



**CAIRO INSTITUTE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**  
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme  
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

**UN Human Rights Council: 21<sup>st</sup> session**  
**Oral intervention: Item 4 – ID on report of COI on Syria**  
**Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)**  
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The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Syrian Organization for Human Rights (Sawasyah) welcome the report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria and the recommendations therein. We further call for the mandate of the commission to be extended, and for the commission to be allowed access into Syria and surrounding countries, with the purpose of collecting further evidence, in order to ensure that individuals responsible for alleged crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law be held accountable.

After 18 months of crisis in Syria, the political manner in which governments have dealt with the situation has contributed to the emergence of a dire humanitarian situation that continues to spread days after day within Syria and into surrounding countries. We fear that the rapid militarization of what has now turned into an armed conflict, the increasing presence unidentified armed groups, refugees and internally displaced persons jeopardizes peace and security in Syria and in the whole region for many years.

Until now, the international community continues to fail to protect the civilian population from brutal abuses and witnesses hundreds of innocent Syrian citizens brutally murdered on a daily basis, as well as despicable abuses which have become customary. Since the beginning of the crisis, civil society organizations have called on this Council to transmit all evidence gathered by the COI to the Security Council and explicitly and strongly call on the Security Council to request the ICC to start investigations into War Crimes and Crimes against humanity in Syria. We reiterate this call again today.

The COI should also carry out a special inquiry into massacres and other international crimes that were recently committed in the city of Daraya, a situation that illustrates the dramatically increasing levels of violence against unarmed civilians. Members in the Council, including amongst others the United States should reconsider their objections to the ability of the Human Rights Council to call on the Security Council to activate the ICC.

Moreover, we are highly disappointed to find the COI itself has refrained from directly acknowledging the need for the ICC to be activated by the Security Council in the report it has submitted. We believe the COI has a duty to recommend the most appropriate means to ensure justice and accountability for ongoing human rights violations in Syria in a direct and unambiguous manner.

Impunity lies at the heart of what is occurring in Syria at the moment. Accountability for grave crimes is the only path that will ensure a sustainable peace and spare Syria and the region a dark future.