

Speech: “Russia has chosen to protect the perpetrators of these attacks rather than work with the rest of the international community to condemn them.”

Thank you Madam President.

The conflict that has ravaged Syria has lasted for more than six years. For the people of Syria that must feel like an eternity. Here in this chamber we only get so many moments to act. Only so many moments to show them that hope is not dead; for the world to unite in condemnation of war crimes. Today was one of those moments.

What happened in Khan Sheikhoun last week was the worst of human acts. UK scientists have now analysed samples obtained from Khan Sheikhoun. And these samples have tested positive for the nerve agent sarin, or a sarin-like substance. We therefore share the US assessment that it is highly likely that the regime was responsible for a sarin attack on Khan Sheikhoun.

We recognise the need for a thorough, swift, independent investigation. Russia’s Foreign Minister has this afternoon also called for such an investigation. Yet Russia has vetoed a resolution that would support that investigation. Their messages are mixed, their aims confused. The OPCW fact finding mission, and the Syrian people, need our political support – something that we should have been able to give as a Security Council. The UK will continue to give this support, and regardless of today’s votes the work of the OPCW will continue.

We’ve once again encountered a Russian veto, the 8th time that Russia has used its veto to protect the Syrian regime. This one is even more regrettable given that Russia was the architect of the 2013 agreement to dismantle Syria’s chemical weapons programme, an initiative that has demonstrably failed.

Russia cannot now possibly claim that it opposes the use of chemical weapons. Russia has seen the same pictures that we all saw just days ago in this chamber. How could anyone look at the faces of lifeless children and choose to veto a resolution condemning those deaths?

It is indefensible that Russia has chosen to protect the perpetrators of these attacks rather than work with the rest of the international community to condemn them.

When those images and videos were broadcast across screens around the world, my team received a message from another child. From Bana Alabed, the 7 year

old Syrian girl from Aleppo, who, with the help of her mother, has given the world a window into the conflict through Twitter.

The message she sent was simple: "You can make a difference. Demand justice for the children." She is one voice, but one that echoes the views of millions of Syrians. "Demand justice for the children" – the heartbreaking truth is that a little girl's plea will not be heard in this Chamber. Not today.

But regardless of the veto today, trust these words: we will hold the regime to account. We will continue to work with our international partners to put an end to any use of chemical weapons and to seek justice for all the victims of these heinous chemical attacks. We will gather in the OPCW in The Hague tomorrow to discuss how best to support a credible international investigation that establishes who was responsible and paves the way to hold the culprits to account.

The catastrophe in Syria is not the way it has to be. Yesterday Foreign Ministers from the G7 and key Regional Countries came together in Italy to discuss how to move forward from last week's tragedy. They gave strong support to Secretary Tillerson's visit to Moscow today to discuss how Russia could work with the international community to end the tragedy of the war in Syria.

Russia has the sort of influence over the regime that could bring to an end the regime's use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs and could lead to a real ceasefire that then leads to the resumption of serious political negotiations on a political transition. Those Foreign Ministers indicated that if Russia took these steps, the international [community] would be ready to work with Russia to bring peace to Syria, defeat Da'esh and terrorism, and reconstruct Syria.

So this is the choice Moscow has in front of it. The world now waits to see if Russia will respond to the G7 and assume its responsibilities as a Permanent Member of the Security Council to help put a stop to the Asad regime's use of chemical weapons and to work with the international community to bring this tragedy to an end.

Thank you.

[News story: Money saving deal for schools' printers](#)

DfE recommends a deal that makes buying printers easier and saves schools money. The first schools to use the new buying framework saved more than 40% on their previous contract prices.

The deal is one of many in the [schools' buying strategy](#) that aim to make buying easier and offer the best value for schools.

This is a single-supplier deal for [Canon UK](#) products. Canon has made the ordering process simple with easy-to-use search and comparison tools. After registering schools have only to choose their preferred device and, if required, select any additional items offered. Canon has a dedicated schools help desk.

Schools do not have to obtain 3 quotes when using the deal as this was done during the framework competition process. Schools needing to check whether this deal meets their local procurement rules should contact us: Schools.ICTSUPPORT@education.gov.uk.

Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and YPO Framework for Multifunctional Devices (MFDs) jointly created [the framework \(RM3781\)](#).

The framework has 2 'lots' (deals) which may be of interest to schools:

Lot 1: 'Print equipment' described above.

Lot 2: 'Multifunctional devices' may also be of interest to schools. It has multiple suppliers so the school must run a further competition. This lot may appeal to schools working in collaboration, or to a multi-academy trust running an aggregation for their schools, as there is potential for further price reductions due to higher device volumes.

Comments from some schools who have already used the deal:

Ross Bowell at Wimborne Academy Trust:

We are using the new CCS framework across our trust for our MFD requirements.

Lot 1 works very well for small schools such as ours with straightforward printing and scanning needs.

We have seen lower black and white print costs but when we tested the total life costs including colour printing and lease costs against other frameworks and suppliers we found the CCS route to be the best value.

The customer support from Canon has been excellent to date and considerably better than our experience on the previous CCS framework.

Nicola Hall at Walnut Tree Walk Primary School:

I thought the process was very straightforward – so straightforward I had to check what I was doing was correct!

Much easier to understand and see what our payments would be.

The prices were amazing in comparison to what we were paying, so pleasantly surprised.

Best deal by far.

[Press release: Justice Minister visits Staffordshire and West Midlands CRC](#)

- Part of an ongoing tour of prisons and probation areas to get to the heart of the daily challenges staff face
- Minister Gyimah thanks staff at Staffordshire and West Midlands Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) for their vital work in delivering major reforms to improve safety and reduce reoffending
- The CRC provides employment and education training, housing and welfare services, and drug rehabilitation – turning offenders away from crime

Justice Minister Sam Gyimah today visited Staffordshire and West Midlands CRC to see the work probation staff are doing to reform offenders and turn their lives around.

The CRC is run by the Reducing Reoffending Partnership – a joint enterprise bringing together the best of the private and voluntary sector. They support and closely monitor offenders, working one-to-one with them to assess and address their needs including accommodation, education, training and employment, drugs and alcohol, and health.

The minister saw staff delivering employment and education training, housing and welfare services, and drug rehabilitation – teaching offenders the tools they need to turn away from crime.

He also met with the CRC CEO, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's senior contract manager, and the head of performance for the local National Probation Service. They discussed how probation services are being delivered in the Midlands, and the CRC's new operating model, which has seen them go from strength to strength this year.

Speaking after the visit to the CRC, Justice Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Probation officers do a vital job in helping offenders turn their lives around and reduce reoffending.

It was great to meet the team at Staffordshire and West Midlands CRC, and the offenders they support, to see how the work they do

helps them lead crime free lives. I was especially pleased to meet their impressive CEO, Chris Blackwell, who is driving forward positive changes which support our reform agenda.

We are committed to improving our probation service and are carrying out a comprehensive review to improve outcomes for offenders and communities.

The CRC provide a Through the Gate service to support prisoners in the run up to, and after, their release from custody. The CRC works closely with the St Giles Trust to train prisoners to act as role models and encourage fellow offenders to engage with all the services available to them.

Press release: Priti Patel urges end to conflict and man-made famine in South Sudan

This follows an official declaration of famine in some parts of South Sudan in February, in areas which have seen some of the most intense fighting between Government and opposition forces and restrictions on access for humanitarian organisations. With 100,000 people in Unity state at risk of starvation and a million more on the brink, this is the first declaration of famine anywhere in the world for six years.

The Development Secretary told President Kiir of South Sudan that the fighting that was causing the famine – and which has killed tens of thousands of civilians – had to stop and that “conflict could not build the country”. Ms Patel, the first Cabinet Minister to visit the country since South Sudan’s independence ceremony in 2011, also made clear that it was abhorrent that those that the people of South Sudan should be able to look to for protection were also perpetrating human rights abuses that included murder and rape.

During a visit to Leer in northern South Sudan, Ms Patel saw first-hand the impact of the famine. She met families that had lost loved ones and were now relying on life-saving support of UK aid, which is providing food, water and medical supplies to millions in need in the country. She also met church leaders in the country who she argued would be key to securing a lasting peace in the country.

Ms Patel met South Sudanese refugees at Imvepi reception centre and Bidibidi refugee settlement in Yumbe, close to Uganda’s border with South Sudan, which is welcoming in thousands of people a day fleeing violence and famine. There she saw the thousands of people who were arriving from across the border with nothing more than what they could carry and the support UK aid was providing.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

“The situation in South Sudan is catastrophic and unbearable. We cannot let food be used as a weapon of war nor can we tolerate attacks on aid workers, who are selflessly trying to deliver lifesaving food, water and medicine.

“The Government of South Sudan and all parties to the conflict must stop the barbaric violence and let aid get through to those in desperate need – this is the only way we can end the suffering of millions of innocent people and stop children dying.

“UK aid is saving lives in South Sudan by delivering urgently needed food, water and medicine. The international community now needs to step up alongside Global Britain to stop famine spreading in South Sudan and help support stability in the region.

“Hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese now call Uganda home and many have faced unimaginable horrors in getting here. We cannot undo the harm that has been done to them, but thanks to UK aid, refugees reaching Uganda are receiving shelter, food, medical care, a measure of safety and the hope for a future.

“This support is helping people who have lost everything stay in the region close to home, so they are not forced to make perilous journeys in search for a better life. This is in everyone’s interest.”

During her three day visit to South Sudan and Uganda, the International Development Secretary saw how UK leadership and support is delivering urgently needed food for people in Leer where over a third of the population have insufficient food and have been surviving by desperate measures, including eating grass and seeds. She also visited a UK aid supported hospital in Juba, South Sudan’s capital, treating malnourished children and met with British troops who are supporting the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

In the whole of South Sudan, almost 5 million face the daily threat of going without enough food and water and 3 million people have been forced from their homes because of ruthless violence and widespread rape.

This is the biggest refugee movement in Central Africa since the 1994 Rwandan genocide and Uganda is now the largest refugee hosting nation in Africa with more than 1,200,000 refugees, of which 834,000 are South Sudanese. Uganda’s Bidibidi refugee settlement recently became the largest refugee hosting centre in the world, with 270,000 refugees despite having opened only less than a year ago.

Uganda has one of the most progressive refugee policies in the world, where refugees are given land, jobs and integrated into communities, giving people fleeing conflict hope for the future.

UK aid has been instrumental in supporting this by rapidly upgrading infrastructure, hospitals and schools on the Ugandan border with South Sudan

as well as delivering emergency food, water, shelter and medicine to respond to the influx in refugees.

[International Development Secretary Priti Patel visited Uganda this week, where violence & conflict has led to over a million people fleeing to neighbouring countries like Uganda](#)

Notes to Editors

- The UK was one of the first major donors to respond to the UN's appeal to South Sudan – pledging in less than 24 hours – and we are leading the way by making sure millions of people in South Sudan get urgently needed food, water and medicine, as well as longer term support to provide much-needed education.
- We are providing £100 million of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan this year. This will provide food for over 500,000 people, safe drinking water for over 300,000 people, emergency health services for over 100,000 people and support for 650,000 people to build their livelihoods.
- The UK has also matched £10 million of the public donations to the DEC's East Africa appeal which together has raised £50 million in three weeks.
- In the last year, UK aid in Uganda has fed 650,000 people, vaccinated 235,000 children, provided healthcare for 65,000, sheltered 181,000, and provided clean water for 40,000 and essential relief items for 64,000.
- Over half a million new refugees arrived in Uganda in 2016, 88% of them from South Sudan – more than crossed the Mediterranean into Europe. Around 2,200 arrive each day. There have been more than 194,000 arrivals since the start of this year.

[Press release: John Millen jailed for 8 months for illegal waste operation](#)

The operator of a waste site in Sittingbourne, Kent has been imprisoned for 8 months for the illegal disposal, sorting and treatment of construction demolition waste.

John Millen, 50, trading as K.M. Millen Grab Hire, received the custodial

sentence today (Wednesday 12 April) at Maidstone Crown Court after pleading guilty to using the Gas Road site for illegal waste transfer activities.

The Environment Agency brought charges against Mr Millen following an investigation in December 2014 which established over 40,000 tonnes of waste had been illegally deposited on the site.

Mr Millen was subsequently provided with clear guidance on the action he was required to take and an Enforcement Notice to clear the waste from the site by the end of March 2015 was issued. However, after the three months had expired it was clear that none of the waste had been removed and he continued to crush, treat and deposit waste.

The activities being undertaken by Mr Millen were in clear breach of environmental legislation and would have required an Environmental Permit. Mr Millen did not apply for an appropriate Environmental Permit and continued to operate, avoiding significant costs to his business.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency said:

Mr Millen was fully aware that he was not allowed to store that amount of waste on the site, but continued to accept more construction and demolition waste whilst ignoring the advice and guidance issued to him by Environment Agency Officers. His actions put the environment at risk.

Waste crime can undermine legitimate businesses, so we work closely with businesses to help them comply with the law. In cases like this, where illegal operations are connected to licensed businesses, we have no hesitation in prosecuting those involved. We want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

Whilst passing sentence, Judge St. John-Stevens said that Mr Millen was the "controlling mind of the business" and he ignored all advice offered from the Environment Agency regarding his business operations