European External Action Service (EEAS)

EU Statement – UN General Assembly: update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on human rights in Syria

2022-04-07 · New York · Press and information team of the Delegation to the UN in New York

8 April 2022, New York – European Union Statement at the informal General Assembly plenary meeting to hear an interim oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as requested in paragraph 64 of General Assembly resolution 76/228 entitled “Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic”

- Check against delivery -

Mr. President,

Madame High Commissioner,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

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

We welcome today's interim oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the General Assembly on how to bolster efforts, including through existing measures and mechanisms, to determine the fate and whereabouts of missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic, locate and identify human remains and provide support to their families, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/228.

We extend our appreciation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet for her work and the work of her Office in preparing and delivering today’s oral update. We look forward to the written report by the United Nations Secretary-General by mid-2022. The EU will actively contribute to the discussion on how to take forward and implement the forthcoming recommendations.

Mr. President,

Eleven years after the beginning of the conflict, the Syrian people continue to suffer from enormous levels of violence and hardship, and the dire human rights situation in Syria remains extremely concerning. We condemn the consistent and systematic violations and abuses of human rights and the use of arbitrary detention, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, involuntary or enforced disappearance and summary executions, as well as demographic engineering, by all parties to the conflict, first and foremost by the Syrian regime.

The European Union and its Member States attach great importance to the fate of the missing and detained persons in Syria: it is a plight affecting almost every Syrian family.

In this respect, the Commission of Inquiry has presented its latest report on Syria, highlighting the issue of the missing and the especially vast scale of the Syrian regime's severe detention practices, while also shedding light on the responsibilities of all parties to the conflict.

Over 100,000 people have gone missing since 2011. Many of them are believed to be victims of enforced disappearance and to be held in detention by the Syrian regime. Locating and identifying the missing and the release of those arbitrarily detained are a humanitarian imperative. The European Union has and will continue to call on the Syrian regime and the countries with influence for large-scale release of those arbitrarily detained, especially the women and children at the hands of the regime, and for transparent information on the fate of the missing. Determining the fate of the missing is critical for ensuring long-term peace and reconciliation in Syria.

We will continue to support the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), notably in regards to missing persons. We reiterate our support to the work of NGOs in collecting evidence and supporting victims and their families. It is essential that all actors possessing information concerning missing persons, their fate, or their whereabouts, come forward with this information.

Mr. President,

Accountability further remains a fundamental priority for the European Union. We reiterate our call to have the situation in Syria referred to the International Criminal Court. We underscore our full support to the indispensable work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), the Commission of Inquiry for Syria and the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team, as participating member of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

The EU, remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian state and is convinced that accountability and justice for victims is – and will remain – essential for a stable, peaceful Syria, based on a credible, inclusive and viable political solution in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, with the full, equal and

meaningful participation of women, and we provide our support to the efforts of the Special Envoy.

In closing, allow me to draw your attention to the Sixth Brussels Conference on supporting Syria and the region that the EU will host on 10 May, co-chaired with the United Nations. With the organisation of this Conference, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the Syrian people are not forgotten.

Thank you.

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

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-statement-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-update-high-commissioner-human-rights-human-rights-syria_en