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Rt Hon William Hague MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
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*Sent via email and post*

23 January 2014

Dear Secretary of State,

As Chairman of the United Nations Association-UK (UNA-UK), I am writing to express the concerns of our members and supporters in the UK over the failure of the UN Security Council to uphold its responsibility to protect civilians in dire need in Syria. Even those who have been core supporters of the UN throughout their lives are deeply disappointed by its inability to take firm action, which has worrying implications for the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle and for the credibility of the Council and the wider UN.

I know how hard you have worked for more positive results, but I felt I had to bring to your attention the growing dismay of many in this country over what they see as the ineffectiveness of the UN. The threat and use of the veto has continuously frustrated HMG's efforts to address the humanitarian situation in Syria and resolve the political crisis. As a result, the horrors experienced by the Syrian people continue unabated and the sole vehicle for authorising robust measures to protect civilians has become paralysed.

Trust in the Council's ability to respond to such crises is dwindling. The UN's standing as the arbiter of legitimacy and the credibility of the Council's permanent members (P5), including the UK, are at risk. Additionally, the Council's commitment to upholding the responsibility to protect principle has been brought into question, undermining the chances of success for this important growing norm.

Our members and supporters believe that the UK should play a lead role in advancing ideas to address this issue. The French recently proposed a 'code of conduct' for voluntary restraint of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. While this idea is not new, it is clearly gaining support and momentum among the non-permanent members of the Council and within the General Assembly. It also carries an immediate appeal to a much wider range of public opinion.

As a former permanent representative to the UN, I understand the difficulties involved in implementing such proposals. The 'code of conduct' will certainly not serve as a

panacea for all the Council's failings. But the P5 need to put more effort into thinking creatively about how to improve the Council's ability to address complex and destructive political crises, and I am not aware of any response yet from the UK to the French ideas.

It would be good to hear where HMG stands on this proposal and what ideas we have for overcoming Council deadlock in cases like that of Syria. I would like to report to UNA-UK's members and supporters that the UK has constructive approaches it is trying to carry forward, and that it intends to uphold its commitment to R2P at the highest levels of diplomacy and in the most difficult situations.

UNA-UK is glad to be working closely with the FCO in a number of areas and we will willingly discuss this important subject in greater depth.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeremy Greenstock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock  
Chairman, UNA-UK