Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Baroness Warsi welcomes conclusions of UN Human Rights Council

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Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi said:

The UK considers it crucial that the Human Rights Council is able to address human rights violations wherever they occur. I welcome the strong action which the Council has once again taken on Syria at this session, and I am also encouraged by the Council's effective response to a range of other critical human rights situations.

The UK shares the deep concern felt across the world for the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in Syria. The conflict has reached devastating proportions and our thoughts remain with the Syrian people. We welcome the high level of support for the resolution which calls for access for the Commission of Inquiry, condemnation of the use of Chemical Weapons and highlights the need to focus on preventing sexual violence.

The UK shares the Commission of Inquiry's concern over the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We are appalled by the attacks of 21 August and the UK supports the growing international consensus that the Syrian regime was responsible. We welcome the proposal for the regime to hand over its chemical weapons and place them under international control within a rapid time frame.

The UK is delighted that the resolution on Somalia enjoys such wide support and co-sponsorship. This is testimony to the commitment and desire of the international community to stand with, and assist Somalia, as it works to promote and protect human rights. We must not shy away from the considerable human rights challenges faced by Somalia, and we will support the Somali government in tackling head on issues such as sexual violence in conflict, violence against children, extra-judicial killings, targeting of journalists and protection of refugees and internally displaced people.

I welcome continued international attention on the human rights situation in Sudan. The UK is deeply concerned about an overall deterioration in human rights in Sudan in conflict and non conflict affected areas. The UK stands ready to work with the Government of Sudan on the realisation of human rights for all in Sudan.

The UK welcomes the adoption by consensus of a resolution on Central African Republic, under the lead of CAR and other African countries. The UK also welcomes the Africa led resolution on Democratic Republic of Congo which has set up a panel focusing on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict. The UK Government's initiative to prevent sexual violence in conflict is rooted in our belief that tackling the issue of sexual violence is an indispensible component of conflict prevention, security and peace building worldwide.

The UK has once again led a resolution at the Human Rights Council on Contemporary forms of Slavery. Slavery in all its forms is completely abhorrent. It is a sad fact that millions of people worldwide are still living in conditions of slavery. The UK unreservedly condemns slavery and is committed to eliminating it. We welcome the high level of support for the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur at the Human Rights Council.

As we look ahead to our bid for election to the Human Rights Council (2014-2016), I would like to emphasise the UK's own commitment to strengthen human rights, both domestically and internationally. We strive to be a powerful example of a country that upholds these rights, judging ourselves by the highest standards and taking corrective action where we fall short. I would also like to reiterate my strong support for the work of the Council; the UK will work to ensure it responds appropriately to all violations of human rights, wherever they occur.

Further information

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