Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary answers questions on Libya and the Arab Spring via Twitter

2011-06-09

After visiting Benghazi on 4 June for talks with the National Transitional Council the Foreign Secretary was able to give a first hand account of the situation on the ground.

Questions were submitted to the Foreign Secretary using the hashtag

#askFS

Q.@insilicogenesis: @WilliamJHague - What was the extent of the devastation observed first handedly during your visit, Sir? #askFS Are they still in greet need?

A.@insilicogenesis Human toll is the biggest devastation of all in any conflict - met people in hospital and heard apalling stories

Q.@thoades: Last week we spent £6,000,000 on bombs in Libya, yet we can not afford schools, education or health. Why?

A.@thoades There is a price attached to coming to the aid of other people, but the cost of not doing so would be far greater.

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Q.@flyinglawyer73: #AskFS So we stay in #Libya no matter how long it takes to remove #Gaddafi? What about #Zimbabwe #Syria, the list goes on! And the cost?**

A.@flyinglawyer73: I can’t put it better than the PM: just because we can’t do everything doesn’t mean we shoudldn’t do what we can.

Q.@TTAMarshall: Watching events in Syria and Yemen, has the interstaional response been adequate? Does Libya tie our hands elsewhere? #askFS

A.@TTAMarshall: No one can accuse Britain of being slow. We’ve led the way on #Libya & #Syria at the UN… #askFS

A. @TTAMarshall …launched a whole new programme to support democracy in the Middle East & North Africa with £110 million in funding…#askFS

A.@TTAMarshall …helped rewrite EU neighbourhood policy. I could go on. British diplomacy at its very finest in responding to the #ArabSpring

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Q. @CrispinJohn: @WilliamJHague #askFS Will the UK now consider going back to the UN to get a new resolution to take direct action to remove Gadaffi?**

A.@CrispinJohn We have the clearest possible UN mandate to protect civilians in #Libya, & we are fulfilling it to the letter… #askFS

A.@CrispinJohn …It is clear that Qadhafi has no future leading #Libya in any shape or form #askFS

Q. @Stop Bombing: @WilliamJHague Why in Hell's Name are you bombing #Libya? STOP BOMBING LIBYA! IT'S CRIMINAL! #askFS #africa #nato #warcrimes #FXAfrica #bbc1

A. @StopBombing Without our action Benghazi would have fallen & war crimes that the ICC are now investigating would have gone unchecked #askFS

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Q.@MCarradini: #askFS @WilliamJHague Minister, how do you reconcile the "Responsibility to Protect" and the interests of civilians supporting Gaddafi?**

A.@MCarradini Qadhafi ruled by fear & oppression & still targets civilians in Western Libya. Many will be desperate to get rid of him #askFS

Q.@pippinlion: @WilliamJHague #askFS why is Libyan state tv still on air despite AL condemnation, un1973 and Egypt based transmission? Would help if gone.

A.@pippinlion I agree. We press all satellite companies to stop transmitting this Qadhafi propaganda, many already have #askFS

Q.@DominicFarrell: @WilliamJHague What's the exit strategy? #askFS

A.@DominicFarrell Fulfilling the @UN mandate to protect Libyan civilians #askFS

Q.@callmenaivebut: #askFS When will UK formally recognise Libya's NTC?

A. @callmenaivebut The UK recognises States not Governments, but we regard the #NTC as legitimate representatives of the Libyan people #askFS

Q. @K_H_Jordan: @K_H_Jordan Time is running out for #Qadhafi. International community is united & his regime is starting to crumble around him #askFS #Libya

A. @K_H_Jordan Time is running out for #Qadhafi. International community is united & his regime is starting to crumble around him #askFS #Libya

Q. @Ransom_Stoddard: @WilliamJHague What steps do you envisage to validate and legitimise the level of democratic support for the Rebel ‘government’? #askFS

A. @Ransom_Stoddard #NTC has set out a vision for a democratic #Libya post-Qadhafi. I’m encouraging them to set out plans in more detail #askFS

Q. @hababbi: Mr Hague after visitng Libya tell us what inspired you most to confirm the need for UK to continue to support for the ppl of #libya #askFS

A.@hababbi I was inspired by the enthusiasm of the people I met, their optimism & courage despite what they’d been through #askFS #Libya

Q.@hababbi: Mr Hague What influences will the UK have in helping the ppl establish a new democratic social system in Libya? #askFS

A. @hababbi If we are asked for help then we will certainly want to respond. But we can’t & won’t dictate to people #askFS

Q. @danielsilas: @WilliamJHague - Alain Juppe says Assad has “lost his legitimacy to rule the country” Do you agree? #askFS

A. @danielsilas I think President #Assad should reform or step aside. #askFS #Syria

Q. @manofchew: @WilliamJHague You promise to “isolate those abusing human rights” yet it’s business as usual with Bahrain. Why? #askFS

A. @manofchew It’s not business as usual - we send strong messages to #Bahrain including on #humanrights & reform #askFS

Q. @sayed3li: #AskFS -When do you think the #UK should walk the talk in relation to #Bahrain uprising? Dialogue needs solid ground,not bloody one.

A. @sayed3li We make clear to #Bahrain our view that national dialogue must lead to real progress & reform #askFS

Q. @sjrlloyd: @WilliamJHague BBC said today Syria is making Libya look like a picnic and that reporters are asking why Libya and not Syria? #askFS

A. @sjrlloyd @MichaelSimison clear intl mandate for action in #Libya, not in #Syria. Doing all we can to pressure #Assad regime to stop killing

Q. @NaomiLGoldberg: Will the FS and the British government condemn the human rights violations taking place in Syria? #askFS #MiddleEast

A. @NaomiLGoldberg We do on a daily basis. What is happening in #Syria is unacceptable - that is why we want the #UNSC to respond #askFS

Q.@AASAWEY_BBC: @foreignoffice @williamjhague #askFS The draft at UNSC on Syria, any coordination with Russia? China?

A. @AASAWEY_BBC Consultations today. As PM said anyone voting against #Syria resolution or vetoing it will have it on their conscience #askFS

Q. @FredChukkawakka: Explain why the UK treats #Syria and #Libya differently even though both leaders have killed their citizens to quell uprisings? #askFS

A. @FredChukkawakka We don't treat #Syria any differently. But harder to build international support for a firm response over #Syria #askFS

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Q. AIUKMEG: #askFS given Libya was so swiftly referred to prosecutor of the #ICC, when will the #UK join the call for the same for #Syria's regime?**

A. @AIUKMEG #ICC referall needs a #UNSC resolution, which on this subject is not possible at the moment #askFS #Syria

Q. @CharlieLewis: #askFS Is there a possibility of intervention in syria as sanctions don't seem to have worked and casualties are mounting?

A. @CharlieLewis_ sanctions are putting pressure on the regime. Pressure will only increase unless they change course #askFS #Syria

Q. @EmilyDanesRoad: #askFS Cameron threatened to support Palestinian statehood at the UN, are there any other ways Britain will pressure Israel to negotiate?

A. @EmilyDanesRoad Shouldn't be a Q of outside pressure.The situation in the region & on the ground shld create a sense of great urgency #askFS

Q. @EmilyDanesRoad: #askFS Can you clarify the British stance on Israel/Palestine? Two states based on 1967 borders? And how can Britain help to achieve this?

A. @EmilyDanesRoad 2 secure states based on 1967 lines with #Jerusalem the capital of both & a fair solution for refugees…#askFS #MiddleEast

A. @EmilyDanesRoad …UK gives diplomatic support, talks to the parties, works closely with the US, & with the EU & will continue this #askFS

Q. @RenaSadeghi: Where does Britain stand from continued Israeli settlements in Palestine? Do democracy and int'l law get applied to Israel also?#askFS

A. @RenaSadeghi International law applies everywhere. #UK view is that settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace #askFS #MiddleEast

Q. @NaomiLGoldberg: How does Mr Hague feel about the Scottish boycott of Israeli books? http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk #askFS

A. @NaomiLGoldberg I oppose boycotts of #Israel - they are counter-productive, polarising & shut down dialogue #askFS

Q. @SanityChecker: @WilliamJHague #askFS What is the stimulus behind the Arab Spring? And will the replacement be any better in the medium term?

A. @SanityChecker Demands for freedom, open government, #humanrights & dignity which are natural aspirations of all people everywhere #askFS

Q. @scotiatide: No question, just want to thank the UK for protecting the people of Libya in their time of need - well done #askFS

A. @scotiatide Thank you - we will see the job through until UN resolutions are fulfilled #askFS #Libya

Q. @Jnugteren: The British are using #helicopters and #jets. What is between groundforce intervention and the current situation? #askFS

A. @Jnugteren a huge difference. UNSC 1973 rules out occupying force & we will stick to it.UN mandate gives our moral & legal authority #askFS

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-answers-questions-on-libya-and-the-arab-spring-via-twitter