



POSTAL ADDRESS-ADRESSE POSTALE: UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. 10017
CABLE ADDRESS -ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE: UNATIONS NEWYORK

New York, 10 July 2017

Dear Secretary-General,

I thank you for your letter of 3 July 2017 conveying your decision to appoint me as Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (the Mechanism).

On the eve of taking up my new functions, I feel both proud and humbled that you have chosen me to lead an institution which I hope will become a milestone in the fight against impunity for the horrific crimes committed against the Syrian people. I thank you for the trust you are placing in me and commit to exercising my mandate and discharging my functions in full impartiality and independence. The importance and difficulty of the task awaiting me as Head of the Mechanism motivates me to give the best of my integrity, skills and energy to efficiently fulfill the mandate of the Mechanism.

I take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the tremendous support I have received in the last two years in my position as the Ombudsperson for the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. My successor will not have an easy task. Your staff has done its best to put in place informal arrangements which go a long way in guaranteeing the independence of the Office of the Ombudsperson. However, in the last two years, I have observed an increasing intrusion of the Committee in a sensitive area for the fairness to petitioners of the Ombudsperson's process. I have witnessed a set-back imposed by the Committee concerning the right of petitioners to receive substantive reasons when they are retained on the sanctions list as a result of the Ombudsperson's recommendation. In my opinion, this situation also affects the general credibility of the Ombudsperson mechanism. Such practice lends support to those who consider that, short of a judicial mechanism, full fairness and transparency cannot be guaranteed.

Finally I wish to reassure you that I am putting in place transitional measures to minimize the disruption to the Office of the Ombudsperson ensuing from my departure. However, these measures cannot replace a fully functioning Ombudsperson and I hope that my successor will be able to take up his or her functions very soon.

Please accept, Secretary-General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Marchi-Uhel', written over a horizontal line.

Catherine Marchi-Uhel
Ombudsperson

Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York