

UN Adopts Russian Statement Condemning Terrorist Oil Sales

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With a statement drafted by Russia, the UN Security Council strongly condemned any sale of oil from Syria or Iraq by terrorist groups and reminded all countries that buying this illegally obtained oil violates UN sanctions.

A presidential statement approved by all 15 council members targets two terrorist groups already subject to UN sanctions: Jabhat al-Nusra, one of the most powerful Syrian rebel groups; and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, which has seized a wide swath of territory in eastern Syria and western Iraq and now calls itself the Islamic State.

It expresses "grave concern" at reports that these two groups have seized oilfields and pipelines in Syria and Iraq and warns that they could face further sanctions.

The Russian-drafted statement expresses concern that oilfields or infrastructure controlled by terrorist organizations "could generate material income for terrorists, which would support their recruitment efforts, including of foreign terrorist fighters, and strengthen their operational capability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks."

The Security Council reminded all countries "that they are required to ensure that their nationals and any persons within their territory not engage in any commercial or financial transactions" with Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State terrorist groups, "notably with respect to oil in Syria and Iraq.

Presidential statements are a step below resolutions and are not legally binding but they do become part of the Security Council's official record and must be approved by all 15 council members.

When the draft resolution was circulated in late June, Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said that with the Islamic State group's advances there is a real prospect of a terrorist state springing up from Syria's second-largest city Aleppo to Iraq's capital Baghdad. He cited many reports of the Islamic State group selling oil from captured fields, and indicated this was taking place in both Syria and Iraq.

The original draft only mentioned oil fields in Syria, a close Russian ally, but Iraq was added during negotiations on the final text.

The presidential statement refers to several previous Security Council resolutions, including one in January reaffirming that all countries are required to prevent the financing of terrorism and one in June on sanctions against al-Qaida.

See also:

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