

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

20 & 23 September 2024

Mr Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported the continued violations and repressions committed against the civilians, including online activists and journalists arbitrarily detained, often incommunicado, for criticizing the Government. Alongside the stalled peace process, other efforts by the international community to bring the fighting to an end are also not meeting with much success. Fighting has intensified along multiple front lines. While people strive to maintain their dignity amidst daily challenges, they are forced to navigate predatory practices by local security forces and factions across the country, ranging from extortion at checkpoints to confiscation of land and properties, and kidnapping or arbitrary detention.

The Chair of the COI affirmed that in recent months the heightened regional tensions stemming from the conflict in Palestine have led to intensified Israeli airstrikes (and last week a raid) targeting Iranian officials and militias across Syria, causing civilian casualties on at least three occasions. Iranian affiliated groups and the US have stepped up attacks on each other in northeast Syria since the start of the Gaza war.

The Syrian Arab Republic (Concerned country) affirmed that the mandates imposed by certain countries without the consent or consultation of the concerned country are tools designed to implement specific agendas that have nothing to do with protecting and promoting human rights. The mandate of the Commission of Inquiry is a flagrant example of this. Principles of impartiality, objectivity, independence, and transparency have been betrayed. No objective observer can ignore the serious professional flaws in its work and reports and its total failure to approach the real challenges facing Syria. The Country affirmed that statements from some Western countries will contain politicization, hypocrisy, and distortion of facts; and not the real danger of terrorist groups nor the violations of human rights and IHL committed by the illegal foreign forces present on Syrian territory. These countries will not condemn themselves by addressing the impacts of UCMs on the humanitarian situation and their violation of the basic rights of the Syrian people. Hence, it questioned the benefit of such interactive dialogue.

In conclusion, Syria, while rejecting the report, renewed its non-recognition of the COI's mandate and the related resolutions. The right path to effectively promote and protect human rights in Syria requires supporting the government's efforts, helping to build its capacities in accordance with its national priorities ending all illegal practices against Syria, and addressing the real challenges and devastating impacts that these practices leave on the Syrian people.

Interactive dialogue

42 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. Thanking the Commission of Inquiry for the report and reiterating their support, **the majority of the countries** called for **accountability and the end of all violations of IHL and all violations and abuses of human rights**. They condemned indiscriminate attacks on civilians including minors, torture and other cruel treatment or punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, looting, and appropriation of civilian property. Syrian refugees need to achieve conditions for safe, voluntary, and dignified returns, added the **EU, Iceland and the Nordic-Baltic countries, Liechtenstein, Brazil, and Malta** remained

alarmed by reports of the acute food insecurity, and water and medical care scarcity faced by the Syrian population.

Israel reported that Syria has become fertile ground for terrorist organizations and a danger for the entire region and beyond. It has become a breeding ground for the spread of terror ideologies, and the trafficking of arms and illegal substances. Terrorism groups supported and financed by the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to inflict terror and threaten the stability of the entire region.

The majority of countries, including Switzerland, Germany, France, Ireland, Japan, Mauritania, Canada, and Qatar called for a ceasefire across Syrian territory in line with Resolution 2254 of the Security Council; as well as for the situation in Syria to be referred to the International Criminal Court. **Egypt** insisted on the importance of undertaking a holistic approach that investigates the root causes and the factors that protect the conflict including the proliferation of terrorists and armed groups which undermine the prospects for the desired political solution.

Iran, Nicaragua, and Cuba categorically rejected the establishment of a monitoring mechanism on Syria. The reports of COI of Syria are considerably one-sided, unfair, and based on invalid information. The Commission of Inquiry imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic is highly politicized, lacks objectivity, and was established without the consent of the concerned state. The misuse of human rights principles is a pretext to justify interference in Syria's internal affairs while undermining its sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, reported **Burundi, Venezuela, Belarus, and Eritrea. Iran, along with Sri Lanka, LAO PDR, Venezuela, the Russian Federation, Cuba, Sudan, Belarus, China, Nicaragua, and DPRK**, stressed the effects of UCMs on the overall capacity of the government in the promotion and protection of human rights.

NGOs condemned the grave violations of human rights and crimes against humanity reported by the COI. Focused on women's rights particularly at risk due to the systematic violence perpetrated by the Syrian regime and non-state parties to the conflict compounded by structural gender-based discrimination. Urging States to address the alarming human rights situation of refugees, reported that they are being forced to return to regime-controlled areas or areas under the control of de facto authorities in Syria which is extremely dangerous for their lives and futures. They encouraged the COI to continue to seek truth and justice and to strengthen measures that protect all civilians, especially religious and ethnic minorities who remain at heightened risk.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (42 country delegations):

European Union, Iceland (on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic States), Lichtenstein, Netherlands, Italy, Israel, Malta, Qatar, Switzerland, Ireland, Jordan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Brazil, Japan, Luxembourg, Sri Lanka, United States of America, Australia, Iraq, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Canada, Belgium, Eritrea, Egypt, UK, Albania, Cuba, Russian Federation, Belarus, Georgia, Mauritania, Venezuela, China, Türkiye, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Greece, Burundi, Sudan, LAO PDR, Germany, France.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (10):

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, Legal Action Worldwide, International Human Rights Council, Ingenieurs du Monde, World Jewish Congress, The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, Every Casualty Worldwide.

To watch the full meeting refer to the UN WEB TV: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).