Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

"Will we take action against those who use chemical weapons in Syria? It’s that simple."

2017-02-28

Thank you Mr President.

This Council is about to be asked a simple question. Will we take action against those who use chemical weapons in Syria? It’s that simple.

Will we take action on behalf of those whose lives have been destroyed by these senseless weapons?

Will we take action for people like Mohammed Abdul-Razzuk Alhashash?

Thanks to the testimony of those on the ground, we know that Mohammed was admitted to hospital at 1:30 PM on the 21st of April 2014. A couple of hours earlier a Syrian regime helicopter had dropped two containers on his home town of Talmenes, exposing him and many others to a yellow toxic gas.

After the attack Mohammed was unable to breathe. He lost consciousness. On arrival at hospital he was intubated under mechanical ventilation. His face was red. Pink foam poured from his mouth. His pupils were dilated. His lungs were crackling. His heartbeat and breathing stopped. CPR was performed but all attempts to revive him failed. Mohammad died at two o’clock. He was six years old.

Mohammed is why we are here today. We are here in this Chamber to begin to bring justice for him, for his family and for the hundreds, if not thousands of other Syrians whose stories are all too similar to his own.

This isn’t about politics. At its core this isn’t really about the JIM or the OPCW. Forget the acronyms. This isn’t even about Syria. This is about taking a stand when children are poisoned. It’s that simple. It’s about taking a stand when civilians are maimed and murdered with toxic weapons; weapons used in complete disregard for the international rules and norms that we all claim to uphold.

So in a moment when we are asked to vote on this resolution, I hope that all members of this Council will lift their hands in favour of this text - and do so with Mohammed in their minds.

Thank you.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/will-we-take-action-against-those-who-use-chemical-weapons-in-syria-its-that-simple