

UN Human Rights Council 61: UK Introductory Statement on the draft resolution on Syria

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**UK Introductory Statement on the draft resolution for supporting human rights in Syria.
Delivered by UK Human Rights Ambassador, Eleanor Sanders.**

Thank you, Mr President,

I present the draft resolution “Supporting human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic.”

For fourteen years, this Council stood with the Syrian people as they endured one of the most brutal chapters in modern history.

It was the Commission of Inquiry that ensured the world could not look away. Its independent investigations exposed the truth the regime tried so hard to bury.

Since the fall of the Assad regime, this Council has supported Syria as it enters a chapter we long hoped for, but which seemed distant before December 2024. As we have heard from the Syrian delegation, the new Syrian Government has made a deliberate choice: to confront the past, not conceal it; to embrace responsibility, not repeat denial.

This is reflected in the establishment of National Commissions on Transitional Justice and Missing Persons, and in unprecedented cooperation with OHCHR, Special Procedures, and the Commission of Inquiry — cooperation that was utterly unimaginable fifteen months ago.

Mr President,

Political transitions do not erase the entrenched legacies of atrocity and impunity.

The deeply alarming incidents of violence since December 2024 are a stark reminder of how fragile this moment remains — a reminder that the scars of division, mistrust, and impunity will not heal without unwavering resolve.

The Government’s steps to launch investigations and initiate criminal proceedings are encouraging. As is their acknowledgement that UN assistance remains necessary — not as a substitute for Syrian leadership, but as a partner to ensure truth, justice, and accountability become permanent features of Syria’s future.

The resolution recognises the fundamentally different situation in Syria today. It welcomes the access granted to UN mechanisms — access denied for over a decade. And it reaffirms that accountability for all violations and abuses is not optional; it is the foundation of a stable and rights-respecting Syria.

Above all, this resolution renews the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry — whose independence remains indispensable, and whose close cooperation with the Government marks a profound and unprecedented shift. We have sought to enhance this cooperation through the sharing of Commission’s extensive experience and expertise to strengthen justice, prevent renewed violations,

and drive sustained, measurable improvements in the human rights situation.

I thank all those who have engaged constructively on this resolution. In particular, I welcome once again the Syrian delegation's active and constructive participation and their support of the Core Groups efforts.

Mr President,

Last year this Council adopted this resolution by a landmark consensus. I urge this Council to once again show our unified support for Syria, and for a future radically different from their past.

Thank you.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-61-uk-introductory-statement-on-the-draft-resolution-on-syria>