Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Baroness Anelay welcomes conclusions of UN Human Rights Council

2015-10-02

Baroness Anelay said:

Today the 30th session of the Human Rights Council draws to an end. Much has been achieved in this session to strengthen and protect human rights.

I thank the Commission of Inquiry for Syria for its work, detailing the cruelty of the Assad Regime and barbarity of ISIL. This has caused nearly 12 million people to leave their homes, 4 million of whom are now hosted by neighbouring countries. Many thousands are risking their lives to cross into Europe. There has never been a greater need to end this conflict, which can only be achieved by a political settlement that provides for a transition away from Assad towards a more representative and inclusive government. We continue to support the UN Envoy's efforts to restart talks and believe all those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights must be held to account.

Violations and abuses of human rights in Sudan, including restricted personal freedoms and lack of national security legislation reform, are deeply troubling. Conflict and indiscriminate bombing of civilians have continued this year in Darfur and the Two Areas, humanitarian access remains restricted and reports of sexual and gender based violence are all too regular. I urge the Government of Sudan to address the culture of impunity by conducting independent and transparent investigations, including in cases such as the September 2013 demonstrations, to bring all those responsible to account. It must ensure the Independent Expert has unfettered access to all conflict areas, and take action on the areas the resolution addresses.

I warmly welcome the first consensual resolution on Sri Lanka. It is truly historic that Sri Lanka itself has cosponsored the resolution, thereby firmly committing to its implementation. I hope now that the resolution will provide the platform for the country to address the issues of the past and deliver lasting peace and prosperity for all Sri Lankans. We are ready to continue supporting Sri Lanka as it does so.

Over the past year, Yemen has descended into a serious security and humanitarian crisis. A political solution remains the best way to end the conflict, avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, and bring long-term stability to the country. The resolution calls upon all parties to respect

their obligations under international law and ensure access for humanitarian aid. It calls on the UN to provide technical assistance to the Government of Yemen, assist the national independent commission of inquiry, and report back to the next session of the Human Rights Council.

Countering Violent Extremism is a critical issue for the international community, and requires a co-ordinated response across the UN system. The resolution adopted at this session calls on all UN member states to implement comprehensive strategies that respect human rights and prevent and counter violent extremism. A report on best practices and lessons learned on the role of human rights in preventing violent extremism will help states national capacities and international cooperation to defeat extremism.

The UK welcomes the resolution on Burundi, which highlights the country's precarious human rights situation and condemns the violations of human rights. It also celebrates recent successes, such as the establishment of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights. Importantly, the resolution requests the Human Rights Commissioner to engage with the Government of Burundi to assess and report on the status of human rights in Burundi, and ensures that Burundi remains on the Council agenda for the next three sessions.

Once again, the Council has demonstrated that the rules based international order is the muscle states need to ensure the right structures and safeguards are in place to uphold universal rights and provide dignity to all.

Further information

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