

Human Rights Council – 29th session (15 June-3 July 2015)

**Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry
on the Syrian Arab Republic**

Statement by Ireland

23 June 2015

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and adds the following.

Mr President

Ireland thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its work and today's oral update.

We have spoken now in numerous dialogues with the Commission, like others condemning the seemingly endless catalogue of atrocities, expressing shock and outrage, calling for accountability. And outside this Chamber, the catastrophe visited upon the Syrian people continues unabated.

The most recent [February] report of the Commission describes this as a “conflagration of an unparalleled scale and magnitude”, “characterised by a complete lack of adherence to the norms of international law”. The figures speak for themselves. Over two hundred thousand deaths and the staggering fact that half of the country's population, over ten million people, have been displaced. We also note with horror the use of children by various actors in this conflict and the fact that fully half of Syria's children, 2.4 million, are no longer in school – a generation growing up with neither the security nor the education to which they are entitled and without which they will struggle to live full lives.

This conflict has long since ceased to be a struggle between Syrians, but is a confrontation fuelled by a small number of parties outside Syria, whose regional and international ambitions are at stake. The pursuit of influence or prestige which underlies their role is at the cost of unspeakable human suffering. There is no lasting security or diplomatic advantage which can outweigh the destruction of human societies or the ancient heritage which lies within Syria's borders.

We are all obliged under international law to support the ending of this conflict. Our collective security and the safety and stability of the Middle East region will be strengthened by the ending of this inhumane conflict and the eradication of terrorist safe havens. The inalienable rights of the people of Syria demand that we make every effort to bring this conflict to a close immediately.

Ireland calls on all parties with influence with the regime and opposition factions to support every effort to bring about an immediate end to this conflict. We also call on all members of the Security Council to take steps to vigorously uphold international law in Syria and to ensure accountability for crimes committed during this conflict by referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Ireland has donated over €30 million in humanitarian assistance and we have accepted increasing numbers of refugees. We again commend the work of the Commission of Inquiry. We call on all States to support the efforts of Special Envoy de Mistura in seeking to renew negotiations based on the principles of the June 2012 Geneva communiqué, which remains the only viable means for ending this appalling conflict. We reiterate our call on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. And we call on other States to similarly speak plainly on behalf of those men, women and children whose unrelenting suffering is known to us, even though they are nameless in

this Chamber. [Another resolution on the situation in Syria will come before the Council this session. As a first step, we challenge each State in this room to allow its adoption for the first time by consensus.]

And we would like to ask the COI – what concrete action can this Council take to better support your work and increase the chances of a negotiated solution in Syria?

Thank you