Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Lord Ahmad welcomes conclusions of the 38th Session of the UN HRC

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As the British Foreign Secretary made clear in his

address

to the Council on its opening day, the Human Rights Council remains a vital part of the international rules-based system. Despite the regrettable US decision to withdraw, the UK's support remains steadfast. We view the Human Rights Council as the best forum the international community has to tackle the most serious human rights violations and abuses, and to advance many of our shared international priorities.

The Foreign Secretary also conveyed to the Council his conviction that all girls should be provided with 12 years of quality education. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals and other commitments, the UK will work with partners to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. I am delighted that the UK's statement on girls' education has so far been signed by 150 countries. This strong endorsement underlines the clear importance UN Member States attach to girls' education.

I was pleased that the UK was able to co-sponsor resolutions this session on Female Genital Mutilation, Violence against Women and Girls, and Discrimination against Women. Working hard to agree advances is how we make progress towards our ultimate aim of a world without violence and discrimination against women and girls.

The UK also strongly supported a resolution on civil society space that raised concerns about growing restrictions placed on civil society organisations throughout the world. We spoke against attempts to weaken the resolution by Russia and others, and co-sponsored the final resolution.

Turning to country situations, as at every session, the UK highlighted serious human rights situations in its

statement

to the Council under Item 4 ("Human rights situations that require the Council's attention").

The human rights situation in Syria remains as desperate as ever, as civilians bear the brunt of the regime's brutal offensives. I particularly condemn the ongoing Russian-backed assault on southern Syria, which is in flagrant violation of the de-escalation agreement. The continued pattern of attacks, including in southern Syria, on hospitals, medical personnel and rescue workers, is particularly troubling. The UK calls on all parties to prioritise the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. I welcome the resolution adopted on Syria. It is vital that Commission of Inquiry continues to shine a light on these atrocities so that those responsible can be held to account.

I welcome the follow-up resolution on the DRC. The new team will be key to assessing and supporting the implementation of the recommendations made by international experts who investigated human rights violations and abuses in the Kasais. This is critical, both to ensure accountability for all crimes, and more broadly, to create the conditions necessary for credible and inclusive elections to take place.

I also welcome the renewal this session of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on Eritrea and Belarus.

Today, after three weeks of intense effort to protect and strengthen the promotion of human rights, the Council session draws to a close. The Human Rights Council enables UN Member States to work together to support and uphold universal rights around the world. In the face of adversity, and as we mark the 70th anniversary this year of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, we must continue to strive towards a world that stands unified in holding to account those that commit human rights violations and abuses.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-ahmad-welcomes-conclusions-of-the-38th-session-of-the-un-hrc