

Statement on the Situation of Civilian Detainees in Syria

The Syrian regime has systematically used arbitrary detention and torture to target civilians and put them beyond the protection of the law. The deterioration of the rule of law and failure of judicial institutions resulted in similar practices committed by non-state actors who claim to oppose the Syrian regime. The hostility of the Syrian government continued despite several resolutions by the Human Rights Council and Security Council in a clear determination to degrade the international human rights system.

This unimaginable suffering continues under total impunity and mainly targets human rights defenders, relief workers and peaceful activists who are either silenced in detention or forced into exile leaving the society to be architected by violence where civilians, particularly women, have very little rights or influence.

We call the Human Rights Council being the highest UN body responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights to move beyond condemnation and reporting and take concrete steps to save the lives of tens of thousands of Syrian detainees who are being tortured as I read this statement.

The majority of the council's member states have agreed with the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry regarding detention and had a consensus on condemning torture of children. States must work together to find concrete and immediate solutions to these horrific violations.

We call the Council and member states to act up to their responsibility of protecting civilians by deploying humanitarian observers to monitor the human rights situation and ensure that the Syrian government and non-state actors immediately release all arbitrarily held detainees and allow independent international observers, including the Commission of Inquiry and ICRC personnel, inside Syria's detention facilities to monitor releases and conditions of confinement.

As the Security Council had repeatedly failed to protect civilians and maintain peace and security in Syria, we request that the Human Rights Council calls the UN General Assembly to put Resolution 377 into practice and immediately act to protect civilians. Meanwhile, the Council should continue to stress that humanitarian aid, though of utmost importance, is not nearly adequate as a measure of addressing the conflict and does not take the grave ongoing abuses into consideration.

The failure to act up to our undisputed knowledge of the cruel and inhumane practices against detainees in Syria is a defeat of our collective humanity and will charge us all of complicity through silence.

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