



Rethink Rebuild Society

A voice of the British Syrian community

Statement

16 March 2018

Chemical Attacks in the UK and Syria: A Threat to Global Humanity

Rethink Rebuild Society (RR) expresses its extreme worry at the apparently increasingly normalised use of chemical weapons around the world. After numerous incidents of chemical attacks in Syria, this phenomenon has now occurred in Britain as a Russian-made nerve agent was used against a former spy and his daughter in Salisbury that has put the lives of civilians in the vicinity at risk.

On Thursday, a [joint statement](#) by the leaders of Britain, Germany, France and the United States mentioned that “any such use by a state party is a clear violation of the chemical weapons convention and a breach of international law”. This phrase has been infamously cited time and time again over the past years with the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria. Yet, [accountability](#) for these attacks has been absent, and its perpetrators have acted and continue to act with impunity.

Voices of condemnation for those previous chemical attacks on civilians have warned of the security threat this holds to the rest of the world. The latest incident in Salisbury comes as a reminder of the urgent need to put an end to such attacks. As Germany’s defence minister points out, this nerve-agent attack in the UK should be understood as [linked](#) to Russia’s alliance with the Assad regime in Syria which has been accused of using chemical weapons against rebels and civilians.

In October last year, the UN Security Council failed to pass a [resolution](#) - due to a Russian veto - that would have extended the investigation of chemical weapons use in Syria through the Joint Investigative Mechanism. International failure to hold perpetrators of chemical weapons accountable has helped normalise the use of such weaponry, and have allowed such an attack to occur on British soil. Other countries are also at risk if such attacks become the norm.

We hope this alarming incident will reinforce the urge to prevent not just the use of chemical weapons, and not only the use of other banned weapons such as cluster munitions and of indiscriminate attacks such as barrel bombs, but all attacks targeting civilians in Syria and elsewhere. The past years have shown how failure to stop ongoing violence in one place will splinter and spread to put the rest of the world in danger. Amidst calls for a ceasefire in Syria including UN resolution 2401, violators of such attacks must be stopped and held accountable.

ENDS

For further information and press enquiries, please contact 07510007187, or email: bilal@rrsoc.org

Rethink Rebuild Society has established itself as a non-profit organisation that acts as an umbrella for the Syrian community in Manchester, and endeavours to clarify the Syrian cause to its audience in the UK and the wider public.