Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Minister welcomes destruction 200 tonnes of Syrian chemical stockpiles

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Commenting on the destruction of 200 tonnes of Syrian chemical stockpile by the UK, Tobias Ellwood said:

Last year, the UK accepted the task of destroying 200 tonnes of the declared Syrian chemical stockpile: part of an extraordinary international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons programme. The final stage of the destruction operation in the UK has now been safely completed, and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), visiting the site this week, have officially verified the destruction.

The global chemical industry has played a vital role. I would like to congratulate Veolia Environmental Services UK Limited and Mexichem UK Limited for their work in safely destroying these chemicals. The operation has highlighted the UK's commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and reinforces our call for end to the development, stockpiling and use of these barbaric weapons.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that industrial chemicals such as chlorine are still being used as weapons in Syria: in breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolutions. This needs to end now. Those responsible for their use must be held accountable and brought to justice. The Syrian regime also has serious questions to answer in respect of its previous weapon programmes and cannot be considered to be in full compliance with its Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council obligations until it has done so satisfactorily.

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