Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Russia and China will have to justify their behaviour to the Syrian people, who continue to suffer under Assad's brutal regime.

2014-05-22

Thank you, Mr President.

We have heard time and again in this Chamber the horrific scale of violations and abuses carried out against civilians by the Syrian regime over the past three years of the conflict:

The indiscriminate bombardment of civilian-inhabited areas.

Horrendous violations, including systematic murder and torture, in regime detention centres.

The arbitrary denial of humanitarian access to those in need.

And the use of siege and starvation as a weapon of war.

This resolution offered Syrians the prospect of an end to impunity for the individuals who have committed these atrocities.

Holding perpetrators to account for their actions is a vital element of a sustainable peace. No settlement in Syria can be real or lasting without justice. This resolution would have given the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court a mandate to investigate all war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated during the conflict – regardless of the identity or affiliation of the perpetrator.

This resolution had the support of 13 members of the Security Council, 65 co-sponsors, and over 100 NGOs from all around the world as well as the Syrian National Coalition. This shows the strength of international feeling on the issue.

It is to Russia and China’s shame that they have chosen to block efforts to achieve justice for the Syrian people. And it is disgraceful that they have yet again vetoed the Security Council’s efforts to take action in response to the appalling human rights violations being committed every day in Syria.

Russia and China will have to justify their behaviour not only to these states and organisations, but to so many of the Syrian people, who continue to suffer under Assad’s

brutal regime.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom is committed to accountability. Despite today's vote, we will continue to look for ways to ensure that there can be accountability in Syria. We will continue to support efforts to document atrocities, ready for the time when those responsible can be held to account. The perpetrators of appalling crimes in Syria may be able to hide behind Russian and Chinese vetoes for now, but they will not be able to evade justice forever.

I thank you.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russia-and-china-will-have-to-justify-their-behaviour-to-the-syrian-people-who-continue-to-suffer-under-assads-brutal-regime