European External Action Service (EEAS)

EU General Statement – UN General Assembly 3rd Committee: Human Rights in Syria

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16 November 2022, New York – European Union General Statement after the vote at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee Draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania*, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

The EU is particularly concerned about the increasing violence in Syria, as reported last week.

The EU recalls that any sustainable solution to the conflict requires a genuine political transition in line with UNSCR 2254. The EU reiterates its urgent call on the Syrian regime, its sponsors and all parties to the conflict to engage fully and in good faith in the Syrian-led political process.

The crisis, in which a multitude of state and non-state actors are involved, continues to have profound repercussions for the overall stability of the region. The EU condemns serious breaches of international law, notably by the Syrian regime and its allies, but as well by other parties to the conflict, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We are seriously concerned about reports of social and demographic engineering and mass waves of displacement, committed by all parties to the conflict, including in parts of the northwest and northeast. We stress the recent finding of the CoI that conditions for a safe, voluntary and dignified return are not met.

The EU continues to demand that all parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime, allow safe, full, rapid, unimpeded and sustained access, both cross-line and cross-border. Humanitarian needs increased and will likely continue to increase, especially in light of the food crisis due to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

The EU welcomes the Secretary-General's Report on missing people, which sheds light on the urgent need to address this issue, and to clarify the fate and whereabouts of persons reasonably believed to be missing in Syria. We condemn the consistent and systematic use of arbitrary detention, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, involuntary or enforced disappearance and summary executions by all parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime.

The EU supports the findings and recommendations of the report, as well as holding an Interactive Dialogue before February 2023. The EU will look positively into proposals for support of a new mechanism.

Accountability remains of utmost importance. We reiterate our call for the situation to be referred to the ICC. The EU insists that the Syrian regime must fully cooperate with all investigation and accountability mechanisms.

The EU remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian state. No normalisation, lifting of sanctions or reconstruction will be possible until the Syrian regime engages in a credible sustainable and inclusive a political transition, in the framework of UNSCR 2254.

Thank you.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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