

Statement by Foreign Ministers Steinmeier and Ayrault on the international Human Rights Day and the situation in Aleppo

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Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his French counterpart Jean-Marc Ayrault issued the following statement today (9 December) on the occasion of tomorrow's international Human Rights Day:

Human Rights Day on 10 December calls everyone to stand up for the rights of the Syrian people.

We are deeply concerned about reports indicating that civilians engaged in structures of civil protection and civil administration of Eastern-Aleppo are being arrested, tortured and in some cases killed by elements associated with the regime when trying to leave the city.

Members of organizations such as the White Helmets to whom France and Germany presented this year's Franco-German Prize for Human Rights are putting their lives at risk day by day in order to help others survive. We commend their courage and altruism.

We call on the regime and its supporters to ensure the safe evacuation of those Members of the White Helmets who wish to leave. Civilians should have the possibility for a safe and unhindered passage to flee from the zone of war. There are firm legal obligations under International Humanitarian law to protect civilians in an armed conflict.

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