Foreign Secretary to announce support for Syrian political opposition

2012-03-29

This support includes agreement in principle for practical non-lethal support to them inside Syria.

“It will help hard-pressed opposition groups and brave civil society organisations inside and outside the country to document the regime’s violations and gain the skills and resources they need to help build a democratic future for Syria.”

The British Government has provided £450,000 of practical support to the Syrian opposition and civil society in the last 8 months, including; strategic communications and media skills training to internal activists; conflict resolution and negotiation training to independent civil society; training and advice to Syrian human rights defenders from across the country; and mentoring for citizen journalists.

UK support is intended to help Syrian political oppositionists to:

develop themselves as a credible alternative to Assad and his regime

keep themselves safe against regime repression and violence by communicating effectively;

get improved access to humanitarian assistance;

develop the necessary capability to realise an orderly transition to a more democratic Syria;

In addition the UK will be expanding its support for activists to ensure accountability. We are already working together with partners to ensure that no options for justice are closed to the Syrian people. Gathering and securing evidence is critical. The UK sent an expert mission to the region last month to help document the atrocities that have taken place and has previously trained Syrian human rights activists to document violations accurately and in accordance with international standards.

We will provide further training to human rights activists from Syrian hotspots which have witnessed severe repression to build their capacity to gather, document and store evidence of human rights violations and abuses. This evidence of serious human rights violations, some of which may amount to crimes against humanity, can then be used by the Syrian people to

ensure that there is a day of reckoning for those responsible. The UK is also looking at providing expert advice to nascent Syrian civil society groups, to help professionalise their reporting on human rights issues and improve their transparency.

Finally, as Syrian opposition and civil society groups start to tackle the challenges of a sustainable political transition, including how to maintain essential services, revive the economy and deliver comprehensive constitutional reform we will provide UK expertise to support them.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-to-announce-support-for-syrian-political-opposition