

# Working to end the eight years of suffering of the Syrian people

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to both of our briefers from the UN. The UN continues to have the United Kingdom's full support for the important work that you are doing.

Madam President, since this is my last meeting in this chamber, I wanted to offer a few reflections on the Council's work on Syria. It weighs heavily on me that despite the best efforts of many of us in this chamber, the international community and this council have failed the people of Syria. But we should be in no doubt that the Assad regime bears the primary responsibility for Syrians suffering, as well as Daesh. And we cannot forget Russia's 12 vetoes to protect the Assad regime. Syrians have and continue to endure unspeakable suffering. The regime has bombed them with chemical weapons. It has systematically tortured and murdered the regime's opponents. And it has targeted civilians through mass indiscriminate aerial bombardment. This is still happening this week, as we saw through the horrific images of the violence Marat al-Numan yesterday.

Eight years on from the start of this conflict, we shouldn't forget why it began. In the spring of 2011, ordinary Syrians, among them teachers, students and doctors, took to the streets of Damascus, Daraa, Homs and other towns and cities across Syria to protest peacefully for greater freedom and better governance. I witnessed some of these protests myself. The regime responded with overwhelming force, shooting civilians in the streets, arresting, torturing and murdering them. This is what started the conflict and what sustains it today. And at no point since then has the regime seriously engaged in a political process; it has pursued a ruthless military strategy against its own people to stay in power at any cost.

Madam President, whilst I think it's important to say these things, these words alone will not help the Syrian people today. First, the least we can now do is to put a stop to the violence in Idlib by demanding and implementing an immediate ceasefire. Since the recent escalation, the regime and its allies have killed more than 500 civilians and displaced more than 400,000. Of the 3 million Syrians in Idlib, less than one percent belonged to the terrorist group HTS. There remain more babies than terrorists in Idlib and over half of the population, as my American colleague said, 1.5 million out of 3 million are children. This council must insist on an immediate ceasefire to protect civilians and prevent further war crimes. We therefore strongly support the resolution proposed today by Belgium, Kuwait and Germany.

Madam President, in addition, the least we can do is ensure justice and accountability for the crimes committed by the Assad regime and by Daesh. The United Kingdom will be relentless in our efforts to ensure accountability through our support for the international impartial, independent mechanism, the UN's Commission of Inquiry and through national prosecutions. We welcome

the successful prosecutions already underway in Europe and the Secretary-General's decision to establish a board of inquiry. One day, Bashar al-Assad will face justice for his crimes.

We must also keep a laser-like focus on the actions of the military units currently engaged on the ground in Idlib, from the regime, Russia and HTS. These include, but are not limited to, the following: at the Hayma Airbase 679 Squadron, 947 Squadron, 680 Squadron; at the Shayrat Airbase, 677 Squadron, 7 Squadron, 675 Squadron and 685 Squadron; at the Al Nasiriya Airbase, 698 Squadron and 695 Squadron; and at the Tiyas Air Base, 1st Squadron, 819 Squadron, the 5th Squadron of Russia and the 827 Squadron of Russia. We will be watching the actions of these military units and their commanders and we will hold them accountable.

And Madam President, the least we can do is address the root causes of this conflict. As Resolution 2254 recognises in its call for inclusive and non-sectarian governance, there will never be stability and peace in Syria as long as the regime terrorises its people and tortures and murders those who oppose it. Such conditions will continue to act as a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism, such as al-Qaeda and Daesh.

Finally, Madam President, this conflict has undermined and weakened the United Nations and the wider rules based international system. Assad has used chemical weapons against his own people. He has thumbed his nose at this council and our resolutions, at the General Assembly and at the OPCW, aided and protected by Russia and by Iran. If we, as UN member states, are to uphold the ideals of the UN Charter, which sought to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and which reaffirmed our faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, we must do more to prevent criminal, rogue regimes from violating international law and imposing death and suffering on their people. Respect for state sovereignty can never be a license to allow a leader to commit war crimes against his own people.

Madam President, this council must learn the lessons from the last eight years of this conflict and from the suffering of the Syrian people. We must now come together urgently to stop the violence in Idlib and to protect Syrians from further suffering.

Thank you.

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## [E3 joint statement on the situation in the South China Sea](#)

We are concerned about the situation in the South China Sea which could lead to insecurity and instability in the region.

We call on all coastal States of the South China Sea to take steps and measures that reduce tensions and contribute to maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability and safety in the region, including as regards the rights of coastal States in their waters and the freedom and rights of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea.

As State parties of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), France, Germany, and the United Kingdom underline their interest in the universal application of the Convention which sets out the comprehensive legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas including in the South China Sea must be carried out and which provides the basis for national, regional and global co-operation in the maritime domain. They recall in this regard the Arbitration Award rendered under UNCLOS on 12 July 2016.

Furthermore, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom welcome the on-going negotiations between the ASEAN member States and China in view of achieving a rules-based, co-operative and effective Code of Conduct consistent with UNCLOS in the South China Sea and encourage progress towards its early conclusion.

## **Further information**

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## **UK FinTech companies announced for trade mission to Latin America**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has announced 6 British FinTech companies have been chosen for the third trade mission to Finnosummit, the largest FinTech conference in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The conference, which will have over 3000 entrepreneurs, financial services innovators, financial executives, and international investors in attendance, will take place in Mexico City from 9-13 September, and will offer UK FinTech firms the opportunity to:

- Participate in a Mexico FinTech immersion day, allowing them to have a clear understanding of the Mexican FinTech ecosystem
- Network with senior executives in banking, insurance, technology and finance and attend bespoke one-to-one meetings
- Attend presentations from industry insiders which will outline the main issues and considerations of doing business in Mexico
- Attend workshops to help them showcase their expertise to business audiences

The businesses were chosen for their cutting- edge financial solutions expertise, in a rigorous recruitment process, which prioritised companies which could meet the market demands and needs specific to Mexico. Mexico City was chosen to host the conference as it is home to the largest FinTech ecosystem, including hundreds of businesses, in the region.

**Liz Truss, Secretary of State for International Trade, said:**

The companies chosen for this year's mission to Mexico showcase the best in class of our world-leading FinTech industry, which continues to attract the highest levels of capital in Europe.

Whether it's our comprehensive State of the Nation report, partnerships with FinTech Alliance, or the launch of our new Pilot Bridge Programs, DIT continues to be a firm ally to the UK's FinTech industry and I am delighted we are supporting this mission to Finnosummit.

**Joanna Crellin, Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner (HMTc) for Latin America, said:**

The strength of the UK's thriving FinTech sector is rapidly receiving great interest around the world. We are delighted to be supporting these FinTech firms as they offer their innovative solutions to one of the fastest growing ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mexico has taken significant steps in providing an open and collaborative market for FinTech to flourish in supporting underserved businesses and helping to meet the needs of the financially excluded.

The UK Government is supporting the FinTech industry in Mexico with initiatives such as the Prosperity Fund Mexico programme. This will reach £60 million over 8 years and seeks to support growth in the country/ region, such as through the bolstering of technology and innovation through digital financial services, including the FinTech sector. £11 million of the fund has been allocated for this specifically.

**An overview of some of the UK delegates:**

[Boseman](#) specialises in money management technology through custom FinTech

products in the investment and credit sectors, moving away from the use of robo-advisors.

[ComplyAdvantage](#) helps firms make intelligent choices when complying with regulations relating to sanctions, money laundering (AML) and terrorist financing (CFT). Using Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to produce higher quality AML risk data on individuals, organizations and associated entities. ComplyAdvantage works globally with some 200 firms in the financial markets and other regulated high-risk sectors.

[Duesday](#) seeks to make recurring payments easier through their mobile app. The streamlined platform allows users to view, pay and organise their bills in one place, rather than struggle with many different direct debit payments. Users can even change their date of payment and split bills with others, as well as unlock rewards for paying bills earlier.

[Tokenise](#) provides regulatory hosting services to the financial services sector, working with companies in the UK, Europe and Asia. Their services allow for fast and cost-effective listing of debt securities, open and closed-ended funds, securitisation cell companies, specialist investment vehicles, cryptocurrencies and other exchange-traded instruments for capital raising and investor diversification.

[Paymentology](#) works alongside banks and program managers to provide a seamless processing experience. Identifying gaps in the financial market, the company aims to help their clients in the areas of security, flexibility and reconciliation through digital processing platforms.

[Rhisco Solutions Limited](#) works internationally with banks and insurers in Latin America to provide risk management and capital services solutions through bespoke technology platforms. Examples include their TEGRA® data management, ALLGOOD® compliance, IBM Algo Credit Management solutions and more.

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## **Official Statistics: Rural expenditure statistics**

Household expenditure and household disposable income in rural and urban areas.

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