

**Special Session on the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the recent situation in Aleppo**

**Statement by Ireland**

**General Debate**

**21 October 2016**

Mr President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU and would like to add the following.

Ireland thanks the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria for his update today.

We welcome the convening of this special session of the Council and take this opportunity to express our grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Syria. The attacks in Aleppo, in particular the ongoing indiscriminate military attacks against a defenceless civilian population and critical civilian infrastructure such as medical, water and rescue facilities are horrific. Ireland fully supports the demands for an immediate end to the targeting of civilians and the denial of access to humanitarian and medical assistance.

The Syrian regime has the primary responsibility for the protection of the Syrian population. It has repeatedly and flagrantly violated its international obligations. Ireland has made clear its demand that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held legally accountable for their crimes.

Ireland condemns the excessive and disproportionate attacks by the regime and its allies. In this regard, we condemn the targeting of a UN humanitarian convoy on 19 September as a clear violation of international law.

An independent enquiry by the Commission of Inquiry into the events in Aleppo to support efforts to ensure that perpetrators of alleged abuses and violations are held accountable is both timely and necessary.

Ireland deplores that a permanent member of the Security Council has chosen on 5 occasions to use its veto to prevent UN action to protect the population of Syria and we repeat our call for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Ireland urges all members of the Human Rights Council to support the draft resolution today.

Thank you.