Joint statement of Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding their cooperation in holding Syria to account

2021-03-12

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, and Stef Blok, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, today issued the following statement:

10 years after the protests in Syria and their subsequent violent repression, gross human rights violations persist to this day. Syrians have been tortured, murdered, forcibly disappeared, and subjected to chemical weapon attacks. The Syrian regime has cruelly and systematically repressed and committed crimes against its own population, causing unimaginable suffering. Over the past decade, it is estimated that over 200,000 Syrian civilians have died in the conflict and another 100,000 people are missing. More than six million Syrians, who almost lost everything, are displaced and 5.5 million have fled all over the globe.

In the face of these grave international law violations, Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands will take further steps together to hold Syria to account, including for human rights violations and torture in particular. We will hold the Assad regime accountable for its violations of the UN Convention against Torture and demand justice for the victims of the regime’s horrific crimes.

On 18 September 2020, the Netherlands invoked Syria’s responsibility for human rights violations, specifically holding Syria responsible for torture under the UN Convention against Torture. On 3 March 2021, Canada took the same step.

We reminded Syria of its international obligations to cease the violations and reiterated our calls to end the impunity and uphold justice.

We are committed to making a genuine attempt to resolve our dispute with Syria through negotiations. However, should this not result in a timely resolution of the dispute, we will explore the possibility of joint legal action under the Convention against Torture.

We reaffirm our call to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, and commend efforts towards justice at the international level. We remain committed to upholding

the rules-based international order and call on all States and the international community to support accountability efforts for Syria, including joining our efforts.

Source: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/2021/03/12/joint-statement-of-canada-and-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands-regarding-their-cooperation-in-holding-syria-to-account