Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

UK statement on civilian casualties in Idlib, Syria

2019-07-23

Dr Martin Longden, the UK's Special Envoy to Syria, said:

Over the past few months the United Kingdom has repeatedly raised concerns about the escalating violence within Idlib and the surrounding areas. Yesterday's appalling attacks on marketplaces in Ma'arat al-Nu'man and Saraqeb town killed over fifty civilians and injured many more, making this one of the deadliest days for civilians since the start of the offensive on Idlib. We condemn these attacks and their perpetrators.

We have continuously called on Russia and the regime in the UN Security Council to explain the repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools – all places that civilians should be safe. We are yet to receive an adequate or reasonable explanation. While we recognise the need to address terrorist activity in northwest Syria, this cannot be an excuse for killing hundreds of civilians.

We continue to call on the parties to the conflict to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law, to protect civilians from harm, and to protect and facilitate the work of all humanitarian workers. The ceasefire must be restored to prevent further suffering.

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