



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 - 55th Session

Item 4 – Interactive Dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Oral Intervention

19 March 2024

Delivered by: Bassal Alahmad

Syria: The parties to the conflict took advantage of a lack of sustained attention to the situation in the country to commit more violations

Thank you, Mr. President,

CIHRS, in partnership with Syrians for Truth and Justice, welcomes the report of the International Commission of Inquiry submitted to this session of the Council. We express our deep concern about the escalation of hostilities across Syria, and support the Commission's demand for an urgent ceasefire.

Mr. President,

As the Syrian conflict nears its 13th year, Syria has become a land of impunity. The various parties to the conflict have taken advantage of a lack of sustained attention on the situation in Syria to commit further violations that may amount to war crimes, as highlighted by the Commission.

This includes indiscriminate attacks by the Syrian government in the north-western territories that have caused multiple civilian deaths and injuries; deliberate Turkish airstrikes on energy infrastructure that have denied over a million people access to water and electricity. Such attacks constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

We condemn all crimes committed by all parties and declare our full solidarity with victims throughout Syria and in neighboring countries, where Syrian refugees face forced deportations and the arbitrary arrest of activists. We call on authorities in these countries, especially Lebanon and Turkey, to respect their obligations concerning prohibitions on “non-refoulement.”

Finally, we call on the international community to adopt a more inclusive approach to justice and accountability, and we call on European war crimes units to expand the scope of their structural investigations to include those occurring across occupied territories in northern Syria.

Thank you, Mr. President,