Germany is supporting efforts to investigate war crimes in Syria

2025-01-14

Only a few weeks after the toppling of the brutal Assad regime, shedding light on the most severe violations of human rights in Syria remains key to reconciliation and a new beginning for the country.

To discuss this issue, Minister of State Lindner, Federal Foreign Office Coordinator for Syria, today held a meeting with Robert Petit, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), a

UN

mechanism that already since 2016 has been focusing on the brutal crimes committed in Syria – by gathering evidence, documenting crimes and making evidence available for judicial proceedings.

Germany has been supporting the IIIM since its establishment, and it is not least thanks to the painstaking work of the IIIM that Germany’s justice system has in the past been able to initiate criminal proceedings in Germany against the Assad regime for severe human rights violations, under the principle of universal jurisdiction. The Federal Foreign Office is now making available at short notice 1 million euro in additional support for the work of the IIIM.

In this connection, Minister of State Lindner issued the following statement today:

A few days ago, together with the Foreign Minister, I was in Syria and visited Sednaya Prison in Damascus. With my own eyes, I saw the place where countless people were imprisoned, tortured and murdered by the Assad regime. The IIIM is collecting evidence so that those responsible for these terrible crimes committed against countless Syrians can be held to account. What is clear is that the process of investigating and prosecuting these horrible crimes must be pursued under Syrian leadership.

However, the investigative process will only succeed as a joint effort. Syria’s transitional administration has signalled it is open to cooperating with the IIIM.

Info

The full name of the IIIM is the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

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Source : https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2694390-2694390