



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Near East Department
Middle East & North Africa Directorate
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Amnesty International Oxford Group

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06 March 2017

Dear Ms Phillips,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February to the Prime Minister about Syria. This has been passed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for a response. The Near East Department of the FCO has been asked to reply.

The Government wholeheartedly shares your concerns. The situation in Syria is a humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Syrian regime and those who support it.

The Amnesty International report that up to 13,000 prisoners have been executed in one prison in Damascus was appalling. The UN Commission of Inquiry has provided evidence of similar atrocities taking place elsewhere in Syria. The Commission of Inquiry has previously stated that the regime has committed crimes against humanity. We strongly condemn the atrocities carried out by the Asad regime, including against political prisoners in Damascus and civilians in Aleppo. We are at the forefront of international action to shine a light on such atrocities and call for those responsible to be held to account. In particular, we have consistently raised at the UN Human Rights Council our concerns about the treatment of those illegally detained by the Syrian regime.

We remain convinced that long-term peace in Syria requires transition away from the Asad regime, and a political settlement which allows Syria to become a stable, peaceful state with an inclusive government with which we can work to tackle Daesh and other extremists.

Whilst doing all we can to support a political settlement, the UK continues to be at the forefront of global efforts to provide humanitarian aid, having committed over £2.3 billion to vulnerable and displaced people inside Syria and to refugees in neighbouring countries.

The UK will continue to do all that we can to ensure that a long-term, lasting solution is found to resolve the current crisis in Syria. And in the meantime, we will maintain all efforts to help those people affected by it.

Yours sincerely,

**On behalf of the
Near East Department**