Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Russian Ambassador called to Foreign Office to discuss Syria

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Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Sir Alan Duncan met Russian Ambassador to the UK, Alexander Yakovenko, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office today (27 February) to stress UK concern at the current situation in Syria, particularly the crisis in Eastern Ghouta and the need for a ceasefire as stipulated in Resolution 2401 passed by the UN Security Council last weekend.

Minister Duncan welcomed the fact that all UN Security Council members, including Russia, had voted in favour of a ceasefire and underlined Russia's obligations to adhere to its commitments to ensure that UNSCR 2401 was implemented in full. Minister Duncan reiterated the UK government's deep concern about reports of continued attacks by pro-regime forces in Eastern Ghouta, where an estimated 400,000 people have been under siege since 2013, including reports of chemical weapons use.

Minister Duncan urged Russia to use its influence to ensure the Syrian regime adhered to the ceasefire in order to allow rapid, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access and non-conditional medical evacuations which are urgently needed across Syria, but particularly Eastern Ghouta. Only 1 inter-agency convoy has accessed Eastern Ghouta since November, reaching just 2.6% of people in need. Humanitarian pauses of limited duration are no substitute for a sustained ceasefire.

Minister Duncan underlined that the violence in Syria reinforces the urgency of achieving a political solution, as called for by the UN Security Council, and urged Russia to work with the international community to achieve this.

Further information

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