

PRESS RELEASE

**G7 ministers must tackle
Russian belligerence and
Syria together if G7 ministers
are to achieve peace and
security**

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, April 20, 2018

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



The war in Syria and increased Russian belligerence are two of the greatest threats to international peace and security, and are highly interlinked, a global coalition of organisations including Avaaz, the White Helmets and the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies said today. In advance of a major foreign ministers' summit happening in Toronto this weekend, the organisations called on the Governments of the G7 countries to develop a more robust and coherent response to both – and how they might use the upcoming World Cup in Russia for political leverage.

On April 22 in Toronto the G7 foreign ministers will meet their international counterparts under the theme of 'Building a more Peaceful and Secure World'. The coalition urged ministers to use the summit to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to deliver a nationwide cessation of hostilities in Syria, increased humanitarian access, a revitalized peace process and accountability for gross violations of international humanitarian law.

“For seven years the Syrian government has committed mass atrocities with impunity,” Dr Simon Adams of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect said. “The world needs the G7 to develop a more coordinated and consistent strategy for defending international norms and laws. Syria must not be allowed to become the graveyard of the global principles of human rights and humanitarianism.”

Since late February, President Assad's onslaught on the Damascus suburb of Eastern Ghouta, backed by Russia, has killed 1600 civilians, left over 5000 wounded and 130,000 internally displaced. Meanwhile, US Congressional and UK Parliamentarian inquiries have shown that the Kremlin is subverting the democratic processes of G7 nations, conducting misinformation campaigns to sow division and discord, and even attempting assassinations on foreign soil.

“For Russia, the World Cup is a 'tournament of dreams' but in Syria, there is no cause to dream,” said Fadel Abdul Ghany, Chairperson of the Syrian Network for Human Rights. “President Putin should not be allowed to use the World Cup to whitewash his record of



wreaking carnage in Syria and sowing division everywhere else. The World Cup must be seized as an opportunity to secure progress for Syria.”

Kyle Matthews, Executive Director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, said: “Russia’s appalling behaviour must not be rewarded by the sight of G7 leaders forming a chorus of cheerleaders at the opening ceremony of the World Cup. By threatening to withhold the government’s representation from the World Cup opening ceremony or by making clear that leaders will speak publicly about Russia’s conduct in Syria, the G7 foreign ministers should make it clear that there is a price to pay.”

WE’RE CALLING ON THE G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS TO:

MAKE CLEAR COMMITMENTS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

for gross violations of international law and guarantees for an inclusive political process, which ensures full and meaningful participation of women at the table.

PUBLICLY SUPPORT THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS’

call to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and provide increased financial support for the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM).

COMMIT THAT NO RECONSTRUCTION FUNDING WILL BE PROVIDED

for Syria in the absence of a credible political agreement.

NOTE THE RISING THREATS TO THE RIGHTS OF DISPLACED SYRIANS

from forced return to the denial of access to their own land and to commit to increased support for refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.





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