



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16 February 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that I will convene an informal meeting of the plenary of the General Assembly on **Tuesday, 2 March 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall** of the UN Headquarters. The meeting will allow a high-level panel to brief the General Assembly pursuant to [A/RES/74/169](#), operative paragraph 37, in which the General Assembly,

“Urgently request[ed] the convening of a high-level panel discussion, funded by voluntary contributions, led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, the Commission of Inquiry and Syrian civil society to brief the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and encourages United Nations monitoring and reporting to help this panel to further document violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, to provide recommendations to facilitate improvements in civilian protection and accountability measures, and to feature witness testimony of Syrian human rights defenders and other Syrian voices through appropriate and safe means”.

In addition to briefing on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic the panel will focus on:

- (i) violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, in particular arbitrary detention, torture, the missing and disappeared, with a focus on women, peace and security; and,
- (ii) recommendations to facilitate improvements in civilian protection and accountability measures.

The high-level panel will be **moderated by Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York**. Ms. Brands Kehris will also present OHCHR's role in documentation, accountability, and engagement with key counterparts including the United Nations, humanitarian partners and accountability mechanisms such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI), the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), the Syrian Government, and civil society.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United
Nations New York

The high-level panel will be comprised of the following six panelists from the COI and civil society:

- Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair, COI
- Karen Koning AbuZayd, Commissioner, COI
- Hanny Megally, Commissioner, COI
- Mazen Darwish, President, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression;
- Sabah Hallaq, Syrian League for Citizenship
- Wafa Moustafa, Families for Freedom.

The meeting will be open and webcast on UN Web TV with interpretation in all official languages. Each panelist will have up to 7 minutes to deliver his/her remarks. The floor will then be open for up to 3-minute interventions and/or questions.

Please note that there will be no pre-established list of speakers for this meeting. For planning purposes only, delegations are encouraged to **register their interest to speak by 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, 26 February 2021** via e-mail to Mr. Igor Bondiuk (igor.bondiuk@un.org), Human Rights Adviser, copying Ms. Hila Wesa (wesa@un.org), Team Leader for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. **Civil society representatives interested in submitting questions to the high-level panel are requested to do so by 5:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday, 24 February 2021**, via e-mail to Ms. Giorgia Passarelli (passarellig@un.org), Human Rights Officer at OHCHR. The moderator will select some of the questions for the panelists to answer during the discussion.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR