Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

"Only a united Iraq can rid ISIL and its violent ideology from Iraqi territory"

2014-09-18

Mr President

I warmly welcome your initiative in convening this important session on Iraq. I thank SRSG Mladenov and Foreign Minister Jaafari for their informative briefings.

I congratulate Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on the formation of Iraq's new government and welcome his commitment to creating an inclusive government that can work together to unite and secure Iraq in the fight against terrorism and the pursuit of peace and prosperity. This is a critical first step to addressing the serious security, political and humanitarian challenges facing Iraq.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the new government's comprehensive programme, especially its commitments on decentralisation, reform of Iraq's armed forces and dissolution of militia groupings, and better delivery for the Iraqi people in services and infrastructure. The international community must help the government to deliver on these promises. And the Government of Iraq must also demonstrate its own unwavering commitment to delivering these reforms.

It is now vital that all political blocs work together to overcome these challenges, including the threat posed by the ISIL. It is essential that Iraq's neighbours, who are all threatened by ISIL's emergence put their differences aside and work together to deal with the threat.

Mr President

The creation of an extremist so-called caliphate represents a direct threat to the security and stability of the region and to the national security of other UN member states, including the United Kingdom. In seeking to establish its extremist state, ISIL is already aiming to use the territory it controls to launch attacks against the west, including the United Kingdom. And it clearly is contributing to insecurity in the region.

We condemn ISIL's barbaric acts, including targeted killings, forced conversions, abductions, trafficking, sexual violence and sexual slavery. The callous and brutal murder a few days ago of British aid worker, David Haines, following on from the equally appalling murders of two American journalists, underlines ISIL's ruthlessness and use of fear to retain power.

This Council has been united in its condemnation of ISIL and all it stands for.

The UK is ready to take whatever steps are necessary to deal with this threat and keep our country safe. We will be working closely with our allies and the Iraqi government on building the international support during next week's meetings.

The adoption by this Council of resolution 2170 sent a clear political message to ISIL, ANF and other AQ-inspired terrorists and has taken important practical steps to combat the threat they pose.

We strongly support the approach set out by President Obama last week – building on a strong international coalition, working with governments in the region, working with others in order to defeat the threat from ISIL. We must work together to drive back, dismantle and ultimately destroy ISIL and what it stands for.

We must use all tools at our disposal – humanitarian, political, diplomatic and military – to squeeze ISIL. We must tackle their presence in both Iraq and Syria and we will continue to support those moderate forces fighting against ISIL. At the request of the Iraqi Government, we have provided heavy machine guns and ammunition and transported other vital equipment to help the Kurdish Peshmerga defend the front line, protect civilians and push back ISIL's advances.

We also continue to give priority to alleviating the humanitarian suffering of those Iraqis targeted by ISIL terrorists. The UK has already donated $37 million in immediate assistance, to provide clean water, sanitation, essential medicine and funding for NGOs and charities. And during the course of the conflict in Syria, we have also provided $1 billion in humanitarian aid, which is reaching all Syria's communities, including those most at risk from ISIL.

There needs to be a comprehensive, coordinated approach, with our regional allies at the forefront to tackle ISIL. As part of this, the UK will continue to be a steadfast supporter of Iraq and an active contributor to the international and regional efforts to degrade and defeat ISIL and rid the world of this repugnant terrorist organisation.

Mr President

As others have noted today, a sustainable solution to this crisis lies in an inclusive, sovereign and democratic governance. Only a united Iraq, with a government that has support from all of Iraq's communities, can rid ISIL and its violent ideology from Iraqi territory.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/only-a-united-iraq-can-rid-isil-and-its-violent-ideology-from-iraqi-territory