

Press release: Troika statement on South Sudan on 29 June

The members of the Troika (the UK, US and Norway) commend the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) efforts to drive forward the South Sudan peace process, and take note of the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement Between Parties of the Conflict of South Sudan agreed between President Salva Kiir, Dr Riek Machar, and other opposition parties in Khartoum on 27 June. We welcome the Government of Sudan's role in hosting the latest round of discussions.

We hope that the principles outlined in the declaration will help to build confidence between the parties and guide the difficult discussions that must follow to reach a credible and comprehensive wider agreement.

While we welcome the renewed commitment to a ceasefire, all sides must stop fighting now – that is the only secure foundation upon which any agreement can be built. The effects of the renewed commitment to a permanent ceasefire must be seen on the ground. It must allow the return of South Sudan's refugees and displaced people, and the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. It must lead to improved security for communities and an end to the horrendous abuses endured by civilians at the hands of security forces. "Self-monitoring" will not be sufficient to assess adherence to the ceasefire. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) must continue to play a central role, with full access throughout the country and support in publishing timely reports.

The new ceasefire does not negate the need to respond to the continued and repeated serious violations by all sides of the December 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA). We will continue to seek measures at the UN Security Council to return the region to peace and security, including consequences for spoilers to the peace process. The international community therefore stands ready to support action by IGAD and the African Union to signal an end to impunity by delivering punitive measures against those responsible.

The parties must work to solidify this agreement. They need robust security and enforcement mechanisms, inclusion of a wide range of constituencies, and clear limits to executive power. There is a need for specific and realistic benchmarks throughout the transitional period, which lead to free and fair elections that allow for a peaceful transition in leadership in the most expeditious and responsible manner. The international community will encourage any oil arrangement to include transparency and accountability and ensure that new oil revenues directly benefit the South Sudanese people, rather than fuel more conflict.

All this will be critical to ensure that the failures of past agreements are not repeated and the confidence of international donors is secured.

We appreciate IGAD's ongoing efforts and look forward to further progress in the next phase of talks.

Further information

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[News story: British diplomats have won the battle to name chemical weapons culprits: article by Boris Johnson](#)

Within hours of the gas attack on the Syrian town of Khan Sheikhoun, the conspiracy mongers were out in force.

They claimed that nothing had happened and the whole incident had been a stunt, or perhaps the town had gassed itself in a bizarre act of self-immolation, or someone – anyone – was responsible for the atrocity other than Bashar al-Assad's regime.

This episode last April showed the convergence of two scourges of our age: the use of chemical weapons and the proliferation of fake news designed to hide the guilty.

There is only one rightful response to this pernicious combination. The international community must be able to uncover the truth by means of independent inquiry, empowered not only to say whether chemical weapons were employed but by whom.

And it is that vital power to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria that British diplomacy has just helped to restore.

Our efforts became necessary because of what followed the Khan Sheikhoun attack. In October 2017, a joint investigation by the United Nations and the

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) found that one of Assad's military aircraft had dropped a bomb laden with sarin nerve gas on Khan Sheikhoun (contrary to the energetic outpourings of the conspiracy theorists).

This was the fourth time this joint investigation had named the Assad regime as responsible for chemical weapon attacks in Syria. The terrorists of Daesh were held culpable for two other incidents.

But Russia chose to respond by protecting Assad and vetoing the renewal of this investigation in the Security Council last November. We then entered a period when the OPCW's experts were able to investigate chemical attacks in Syria, provided they did not say who was responsible.

They were effectively asked to indulge a fiction whereby chemical weapons might descend from the sky of their own volition, without any agent or perpetrator. It was as if a vow of omerta had to surround the identity of the guilty party.

The OPCW reported that chemical weapons had been used twice more in Syria – in the towns of Lataminah in March 2017 and Saraqib in February this year. But they did not identify the perpetrator.

I sensed that a new and profoundly damaging taboo was slowly emerging, a taboo that applied not to the use of chemical weapons but to naming whoever was responsible. It was as if the real offence was not killing people with poison gas, but daring to identify the perpetrator of such wickedness.

Hence the importance of the change that was achieved this week. On Wednesday, a special conference of states parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention adopted a British-drafted "Decision" to allow the OPCW to make full use of its powers to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria.

If you had joined me in The Hague, you would have shared my pride in the British diplomats who were lobbying scores of countries, convincing the waverers and countering the frantic efforts of Russia and Iran to scupper the plan.

Our network of embassies threw itself into this campaign, working alongside countries across the world. I spent much of the day meeting or calling dozens of my counterparts. In the end, our proposal carried the day by 82 votes to 24 – a better result than we had dared hope.

Thanks in no small measure to British diplomacy, the OPCW will be able to answer all the vital questions about any future incident: what happened when and where – and who was responsible.

We are placing the taboo back where it belongs: over the singular horror of using chemical weapons. If any such attacks happen again, there will once more be international investigators empowered to discover the culprit. You can be proud of the British diplomats who did so much to bring this about.

[News story: British diplomats have won the battle to name chemical weapons culprits: article by Boris Johnson](#)

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Find out more about the international community coming together to [strengthen the global ban against chemical weapons use](#).

Further information

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Press release: Media advisory notice – Hillsborough proceedings

Criminal proceedings against six individuals arising out of the investigations into the tragic events at Hillsborough on the 15th of April 1989 and its aftermath are currently active. The first of three criminal trials is due to start in 10 weeks' time.

The Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP wishes to draw attention to the requirement not to publish material, including online, which could create a substantial risk that the course of justice in these proceedings may be seriously impeded or prejudiced, thereby jeopardising the defendants' right to a fair trial.

In particular, the Attorney General draws attention to the requirement not to publish material that asserts or assumes, expressly or implicitly, the guilt of any of those who face trial, whether in relation to the events of the 15th of April 1989 or to subsequent events. That is an issue to be determined solely by the three juries on the evidence that they hear in court.

The risks may also arise by commentary which prejudges issues that witnesses may give evidence about or which asserts or assumes wrongdoing on the part of organisations by whom the defendants were employed.

The Attorney General's Office will be monitoring the coverage of these proceedings.

Editors, publishers and social media users should take legal advice to ensure they are in a position to fully comply with the obligations they are subject to under the Contempt of Court Act.

They are also reminded of the terms of the order made under section 4(2) of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 by Sir Peter Openshaw DL on 29th June 2018.

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