



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK



Building the foundation for justice in Syria

Thursday, 21 September 2017, 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters (conference room 3)

Opening remarks:

H.E. Ms. Aurelia Frick, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Principality of Liechtenstein

H.E. Mr. Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar

Panelists:

Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria

Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary-General, Amnesty International

Mr. Raed Al Saleh, Head of the White Helmets

(Speakers from floor)

Concluding remarks by the Ministers of Qatar and Liechtenstein

Purpose of the meeting:

The International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations through resolution 71/248, in response to the reports of mass atrocities in the country and the lack of any meaningful action in the Security Council to ensure accountability for these crimes. The creation of the Mechanism is thus a decisive step forward in providing justice for the crimes committed in Syria by securing and consolidating evidence and preparing it for criminal trials. In his most recent report on the IIIM (A/71/755/Add.1), the Secretary-General reiterated his call on Member States to cooperate fully with the Mechanism and in particular to provide it with any information and documentation they may possess. In this regard, the Secretary-General calls on States to ensure that they have the necessary legal basis and procedures in place to cooperate with the IIIM.

States are encouraged to speak about their national efforts to address the impunity gap in Syria and highlight their ongoing work aimed at cooperating with the IIIM. The event also provides an opportunity for States to announce their financial support for the Mechanism. A chairs' summary will be prepared for the participants.

Background:

The armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has been characterized by systematic violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the Human Rights Council, has reported on these crimes, and civil society organizations have collected extensive information and evidence. The primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute these crimes remains with the Syrian judiciary which has, however, not fulfilled its obligation in this respect, with a resulting culture of impunity leading to the commission of additional crimes. Efforts in the Security Council to ensure individual criminal accountability for the crimes committed in Syria have been blocked, resulting in inaction in the Council.

On 21 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted with an overwhelming majority resolution A/RES/71/248, which established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. It has a mandate to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of such crimes and prepare files in order to facilitate and expedite criminal proceedings in tribunals or courts that have or may in the future have jurisdiction over these crimes. The Mechanism is, during its initial phase, voluntarily funded. 38 States have so far contributed a total of USD 11 million to the annual budget of USD 13 million.

Format:

After the presentations by the panelists, the floor will be opened to all invited delegations and civil society representatives wishing to take the floor. To reserve a place on the informal speaking list, as well as for any further questions, please contact: Mr. Jörn Eiermann, (t) +1 212 599 0220 ext. 227, joern.eiermann@nyc.llv.li