

Human Rights Council – 25th session (3-28 March 2014)

Statement by Ireland during interactive dialogue with the independent international Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

18 March 2014

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the members of the Commission of Inquiry and thanks the Commission for its latest report to the Council, its seventh, and for the presentation today. We would like to make some remarks in addition to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

As appears clearly from this and earlier reports of the Commission of Inquiry, the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is dire in the extreme. The same can, of course, be said for the humanitarian and security situations. Fear, displacement, hunger, physical and mental suffering are part of daily life for vast numbers of people, as are death, destruction, disappearances and despair.

Ireland commends the members and dedicated staff of the Commission of Inquiry for their assiduous chronicling of the horrors of the ongoing conflict and its consequences, and for the Commission's tireless efforts to bring the reality of the situation before the eyes of the international community. If the Commission's words on the negative consequences of the flow of funds, weapons and fighters into Syria from outside, or on the need for referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court, have often fallen on deaf ears, that is certainly no fault of the Commission's.

The list of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law contained in the Commission's reports is a long one. Unfortunately, with every report it seems only to get longer. It is clearer than ever that no military solution to the conflict is possible, and that only a negotiated political solution which respects the wishes of all Syrians can bring it to an end. We urge all parties to put the interests of

the country and its people above their own political or personal interests, and to return to the negotiating table with a real spirit of compromise. Every day that is lost to the search for a comprehensive solution to the conflict serves only to cause more suffering to the Syrian people and, in all probability, to place a solution further away, rather than bring it closer.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the members of the Commission of Inquiry the following questions:

What actions can be taken by the parties, pending a comprehensive solution, to minimise the suffering of the civilian population? If a nationwide ceasefire is not achievable, can local ceasefires with humanitarian access be sustainable?

I thank you, Mr. President.