European External Action Service (EEAS)

EU Intervention – UN General Assembly 3rd Committee: Interactive dialogue on the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

2023-10-24 · New York · Press and information team of the Delegation to the UN in New York

24 October 2023, New York – European Union Intervention at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee Interactive Dialogue with Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Chair,

I have the pleasure of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The EU strongly supports the inclusion of this Interactive Dialogue in the schedule of the Third Committee.

More than a decade after the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, violence and instability in the country continue to cause the Syrian people enormous suffering and hardship. Long-term consequences persist for the Syrian people and the region, with millions of Syrians still displaced or living as refugees in other countries. We are very concerned about the potential for the current conflict in Gaza to spread to the wider region, including Syria, with consequent negative impacts on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Mr. Chair,

Violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are still being perpetrated by all parties to the conflict . Indiscriminate and direct attacks on civilians and on critical infrastructure still regularly take place. The systematic use of torture and ill-treatment in detention continues. The EU strongly condemns these violations.

We commend and support the Commission’s determination to report on violations committed in all parts of Syria, including in the north east. The Commission of Inquiry plays a unique role in this regard, regardless of where the violation has taken place or who the perpetrator may be.

The EU continues to voice strong concern about reports of social and demographic engineering in all areas throughout Syria. We call upon the Syrian regime to help create the conditions necessary for the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of refugees and internally

displaced persons and to protect those who returned from human rights violations and abuses .

Mr. Chair,

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need to end widespread impunity in Syria. All parties responsible for breaches of international law, wherever they occur, must be held accountable. This includes violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU reiterates its call to have the situation in Syria referred to the International Criminal Court. Accountability and justice for victims is essential for a stable, peaceful Syria, based on a credible, inclusive and viable political solution in accordance with UNSCR 2254.

The EU will continue to support efforts to gather evidence with a view to future legal action, including by the Commission of Inquiry. The Syrian regime must also fully cooperate with the OPCW, including in its investigations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict.

We also welcome the establishment of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria, to clarify the fate of all missing persons in the country.

Mr. Chair,

We wish to recall our support for the UN Special Envoy and our long-standing demand for constructive and meaningful engagement by the Syrian regime and its allies towards the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, to put an end to repression, release detainees, and ultimately find a credible, sustainable and inclusive solution to the conflict. A durable solution to the conflict requires a genuine and inclusive political transition with full, equal and meaningful participation of women in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and with the 2012 Geneva Communiqué.

The Syrian people have suffered enough. And in this context, the international community must not give up on Syria and must continue its efforts for a viable, credible and inclusive political solution in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254. Let me reiterate that the EU remains fully committed in this regard.

I thank you.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-intervention-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-3rd-committee-interactive-dialogue-commission-inquiry-syrian_en