

UN Human Rights Council 44: statement on the Human Rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

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Speech

The UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, delivered this statement on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

From:

Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Rita French

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17 July 2020 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)



Thank you Madam President,

The UK has the honour to present draft resolution L.10 on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of a group of states: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey and my own country, the United Kingdom.

Madam President,

In light of the unique circumstances of the 44th session, we have chosen to respond appropriately and present a short and focused resolution.

This resolution highlights the ongoing dire situation of human rights across Syria and the need for all parties to abide by international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It focuses on key developments since we negotiated the March resolution, including: the call by the UN Secretary General and his Special Envoy for an immediate nationwide ceasefire; the Commission of Inquiry's latest findings on war crimes and crimes against humanity in Idlib; and the importance of unimpeded humanitarian access.

The text also reflects the additional risks to detainees posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as noted by the High Commissioner, the Commission of Inquiry and the Secretary General's Special Envoy, and requests that the Commission of Inquiry presents a report on the situation of arbitrary detention across Syria.

Madam President,

Our decision to streamline this resolution was taken in response to the unique situation of this meeting of the Human Rights Council. It should not be misinterpreted to suggest any improvement of the human rights situation in Syria, which remains one of the worst in the world.

We hope our approach this session will enable even more members of the Council to support this text.

Finally Madam President,

We would like to highlight an oral revision to operative paragraph five of document L10, circulated in advance through the secretariat.

In view of UN Security Council Resolution 2533 adopted on Saturday 11 July, we have deleted the words in OP5 'and calls for the continuation of cross-border humanitarian support beyond July 2020',

and replaced with

'regrets in this regard the further reduction in approved crossing points for cross border humanitarian aid, and urges the Syrian authorities to immediately and significantly improve cross line access to prevent further unnecessary suffering and loss of life'.

We would request that action is taken on L.10 as orally revised. If a vote is called on this resolution, I would urge all members of the Council to vote in favour of it.

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