibility to protect civilians lies with the Syrian government. Both the Assad regime and ISIL are responsible for widespread violations and abuses of international law, that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. We will continue to call for accountability for those who commit such crimes, and for all parties to respect human rights.

Despite the efforts of the region, the situation in South Sudan continues to deteriorate with no peace agreement yet established and continued fighting. The appalling burden of the conflict falls on the people of South Sudan, especially the most vulnerable. I welcome the Council`s unanimous agreement for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the situation in South Sudan. I call on all parties to cooperate with the mission. This will complement and build upon the work of the African Union Commission of Inquiry and help move closer towards accountability; a vital part of the peace and reconciliation process.

The human rights situation in Belarus remains a serious concern. We welcome the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a further year. In the run up to Presidential Elections and with opponents to the regime still detained on politically motivated grounds, this is particularly important.

The UK commends Ukraine for bringing forward a resolution aimed at regular discussion of the human rights situation in the country by the Council. The adopted resolution underlines the commitment of Ukraine to promote and protect human rights.

As the new Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence, I welcome the Council’s adoption of resolutions on tackling discrimination against women, violence against women,

and the Council's first substantive resolution on ending child, early and forced marriage. Tackling all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence in conflict, is a top priority for the UK and I hope the Council will build on the achievements made so far through the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative.

The UK once again supported a cross-regional statement on sexual orientation and gender identity. As the most recent report from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights makes clear, killing, rape and torture of people due to their sexual orientation is widespread and affects every region of the world. There can be no justification for violence because of their sexual orientation.

The session in Geneva has come to an end, but our work has not. The promotion and protection of human rights cannot be left to chance. That is why I urge all States to be tireless in our efforts to champion universal values.

Further information

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