Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Baroness Anelay welcomes conclusions of Human Rights Council

2016-07-01

Baroness Anelay said:

It was a privilege be in Geneva for the 10th anniversary of the Human Rights Council. This anniversary was an opportunity to look back at the Council's significant achievements. It was also a chance to chart a course for the next ten years; a decade of action, during which I hope we will no longer need to hold events about the importance of empowering women, but that this becomes a fact of life.

I hope the resolutions adopted at this session will give hope to all those whose human rights are violated or at risk, and will support those states determined to reform.

The people of Syria continue to face unimaginable horrors and suffering with flagrant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated by both the regime and Daesh. The UK welcomes the adoption of another resolution on Syria that draws attention to those human rights violations and abuses. We reiterate our calls for the regime to release those arbitrarily detained. The UK fully supports the efforts of the UN Special Envoy to find a political solution to the Syria crisis and efforts to sustain the Cessation of Hostilities and ensure full humanitarian access. The UK will continue to work for an end to the conflict through its role in the International Syria Support Group and the UNSC.

I am pleased that the Council has again adopted a Ukrainian resolution, which will ensure the human rights situation remains firmly on the HRC's agenda. We call on all sides to investigate all cases of human rights abuses and violations detailed in the OHCHR reports. I am particularly concerned about the instances of conflict-related sexual violence. We call on all sides to ensure allegations of conflict-related sexual violence are fully investigated, justice is delivered for victims and that harmful attitudes are challenged in order to ensure that victims do not face stigma or become ostracised from their communities.

I remain concerned about human rights in Eritrea, in particular widespread arbitrary detention, lack of rule of law, and indefinite national service as highlighted in the resolution adopted by the Council. I welcome the Eritrean Government's renewed engagement with the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights and I urge the Government to fully

implement its constitution and to address broader human rights issues, including delivering on its commitment to end Female Genital Mutilation and early and forced marriage.

I thank the High Commissioner for his assessment of the progress made by Sri Lanka to deliver its commitments, as set out in resolution 30/1. I also thank Foreign Minister Samaraweera for his engagement with the Council. I welcome the progress made by Sri Lanka and the commitment to a comprehensive approach to reconciliation. Much remains to be done as Sri Lanka seeks to build a sustainable and prosperous future for all Sri Lankans. Determined political leadership and inclusive consultations with all communities are essential. The UK will continue to support the Government of Sri Lanka and we look forward to the High Commissioner's assessment of progress in March 2017.

I thank the High Commissioner for his extremely concerning report on the human rights situation of the Rohingya Muslims and individuals belonging to other minorities in Burma. As the report makes clear, not all of Burma's people have yet felt the benefit of the momentous changes that are transforming that country. I am, however, heartened to see the energy and fresh initiatives that the new Government are bringing to tackling these serious challenges. Ensuring rights, freedoms and prosperity for all Rakhine's people and building a sustainable nationwide peace will be vital if Burma's reform process is to be ultimately successful. The UK stands ready to support the Burmese Government.

I welcome the adoption of a resolution addressing violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and the establishment of an Independent Expert in this area. I am proud that the UK played an active role in encouraging support for this resolution and vociferously defended it when it came to a vote in the Council. The chance to live a life with dignity, free from discrimination, should not be based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Acts of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity take place in all regions of the world, including our own, and we offer our full commitment to supporting the Independent Expert in her/his work. The United Kingdom remains strongly committed to promoting and protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) people, wherever they may live in the world.

I was delighted to see the adoption of four resolutions dedicated to the advancement of women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment. These resolutions recognise the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that many women continue to face and show how the international community must work together to end all harmful practices, including FGM and child, early and forced marriage.

I welcome the constructive approach taken by Mexico on the human rights of migrants and look forward to discussions in New York in September on a framework for better global management of migration. The global displacement crisis has reached unprecedented levels, with 60 million people forcibly displaced, 20 million of whom are refugees. We need a

comprehensive and sustainable global response which includes placing greater emphasis on global responsibility sharing, tackling root causes, reducing large-scale irregular migration and providing protection and humanitarian support to those who need it.

I share the High Commissioner’s concern that racism and xenophobia are totally unacceptable. The Prime Minister has described his own concern and disgust following reports of attacks on foreign citizens in the UK. This country will always take a strong stand against hate crime.

The Human Rights Council has once again demonstrated the important role it plays in upholding universal rights. The UK will work to ensure it holds those responsible for the worst atrocities and violations to account. Through working with all states, we will strengthen safeguards, so that the enjoyment of universal rights is not a luxury but a universal reality for all. Championing these rights matters to the UK and that is why we are standing for re-election to the Council for 2017-2019.

Further information

Follow Foreign Office Minister Baroness Anelay on Twitter

@JoyceAnelay

Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter

@foreignoffice

Follow the Foreign Office on

Facebook

and

Google+

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-anelay-welcomes-conclusions-of-human-rights-council