

The situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh: UK statement, 22 October



Thank you Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom welcomed the second announcement of a humanitarian ceasefire and we are once again deeply disappointed to see that it is not being respected.

We strongly condemn the continued shelling of civilian areas. The UK continues to make our position clear: the targeting of civilian settlements is unacceptable and civilian populations must be protected. We offer our condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones. Our thoughts are with those who have been displaced and whose lives are being affected.

The humanitarian situation continues to worsen and we are particularly concerned about the impact on children. The rising number of COVID-19 cases across the region presents a huge risk to these communities and we urge both parties to consider the humanitarian impact of their actions.

We urge the parties to the conflict to stop the violence immediately, abide by the 17th October agreement and return to substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. The parties must also grant the ICRC swift and unimpeded access and support their efforts as they seek to facilitate the return of prisoners of war and the remains of the deceased.

The UK continues to offer its full support to the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and welcomes their efforts so far. The Minsk Group remains the primary format through which a settlement should be reached. We urge all parties and friends of both States to redouble their efforts in support of an end to hostilities.

We continue to urge the parties to recognise that a military solution will not be forthcoming; a diplomatic, peacefully negotiated solution remains the only option. The parties must urgently return to the negotiating table to engage in substantive discussions without preconditions.

Once again I would like to reiterate the UK's support for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in their role in mediating negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

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