European External Action Service (EEAS)

HRC 45 - EU Intervention: Interactive Dialogue with Commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

2020-09-22 · Geneva

Madam President,

The European Union welcomes another important report by the Commission of Inquiry.

The EU condemns the persistent, widespread, systematic and serious violations and abuses of human rights and all violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, in particular by the Syrian regime and its allies.

The EU is deeply concerned by the report's findings regarding violations committed by non-state actors, including the Syrian National Army, and calls on all responsible parties to abide by their international humanitarian law and human rights obligations. As noted in the report, insofar as these violations are committed in areas under effective Turkish control, Turkey carries a responsibility to ensure public order and safety.

The report highlights indiscriminate attacks on civilians and a widespread practice of arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, assassinations, torture and ill-treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, and attacks, looting and appropriation of civilian property. Among those most exposed to such violations are women, children, displaced persons and persons with disabilities. All those responsible must be held accountable, including by referring the situation in Syria to the ICC.

The EU continues to voice strong concern about reports of social and demographic engineering in all areas throughout Syria, and mass waves of displacement, inter alia in parts of the Northwest and the Northeast. We recall the need to create conditions for a safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs.

As the largest humanitarian donor, we reiterate the need for safe, full, unhindered and sustained access for humanitarian, protection and human rights organizations, including to places of confinement or detention, as well as cross border support, in line with humanitarian principles. Continued harassment and enforced disappearance of current and former humanitarian workers, activists and other civilians is deeply concerning. We wish to stress firmly that EU sanctions do not hinder the international humanitarian response and do not target the civilian population but only those oppressing the Syrian people.

As the Covid-19 pandemic worsens in Syria, we echo the calls for a complete, immediate and nationwide ceasefire and an end to the targeting of medical facilities, as has been outlined recently by both the Board of Inquiry and the Commission of Inquiry. Ultimately, only a credible sustainable and inclusive political solution based on the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, can bring sustainable peace to Syria.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-geneva/hrc-45-eu-intervention-interactive-dialogue-commission-inquiry-syrian-arab-republic_en