

Addressing the Syrian government's persecution of its own people

Thank you very much indeed, Madam President. Thank you to the Under-Secretary-General and thank you very much to our two briefers from civil society.

I think we join others in welcoming the fact that this long overdue subject is now being debated in the Security Council. And it is worth recalling that the arbitrary detention of civilians by the Syrian regime is one of the factors that catalysed protests in 2011. And as others have noted, more than eight years later, this repressive practice is still ongoing. Tens of thousands of Syrians have been detained, tortured, subject to sexual violence and killed in detention centres by the regime since the start of the conflict. This is not to underplay, Madam President, what Da'esh has done. We agree there is a very clear need for those who have committed appalling crimes for Da'esh also to be brought to justice. But today's debate is about government's persecution of its own people.

This year, after waiting for years, thousands of families were informed that their loved ones had died in the detention centres with no explanation, no accountability. And many more are still waiting to find out if their relatives are alive or dead, which is unbelievably cruel. Other speakers have made reference to Resolution 2474, and in line with that resolution, the families must be informed of what has happened to their loved ones.

So I'd like to echo the call of the US representative today, Madam President, in calling for the release of all those arbitrarily detained. That is quite a dramatic step. It is important. It is important it happens soon. It is an important element of any political process. But I wanted to pick up on the calls from the civil society briefers for an immediate step that the Syrian authorities could do straight away, Madam President. They could agree to give the UN and the Commission of Inquiry access to detention facilities. And they could agree to provide a list of names of all the detainees and their location. Those are easy steps. And I look to the Syrian representative to undertake to transmit these requests to his government. And I would suggest that he lets you, Madam President, on behalf of the Security Council, have an acknowledgement from his government this week that those lists will be provided. And I would like to include access to burial grounds amongst that list.

Madam President, the United Kingdom is the penholder for the Syria Human Rights Council resolution. And we will continue to call for the release of the detainees and for access by independent monitors to detention facilities in the Human Rights Council in Geneva. And I'd like to use this occasion also to pay tribute to the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry, as well as to the brave journalists and NGOs that continue to document the violations and abuses. A number of people have mentioned the importance that the Special Envoy attaches to this issue and we too support all his efforts. And we

welcome the continued facilitation by Turkey and Russia of prisoner swaps between regime and opposition armed groups, including those released ahead of the Astana meeting on 1 August. This is not the same though, Madam President, by no means the same as the wholesale release of arbitrarily detained persons that the Council has demanded in various resolutions.

A wider point, if I may: delivering justice for the families of those detained is not only the right moral thing to do, it is also necessary if we are to tackle the drivers and root causes of serious conflict. A credible, substantive and genuine political settlement will need to address the issue of political detainees. And all Syrians, all Syrian citizens, need to be able to live free from fear of arbitrary arrests, torture and execution.

As we have said several times in this Council, Madam President, if Syria cannot resolve the issues that led to the original conflict in 2011, she has no hope of internal rehabilitation and reconstruction and no hope of rehabilitation into the international community of nations.

Thank you.

Anglers urged to protect fish stocks in warm weather

The Environment Agency has linked up with Angling Direct for a trial scheme to beam live water temperature data from a water quality device in the Broads to Angling Direct's tackle shop in Wroxham.

Shop staff can then use this information to help advise customers on safe periods to fish for pike in the Broads and some of the alternative fishing experiences available when conditions are too warm for pike. It is hoped this will also be available online, with a view to expanding coverage if the trial is successful.

Environment Agency officers have also produced posters to highlight the risks associated with warm water fishing for pike, which are being displayed in local tackle shops.

Prolonged hot weather can cause problems in rivers, lakes and drains such as low oxygen levels, low river flows, elevated water temperatures and algal blooms, which in turn can lead to increased levels of stress on fish populations and even fish deaths in extreme conditions.

Steve Lane, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

This is an important step for pike conservation in the Broads.

Here in the east of the country, the shallow waters of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads can be surprisingly warm in the summer months, which can lead to problems for pike, an iconic and popular predatory fish.

Coupled with an increase in fishing pressure associated with large numbers of holiday makers visiting the area to go fishing, this means Broads pike are often under increased pressure in summer months. Pike anglers have long been concerned about a perceived decline in pike numbers on the Broads and this is one of a range of factors that could be contributing to pressure on pike stocks.

We're asking anglers to take particular care while fishing as the dry weather continues to help us protect fish stocks.

Please return fish to the water as quickly as possible and avoid using keepnets if practical to do so, particularly on lakes, the Broads and rivers with low flows.

The initiative is a partnership project between the Environment Agency, the Broads Angling Services Group (BASG), the Pike Anglers Club (PAC) and Angling Direct. It builds on recent national guidance for anglers and a scientific literature review commissioned by the PAC, which advises anglers not to fish for pike when water temperatures in the Broads are at or above 21 degrees Celsius.

John Currie, general secretary of the PAC and director of BASG, said:

This is a very simple initiative that has been very successful. It allows the beginner and experienced angler to make an informed decision based on scientific evidence to decide if it is dangerous for pike welfare to fish for them.

A glance at a screen tells you all you need to know. I would hope anglers realise the 21 degrees Celsius water temperature cut off point should be seen as the maximum temperature anyone should be fishing for pike, but 20 degrees Celsius is not much safer. In these extremes we really should not be fishing for pike at all.

Phil Gray, Angling Direct's Wroxham store manager, said:

We are pleased to be helping the Environment Agency and PAC with their initiative to protect pike stocks through the warmer months.

We now have the visual tool to advise our customers of the risks involved in warm weather piking. We see a huge amount of holiday anglers fishing for pike in the summer and want to help create a

more sustainable fishery by advising customers of other species that provide superb sport throughout the summer.

Any signs of dead or distressed fish, pollution or illegal fishing should be reported to the 24 hour Environment Agency incident hotline number on 0800 80 70 60.

For further advice and guidance on this issue contact the [Pike Anglers Club](#).

Anglers urged to protect fish stocks in warm weather

An innovative pilot project is set to help protect vulnerable fish stocks in the Broads during the warm weather period.

Furthest from the Labour Market – project in Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (OC12S19P1493)

Call to run a project to support unemployed people and encourage inactive residents to move closer to employment through participation training, work placement and volunteering.

Detailed guide: Import live fish and shellfish

What you need to do to import live fish, molluscs and crustaceans (shellfish): authorisation and health certificates.