

UN Human Rights Council 41: Syria

Thank you, Mr Pinheiro, Commissioners,

The UK reiterates its support for the important work of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria. We are grateful for the latest update and regret that the human rights situation remains of grave concern.

The UK shares the Commission's concerns about the violations committed in Idlib. It is inexcusable that civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, have been attacked, despite the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs sharing deconfliction information with Russia and other parties. With over 300 killed and 330,000 displaced since the end of April, we agree with the Commission that all sides must end the violence, return to the Sochi ceasefire, and abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We are grateful for the Commission's continued work on the issues of arbitrary arrests and torture – including sexual violence, in detention. We condemn executions and other unexplained deaths in regime detention. We note that arrests of perceived opponents and recent returnees have continued in areas re-taken by the regime. Courageous journalists too continue to be targeted by the regime and extremist groups, both afraid of the truth being told.

Mr Pinheiro, Given reports of numerous medical facilities being targeted in Idlib even after the UN had provided deconfliction information to all parties, will the Commission investigate this? Deliberate attacks on these buildings may amount to war crimes.

Thank you, Mr Vice-President.