



Statement

Syrian Network for Human Rights Is a Primary Source in the Latest European Parliament Resolution

We Welcome This Resolution and Hope It Will Be a Step Towards a Seriously Active European Role in Achieving a Political Solution Towards Democracy on Equal Terms with the European Union States

Coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria, the European Parliament adopted a resolution by a majority of votes on March 11, 2021, in which it noted the gravity and the magnitude of human rights violations in Syria perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including killing, detention, enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence, rape, displacement and ethnic cleansing, describing the situation in Syria as a “disastrous humanitarian crisis.”

The resolution was based mainly on:

1. Relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.
2. Reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI).
3. Data from the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), from which 10 statistics were referred to in five places in the report.
4. The latest statement from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The resolution condemned all atrocities and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and reminded the international community of the gravity and the magnitude of human rights violations in Syria perpetrated by different parties to the conflict, as well as emphasizing the Syrian regime's overwhelming responsibility for its decision to meet peaceful protests from their first moments with brutal repressive practices, including killings, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture of detainees, sexual violence, and other atrocities, and noted that the regime is responsible for nearly 88% of all civilian killings, and nearly 99% of those tortured to death, who number nearly 15,000, according to the SNHR's data.

The resolution noted that Russian airstrikes killed about 6,900 civilians, targeting independent media centers, hospitals, and Syrian Civil Defense units, and denounced Russia's attempts to tarnish the image of the White Helmets in Western media through an aggressive and sustained social media disinformation campaign.

The resolution referred to the roles of Russia and Iran in backing the Syrian regime's all-out repression of its civilian population, and their takeover of Syria's political process and economic resources, adding that Russia, Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah group should withdraw their forces from the Syrian territories, where they have been operating outside any UN mandate.

The resolution addressed the role of many actors in the Syrian conflict; amongst the most prominent recommendations it made are:

- Calling on the Syrian regime to immediately release the 130 000 political prisoners unjustly detained, including women, men and children, the majority of whom have been forcibly disappeared. In this regard, members of the European Parliament urged the EU and its Member States to facilitate the creation of an independent mechanism with an international mandate to locate the missing or their remains, including those found in mass graves.
- Emphasizing that the upcoming 2021 Syrian Presidential elections lack any form of credibility in the eyes of the international community in the current context, condemning the visits of MEPs to the Syrian regime, and affirming that the European Parliament opposes any normalization of diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime so long as there is no fundamental progress in regard to the political process.
- Noting that Syria is still unsafe for the return of refugees, and calling on the European Union States to refrain from the forcible return of Syrian refugees or asylum seekers.
- Asserting that the persons responsible for core international crimes must be duly prosecuted, including by EU Member States, in the absence of other international or national processes of transitional justice, and emphasizing the key importance of resolving the issue of those detained and disappeared as a fundamental part of any transitional process with the aim of achieving peace.
- Proposing that the International Criminal Court (ICC) should remain the primary source of jurisdiction for international justice for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression; the lack of accountability provides a breeding ground for further atrocities and compounds the suffering of the victims, the resolution noted, insisting, therefore, on the need to hold all perpetrators to account.

- Stressing the need for accountability in Syria, and warning that impunity allows continuing perpetration of more crimes. The resolution welcomed European efforts in this regard, especially those led by the Netherlands to launch legal proceedings against Syria at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its violation of the UN Convention against Torture.
- Calling on the European Commission to present an EU action plan on impunity, with a specific chapter on Syria, and calling on the EU to launch a designated European fund for victims of crimes against humanity in Syria.
- Calling on EU Member States to request the suspension of Syria's membership to the OPCW at the upcoming spring 2021 OPCW conference for falsifying evidence of the use of chemical weapons, and repeatedly using them against its own people.
- Calling on the EU Member States to maintain sanctions on individuals and entities involved in the repression in Syria, and urged the EU and its Member States to renew and expand the list of those subjected to targeted sanctions under the new EU Global Human Rights Sanction Regime.
- The resolution further called on the High Representative of the European Union and Vice President of the Commission, Mr. Borrell, to develop a robust human rights due diligence policy for future rebuilding interventions in close cooperation with Syrian civil society.

In conclusion

The Syrian Network for Human Rights welcomes this resolution issued by the European Parliament, and we stress the need to implement the recommendations therein, and for it to be a serious step towards a more effective role for all European Union States enabling them to contribute more extensively to finding an urgent political solution that ends the Syrian disaster and moves Syria to a civilized, democratic state on equal terms with the European Union States.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights stresses its willingness to place its database and the extensive information it contains, compiled over the past ten years at the service of showing the true extent of human rights violations perpetrated against the Syrian citizens and state. We do so in the hope that this will provide a service in documenting the history and chronicling events in Syria objectively, helping to thwart the vigorous and relentless efforts of the perpetrators of violations, foremost among which are the Syrian regime, Russia and Iran, from establishing affiliated organizations which aim to change or 'rewrite' the true history of events, and to deny or attempt to justify heinous violations. We also stress that we will continue to make the greatest possible effort to document violations and incidents objectively and credibly to achieve the goal of protecting civilians in Syria, holding all perpetrators accountable, and helping to start the country along the path of positive change towards democracy, in keeping with our motto: "**No Justice without Accountability**".

To read the text of the European Parliament's resolution, please visit [the link](#).

