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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

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[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/78/481/Add.3, para. 33)*]

78/222. Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ and relevant international human rights treaties, including the International Covenants on Human Rights,²

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and to the principles of the Charter, and strongly demanding that the Syrian regime meet its responsibility to protect the Syrian population and to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction,

Deploring the fact that March 2023 marked 12 years since the peaceful uprising and its brutal repression that led to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, which has had and continues to have a devastating impact on civilians, including through grave violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law,

Strongly condemning the grave human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the indiscriminate killing and deliberate targeting of civilians, including humanitarian workers, including those involving the continued indiscriminate use of heavy weapons and aerial bombardments, which has caused more than 500,000 fatalities, including the killing of 30,034 children, the continued widespread and systematic gross violations, as well as abuses, of human rights and violations of

¹ Resolution 217 A (III).

² Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.



international humanitarian law, including by the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the use of chemical weapons, including sarin and chlorine gas, and sulfur mustard, which are prohibited under international law, and acts of violence by the Syrian regime that foment sectarian tensions within the Syrian population,

Welcoming the work of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, noting its findings in its three reports to date, including most recently its report of January 2023 which found reasonable grounds to believe that the chemical weapons attack in Douma on 7 April 2018 was perpetrated by the Syrian Arab Republic and found that Russian forces were co-located at the base in the Syrian Arab Republic from which the Syrian regime launched the attack on Douma, and anticipating the publication of its reports into further chemical weapons attacks, including those perpetrated in Mari‘ on 1 September 2015,

Condemning in the strongest possible terms the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the instances independently attributed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons–United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, noting that the Joint Investigative Mechanism determined that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces had been responsible for attacks that released toxic substances in 2014 and 2015 and that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da’esh) had used sulfur mustard in 2015 and 2016, and further concluded in October 2017 that the Syrian Arab Air Force had been responsible for the use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in Khan Shaykhun, and noting also that the Investigation and Identification Team concluded in April 2020 that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Air Force had carried out three chemical weapons attacks in Ltamenah in March 2017 and further concluded in April 2021 that there were reasonable grounds to believe the Syrian Air Force had carried out a chemical weapons attack in Saraqib in February 2018 and further concluded in January 2023 that there were reasonable grounds to believe the Syrian Arab Air Force had carried out a chemical weapons attack in Douma on 7 April 2018 and found that Russian forces were co-located at the base in the Syrian Arab Republic from which the Syrian regime launched the attack on Douma,

Noting with grave concern that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a report of June 2022, has identified 306,887 civilians by full name, together with an established date of death and location, who were killed in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic between March 2011 and March 2022 and that, of those identified, 26,727 were women and 27,126 were children, recalling also that the list compiled by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights indicates a minimum verifiable number and is certainly an undercount of the actual number of killings,

Recalling its demand that all parties, especially the Syrian regime, take all appropriate steps to protect civilians, including members of ethnic and religious communities,

Reiterating that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, under the auspices of the United Nations, that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) of 18 December 2015, with a view to establishing credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance, with the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of all women and youth at all levels, underlining the importance of prevention of the efforts to foment sectarian tension among Syrians, recognizing the importance of the Constitutional Committee

and the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, reaffirming in this regard the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, stressing the importance of their full, equal and meaningful participation and involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, and recognizing the work carried out by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria to that end,

Expressing grave concern that the cross-border authorizations in Security Council resolutions [2642 \(2022\)](#) of 12 July 2022 and [2672 \(2023\)](#) of 9 January 2023 have not yet been extended, noting the statement of 13 July by the Syrian Arab Republic that acknowledged the need for cross-border humanitarian assistance, and taking further note of the decisions by the Syrian Arab Republic to consent to the use of the Bab al-Hawa crossing for six months, and the Bab al-Salamah and Ra'i crossings for an additional three months, by the United Nations and its specialized agencies for the purpose of delivering humanitarian assistance, but remaining concerned by the limited timeframe, which is insufficient, and emphasizing the need for all actors to ensure such access is sustained and unhindered as requested by humanitarian agencies, and for United Nations humanitarian operations in the country to remain guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence,

Reiterating the urgent need to strengthen efforts to address the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including through protection of civilians and safe, full, immediate, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic to all civilians in need, including through the continuation of cross-border assistance, as recalled in Security Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#) of 22 February 2014, [2165 \(2014\)](#) of 14 July 2014, [2191 \(2014\)](#) of 17 December 2014, [2258 \(2015\)](#) of 22 December 2015, [2286 \(2016\)](#) of 3 May 2016, [2393 \(2017\)](#) of 19 December 2017, [2401 \(2018\)](#) of 24 February 2018, [2449 \(2018\)](#) of 13 December 2018, [2504 \(2020\)](#) of 10 January 2020, [2533 \(2020\)](#) of 11 July 2020, [2585 \(2021\)](#) of 9 July 2021, [2642 \(2022\)](#) and [2672 \(2023\)](#),

Welcoming the efforts of the Special Envoy to advance United Nations efforts to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), recalling the importance of advancing the work of the Constitutional Committee and achieving tangible results, and in that regard urging all parties, particularly the Syrian regime, to engage meaningfully in the political process under the auspices of the Special Envoy and his office in Geneva, including the work of the Constitutional Committee, and to convene the next round of the Constitutional Committee as soon as possible under the auspices of the United Nations, and underlining that a political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic requires full implementation of all aspects of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), including the holding of free and fair elections, under the supervision of the United Nations, to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including displaced persons, refugees and members of the diaspora, eligible to participate, as well as the establishment of a neutral and safe environment, noting that the 2021 presidential elections held in the Syrian Arab Republic were neither free, fair, nor consistent with the political process called for by the Council in its resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#),

Reconfirming its endorsement of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012,³ endorsing the joint statement on the outcome of the multilateral talks on Syria held in Vienna of 30 October 2015 and the statement of the International Syria Support Group of 14 November 2015 (the Vienna statements) in pursuit of the full implementation

³ Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), annex II.

of the Geneva communiqué, facilitated by the Special Envoy, as the basis for a Syrian-led- and Syrian-owned political transition in order to end the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and stressing that the Syrian people will decide the future of the Syrian Arab Republic,

Welcoming the call by the Special Envoy for a complete, immediate and nationwide ceasefire throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, as endorsed by the Security Council in its resolutions [2532 \(2020\)](#) of 1 July 2020 and [2565 \(2021\)](#) of 26 February 2021, while noting with extreme concern the recent rise in hostilities in different parts of the country, and reaffirming that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, while continuing to support legitimate counter-terrorism operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Hay'a Tahrir al-Sham (formerly known as the Nusrah Front), and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida or ISIL, and other terrorist groups, which have been designated by the Security Council,

Reaffirming the importance of the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda of the Security Council, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) of 31 October 2000, and its nine subsequent resolutions, in this regard, and welcoming the inclusion of civil society in the political process, in particular through the Civil Society Support Room and Syrian Women's Advisory Board,

Recognizing that women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the crisis and conflict, and continue to be among the worst affected and on multiple grounds, including given that many women have become the main or sole breadwinners for their families, a situation that may be exacerbated by the enforced disappearance of their loved ones, while facing increased caring responsibilities and alarming levels of violence,

Noting with deep concern the culture of persistent and pervasive impunity from within the Syrian regime for the most serious violations of international law and violations and abuses of human rights law committed during the present conflict, some of which rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which has provided a fertile ground for further violations and abuses,

Emphasizing the importance of accountability for the most serious crimes in violation of international law committed during the conflict for ensuring sustainable peace,

Recalling all relevant resolutions on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the protection of United Nations personnel, including its resolution [73/137](#) of 14 December 2018, as well as Security Council resolutions on the protection of humanitarian personnel, including resolutions [2175 \(2014\)](#) of 29 August 2014 and [2286 \(2016\)](#) of 3 May 2016, the relevant statements by the President of the Security Council referring to the specific obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect, in situations of armed conflict, all medical personnel and humanitarian workers exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport, equipment, hospitals and other medical facilities, and to ensure that the wounded and sick receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required, and condemning attacks against hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, including makeshift hospitals, as well as attacks against medical personnel and humanitarian workers that are in violation of international humanitarian law,

Expressing grave concern at the continued indiscriminate use of force by the Syrian regime against civilians, which continues to cause immense human suffering and fomented the spread of violent extremism and violent extremist groups and which demonstrates the continuing failure of the Syrian regime to protect the population and implement the relevant resolutions and decisions of United Nations bodies and has created a safe haven and operating environment for perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity,

Expressing grave concern also at the remaining presence of violent extremism and violent extremist groups, terrorists and terrorist groups, and strongly condemning all violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic by any party to the conflict, in particular Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups, armed groups and non-State actors, and also the Syrian regime and its allies,

Expressing support for the work carried out by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, welcoming its reports, strongly condemning the continued lack of cooperation by the Syrian regime with the Commission of Inquiry, reiterating its decision to transmit the reports of the Commission of Inquiry to the Security Council, expressing its appreciation to the Commission of Inquiry for its briefings to members of the Security Council, and requesting that the Commission of Inquiry continue to brief the General Assembly and members of the Security Council,

Welcoming the reports for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 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 2011⁴ and their consideration by the General Assembly, noting with serious concern the observation of the Commission of Inquiry that, since March 2011, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian regime has conducted widespread and systemic attacks against the civilian population amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including targeted attacks on protected persons and objects, including medical facilities, and personnel and transport and blocked humanitarian convoys, as well as widespread and systematic patterns of enforced disappearances and torture in detention, arbitrary detentions, summary executions and other violations and abuses, and underscoring the need for those allegations to be examined and evidence to be collected and made available for future accountability efforts,

Expressing grave concern about all persons missing in the Syrian Arab Republic, including those subject to abductions, enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention, first and foremost by the Syrian regime, noting the comments of the Commission of Inquiry and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria that at least 100,000 people are estimated to be missing in the Syrian Arab Republic, and recalling Human Rights Council resolutions [45/3](#) of 6 October 2020,⁵ [48/15](#) of 8 October 2021⁶ and [51/26](#) of 7 October 2022,⁷ and Security Council resolutions [2254 \(2015\)](#), [2139 \(2014\)](#) and [2191 \(2014\)](#),

Welcoming the establishment by the General Assembly in its resolution [77/301](#) of 29 June 2023 of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons in the Syrian Arab

⁴ [A/73/295](#), [A/73/741](#), [A/74/313](#), [A/74/699](#), [A/75/311](#), [A/75/743](#), [A/76/690](#) and [A/77/751](#).

⁵ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fifth Session, Supplement No. 53A (A/75/53/Add.1)*, chap. III.

⁶ Ibid., *Seventy-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/76/53)*, chap. VII, sect. A.

⁷ Ibid., *Seventy-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/77/53)*, chap. III, sect. A.

Republic and to provide adequate support to victims, survivors and the families of those missing, in close cooperation and complementarity with all relevant actors, and underscoring the resolution's call for all States as well as parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with this Institution, which is humanitarian in nature, and also underscoring the resolution's call upon other relevant actors, including international institutions, victims' associations, and civil society organizations, to cooperate with the Institution,

Strongly condemning the reported killing of detainees in Syrian military intelligence facilities and the widespread practice of enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and the use of sexual and gender-based violence and torture in detention centres referred to in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry, including, but not limited to, Branch 215, Branch 227, Branch 235, Branch 251, the Air Force Intelligence Investigation Branch at Mazzah military airport and Saydnaya prison, including the practice of mass hangings by the regime, as well as the killing of detainees at military hospitals, including Tishrin and Harasta hospitals,

Noting that, consistent with Security Council resolution [2474 \(2019\)](#), States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of all individuals within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction and that parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible measures to account for persons reported missing as a result of hostilities and to put in place appropriate channels enabling response and communication with families on the search process,

Urging the Syrian regime to provide families with the remains of their relatives whose fate has been disclosed, including those who have been summarily executed, to take all appropriate measures immediately to protect the lives and rights of all persons currently detained or unaccounted for, and to clarify the fate of those who remain missing or are still in custody, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2474 \(2019\)](#), many of whom still remain in detention and are highly vulnerable to disease and illness owing to overcrowded conditions and pre-existing health issues, such as widespread malnutrition and tuberculosis, despite calls from the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy and the international community for the large-scale release of detainees in the Syrian Arab Republic to mitigate the spread of the virus,

Urging also the Syrian authorities to share further information regarding the 344,684 detained and convicted persons who they have claimed have benefited from "amnesty laws", noting with concern reports that over 135,000 remain under arbitrary arrest, further noting the use of the Counter-terrorism Court to detain perceived political opposition figures and dissidents and confiscate their properties, and calling upon all parties to the conflict, but particularly the Syrian authorities, to cease all forms of abuse of detainees, including but not limited to torture of detainees in Syrian military intelligence facilities, physical abuses, mistreatment and sexual and gender-based violence, and to grant appropriate international monitoring bodies and medical services immediate access, without undue restrictions, to detainees and detention facilities, including all Syrian military facilities referred to in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry, highlighting the recent recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in this regard,

Noting the unique impact that enforced disappearances and missing and arbitrarily detained persons has had on Syrian families, in particular women and children,

Recalling the statements made by the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council that crimes against humanity and war crimes are likely to have been committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, noting the repeated encouragement by the High Commissioner for the Security Council to refer the situation to the International

Criminal Court, and regretting that a draft resolution⁸ was not adopted notwithstanding broad support from Member States,

Recalling also the report of 6 April 2020 of the United Nations Board of Inquiry⁹ into strikes that damaged and destroyed health-care facilities in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, including sites whose coordinates had been recorded on the United Nations deconfliction list as a step to ensure that they would not be targeted or impacted by violence, and which in most instances examined, concluded that it was “highly probable that the strikes had been carried out by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and/or its allies” and found that health-care services were being provided at the time of some of the strikes and that there were no armed opposition groups in or near the facilities, and calling upon all parties to adhere to and comply with the deconfliction mechanism,

Emphasizing that the humanitarian cross-border mechanism remains an essential and life-saving channel to address the humanitarian needs of a significant portion of the population of the Syrian Arab Republic, which cannot be reached through existing operations within the Syrian Arab Republic, and emphasizing the importance of cross-line operations and that an immediate and significant improvement in cross-line access to all parts of the Syrian Arab Republic and respect for principled humanitarian action are essential to prevent further unnecessary suffering and loss of life,

Recalling its commitment to Security Council resolutions [2170 \(2014\)](#) of 15 August 2014, [2178 \(2014\)](#) of 24 September 2014 and [2253 \(2015\)](#) of 17 December 2015,

Alarmed that, according to the United Nations, an estimated 15.3 million Syrians need humanitarian assistance, and more than half of the population of the Syrian Arab Republic remains displaced from their homes, including 5.3 million refugees living in neighbouring countries and more than 6.8 million internally displaced persons inside the country, of whom women and children comprise more than two thirds, which has resulted in an influx of Syrian refugees into neighbouring countries, other countries in the region and beyond, and alarmed also at the risk the situation presents to regional and international stability,

Calling for the immediate repeal of Law No. 10/2018 and all similar laws, concerned about the Syrian regime’s infringement on the housing, land and property of Syrians, particularly through the dispossession of displaced Syrians’ land and property in the national legislation and similar measures, which have a significant detrimental impact on the rights of Syrians displaced by the conflict to claim their property and to return to their homes in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner when the situation on the ground allows it, and expressing concern about reports of armed groups’ abuses of Syrians’ housing, land and property rights in areas under their control,

Expressing its abhorrence at the death of more than 30,034 children, including 198 reportedly killed owing to torture and other ill treatment, and the many more injured since the beginning of the peaceful protests in March 2011, and at all violations and abuses committed against children, in particular by the Syrian regime, in contravention of applicable international law, including those involving their recruitment, and emphasizing that the Syrian regime and its allies must comply with their applicable international law obligations that are relevant to children, including

⁸ [S/2014/348](#).

⁹ See [S/2020/278](#), annex.

under the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁰ and the Optional Protocols thereto,¹¹

Noting with concern that the Hawl camp currently hosts over 47,000 people, 93 per cent of whom are women and children, and roughly half of whom are children under 12 years of age who live under extremely challenging conditions,

Calling for the implementation of Security Council resolution [2475 \(2019\)](#) of 20 June 2019 on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflict, expressing serious concern regarding the disproportionate impact that armed conflict has on persons with disabilities, including abandonment, violence and lack of access to basic services, stressing the protection and assistance needs of all affected civilian populations, and emphasizing the need to consider the particular needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response in the Syrian conflict,

Expressing its deep appreciation for the significant efforts that have been made by neighbouring countries and other countries in the region to accommodate Syrians, while acknowledging the increasing financial, socioeconomic and political impact of the presence of large-scale refugee and displaced populations in those countries,

Welcoming the efforts of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and all diplomatic efforts, including those of neighbouring countries, to achieve a political solution to the Syrian crisis based on the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria of 30 June 2012 and consistent with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#),

1. *Strongly condemns* the systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic and the indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against the civilian population and against civilian infrastructure, in particular attacks on medical facilities and schools, which continue to claim civilian lives, and demands that all parties comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law as applicable;

2. *Deplores and condemns in the strongest terms* the continued armed violence by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people since the beginning of the peaceful protests in 2011, and demands that the Syrian regime immediately put an end to all attacks against civilians, take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects and meet its responsibilities to protect the Syrian population and immediately implement Security Council resolutions [2254 \(2015\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#) and [2286 \(2016\)](#);

3. *Urges* all Member States to create conditions for continued negotiations for a political solution to the Syrian conflict, under the auspices of the United Nations, to this end recalls the importance of advancing the work of the Constitutional Committee, within the context of the Syrian-led, Syrian-owned and United Nations-facilitated political process, convening the next round of the Constitutional Committee as soon as possible under the auspices of the United Nations and achieving tangible results, and in that regard urges all parties to engage meaningfully in the work of the Constitutional Committee, as well as by working towards the nationwide ceasefire, to enable safe, full, immediate, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access and to lead to the release of those arbitrarily detained and ensure the assessment of the number of people who remain in prisons, consistent with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), as only a durable and inclusive political solution to the conflict can bring

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vols. 2171, 2173 and 2983, No. 27531.

an end to the systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law;

4. *Strongly condemns* the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, demands that all parties desist from any use or preparation of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, expresses its strong conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable, and recalls in this regard decision C-25/DEC.9 of 21 April 2021 of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction;

5. *Welcomes* the work of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is authorized to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, thereby making an important contribution towards the ultimate goal of holding such perpetrators to account;

6. *Demands* that the Syrian regime adhere fully to its international obligations, including the requirement that it declare in full its chemical weapons programme, with special emphasis on the need for the Syrian Arab Republic to urgently resolve the verified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies pertaining to its declaration in respect of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and to eliminate its chemical weapons programme in its entirety,¹² and further requests that the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons consider additional procedures for stringent verification pursuant to article IV, paragraph 8, and article V, paragraph 10, of the Convention, in order to ensure the complete destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and prevent any further use of chemical weapons;

7. *Deplores and condemns in the strongest terms* the continued widespread and systematic gross violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms and all violations of international humanitarian law by the Syrian regime, the government-affiliated militias and those who fight on their behalf, including those deliberately targeting civilians or civilian objects, attacks on schools, hospitals, civilian water stations and places of worship, indiscriminate attacks with heavy weapons, aerial bombardments, cluster munitions, ballistic missiles, barrel bombs, chemical or other weapons and other force targeting civilians, as well as the starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare, massacres, arbitrary executions, extrajudicial killings, the killing of peaceful protesters, human rights defenders and journalists, individuals and members of communities on the basis of their religion or belief, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, forced displacement of members of minority groups and of those opposed to the Syrian regime, unlawful interference with access to medical treatment, failure to respect and protect medical personnel, torture, systematic sexual and gender-based violence, including rape in detention, and ill-treatment, other violations and abuses of human rights, including those of women and children, and violations of international humanitarian law;

8. *Condemns unequivocally* all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers by the Syrian regime, the government-affiliated militias and non-State armed groups, urges all parties to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, and recalls in this regard that journalists and media workers engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered civilians and shall be protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians;

¹² Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), annex I.

9. *Strongly condemns* all violations and abuses of human rights and all violations of international humanitarian law, including the killing and persecution of individuals and members of communities on the basis of their religion or belief, by armed non-State actors, as well as any human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law by non-State armed groups, including Hizbullah and those designated as terrorist groups by the Security Council;

10. *Deplores and strongly condemns* the terrorist acts and violence committed against civilians by ISIL (also known as Da'esh), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly known as the Nusrah Front), Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups, terrorist groups, such as Hurras al-Din, designated by the Security Council and other violent extremist groups and their continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, in particular against the human rights of women and children, and reaffirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality or civilization;

11. *Condemns* the reported forced displacements of the population in the Syrian Arab Republic due to repeated violations of international human rights, including forced displacement of civilians as a result of local truce agreements, as highlighted by the Commission of Inquiry, and the alarming impact thereof on the demography of the country, which amounts to a strategy of radical demographic change initiated by the Syrian regime, its allies and other non-State actors, further expresses deep concern at reports of social and demographic engineering in areas throughout the country, and calls upon all parties concerned to cease immediately all activities related to these actions, including any activities that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, notes that impunity for such crimes is unacceptable, reaffirms that those responsible for such breaches of international law, must be brought to justice, and supports efforts to collect evidence in view of future legal action;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of creating conditions conducive to voluntary, safe, dignified and informed movements of internally displaced persons within the Syrian Arab Republic, and strongly urges all parties to work with the United Nations to ensure that any such movements are in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,¹³ and that displaced persons receive the information they need to make informed and voluntary decisions about their movement and safety, and also calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to create conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified returns;

13. *Reminds* the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of its obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,¹⁴ including its obligation to take effective measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction, and calls upon all States parties to the Convention to comply with any relevant obligations under the Convention, including with respect to the obligation to extradite or prosecute contained in article 7 of the Convention;

14. *Deplores* the non-renewal of the Security Council authorization of cross-border humanitarian assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic, and in particular the veto cast on 11 July 2023 by the Russian Federation, and takes note of the resumption of United Nations life-saving humanitarian deliveries through the Bab al-Hawa crossing as from 19 September, as announced in a statement by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, but remains concerned by the limited timeframe, which is insufficient, and underscores that needs have increased to the highest levels since

¹³ E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

¹⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1465, No. 24841.

2011, with an estimated 15.3 million Syrians in need, according to the United Nations, and that more than 6.9 million people live in areas not under the control of the Syrian regime and 5.3 million require humanitarian assistance in the north-east and north-west, and also considers with great concern the significant effects of the earthquakes February 2023, which disproportionately affected those who are in vulnerable situations, and that cross-border assistance remains an indispensable tool to address the humanitarian needs of the population, including to deliver vaccines and supplies to combat communicable diseases, which cannot be adequately reached through existing operations within the Syrian Arab Republic;

15. *Demands* that the Syrian regime and all other parties to the conflict allow and facilitate safe, full, timely, immediate, unrestricted and sustained humanitarian access, including through the continuation of cross-border assistance;

16. *Supports* the United Nations in its endeavours for the continuation of the monitoring of all humanitarian relief consignments of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic in the future, while underscoring the role of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic in confirming the humanitarian nature of these relief consignments;

17. *Strongly condemns* the persistent and widespread use of sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, such as in government detention centres, including those run by the intelligence agencies, reaffirms that acts of sexual and gender-based violence, when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, can constitute crimes against humanity, and that acts of sexual and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict can constitute war crimes, reaffirms the need to end impunity through the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes under national and international law, stresses the need for the perpetrators of these crimes to be held accountable by national justice systems or, where applicable, international courts and tribunals, notes that such acts may constitute violations of international humanitarian law, violations of international human rights law and abuses of human rights, in this regard expresses deep concern at the prevailing climate of impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, urges all parties to the conflict, especially the Syrian regime, to immediately cease the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence, and urges the Syrian regime to ensure that victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have access to holistic support and are able to seek reparations and redress;

18. *Also strongly condemns* all violations and abuses committed against children in contravention of applicable international law, including those involving their recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and all other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, child, early and forced marriage, abductions, denial of humanitarian access and education for children, and attacks on civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, as well as their arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment and their use as human shields;

19. *Reaffirms* the Syrian regime's responsibility for the systematic use of enforced disappearances, takes note of the assessment of the Commission of Inquiry that the Syrian regime's use of enforced disappearances amounts to a crime against humanity, condemns the targeted disappearances of young men and boys and the exploitation of ceasefires as an opportunity to forcibly recruit and arbitrarily detain them, and demands that the Syrian regime comply with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

20. *Urges* all States as well as all parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with the victim- and survivor-centric Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to help clarify the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons

in the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with their obligations under international law, calls upon other relevant actors, including international institutions and civil society organizations, in particular Syrian civil society organizations, to cooperate with the new institution, recalling the crucial humanitarian imperative of allowing families to know the fate and whereabouts of their missing relatives, consistent with applicable international humanitarian law, and encourages the timely establishment and full functioning of the Institution;

21. *Encourages* all parties to the conflict to enhance their engagement with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria to hasten the release of all arbitrarily detained persons by the Syrian regime and to make progress on the issue of missing persons;

22. *Strongly condemns* all attacks on the wounded and sick and on medical, health and humanitarian personnel, facilities and means of transport and equipment, as well as indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians, civilian objects, schools and water stations, taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic, which may constitute war crimes, as well as the intentional denial of humanitarian assistance to civilians, and demands that the Syrian regime meet its responsibility to protect the Syrian population and act in accordance with its obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law and international humanitarian law;

23. *Also strongly condemns* the targeting of humanitarian workers and persons engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment and hospitals and other medical facilities, which may constitute war crimes, including the attack against the deconflicted Atarib cave hospital on 21 March 2021, the terrorist attack against Al-Shifa' hospital on 12 June 2021 and the attack on emergency first responders in Atarib on 11 July 2023;

24. *Demands* that the Syrian regime cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry, including by granting it immediate, full, safe, unhindered and sustained access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic;

25. *Strongly condemns* the intervention in the Syrian Arab Republic of all foreign terrorist fighters and those foreign organizations and foreign forces fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime, expresses deep concern that their involvement further exacerbates the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the human rights and humanitarian situation, which has a serious negative impact on the region, and further demands that all foreign terrorist fighters, and those who are fighting in support of the Syrian regime, including all militias sponsored by foreign Governments, must immediately withdraw from the Syrian Arab Republic;

26. *Demands* that all parties immediately put an end to all violations of international human rights law, abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, recalls, in particular, the obligation under international humanitarian law to distinguish between civilians and combatants and the prohibition against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, further demands that all parties to the conflict take all appropriate steps to protect civilians, in compliance with international law, including by desisting from attacks directed against civilian objects, such as medical centres, schools and water stations, and refrain from militarizing such facilities, seek to avoid establishing military positions in densely populated areas and enable the evacuation of the wounded and all civilians who wish to leave areas of conflict, including besieged areas, and recalls in this regard that the Syrian regime bears primary responsibility for protecting its population;

27. *Emphasizes* the need for full accountability and justice for crimes involving breaches of international law, in particular of international humanitarian

law and international human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, through fair, transparent and independent investigations and prosecutions at the domestic or international level;

28. *Requests* the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to submit an annual report to the General Assembly, starting at its eightieth session, on the implementation of its mandate while preserving the confidential nature of its substantive work, in time for the annual presentation of the report by the Head of the Mechanism in April at a plenary meeting of the Assembly under the agenda item entitled “Prevention of armed conflict”;

29. *Welcomes* efforts by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the search for missing persons in the Syrian context, and further encourages the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to cooperate with the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to help advance efforts to clarify the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons in the Syrian Arab Republic;

30. *Also welcomes* the victim- and survivor-centred approach practised by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, commends its model of engagement with victim and survivor groups, as well as civil society in general, through bilateral cooperation and regular consultations, and looks forward to the plans of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to adopt a similarly victim- and survivor-centred approach;

31. *Further welcomes* the continued funding for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism through the programme budget, and urges the Secretary-General to include further necessary resources to address the Mechanism’s significantly increased workload since 2020 and ensure the effective discharge of its mandate;

32. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights law are held to account through appropriate, fair and independent domestic or international criminal justice mechanisms, stresses the need to pursue practical steps towards this goal, for that reason encourages the Security Council to take appropriate action to ensure full accountability, noting the important role that the International Criminal Court can play in this regard in accordance with complementarity, and urges the Syrian authorities to share further information regarding reports of extrajudicial executions and other serious violations throughout the country to advance accountability efforts;

33. *Welcomes* progress made on national and international accountability efforts, and in this regard notes the conviction and sentencing in January 2022 by a court in Germany of a former director of the Syrian intelligence service for crimes against humanity as part of a widespread or systematic attack against the civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic, noting that information from the Commission of Inquiry and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism was used as evidence during the investigation and trial, and further welcomes that the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Canada recently initiated legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice to hold the Syrian Arab Republic accountable for torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment of its own people, in breach of its obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and strongly condemns retaliation and reprisals against those who cooperate with relevant mechanisms;

34. *Also welcomes* the efforts by States to investigate conduct in the Syrian Arab Republic and to prosecute crimes within their jurisdiction committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, encourages them to continue to do so and to share relevant information between States in accordance with their national legislation and international law, and also encourages other States to consider doing the same;

35. *Urgently requests* the Commission of Inquiry to present its latest reporting to the General Assembly during an interactive dialogue at its seventy-ninth session on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and encourages United Nations monitoring and reporting to further document violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, to provide recommendations to facilitate improvements in civilian protection and accountability measures, and to feature witness testimony of Syrian human rights defenders, survivors of torture and sexual and gender-based violence, former detainees, and other Syrian voices through appropriate and safe means, and where informed consent has been provided;

36. *Deplores* the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and urges the international community to assume its responsibility for providing urgent financial support to enable the host countries and communities to respond to the growing humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees, while emphasizing the importance of burden- and responsibility-sharing;

37. *Calls upon* all members of the international community, including all donors, to fulfil their previous pledges and continue to provide much-needed support to the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other humanitarian actors to provide humanitarian and medical assistance to the millions of Syrians who are in need, including those displaced both internally and in host countries and communities;

38. *Welcomes* the efforts of those countries outside the region that have put in place measures and policies to assist and host Syrian refugees, encourages them to do more, also encourages other States outside the region to consider implementing similar measures and policies, with a view to providing Syrian refugees with protection and humanitarian assistance, acknowledges the need to improve the conditions on the ground to facilitate the return of refugees in a safe, voluntary, informed and dignified manner to their place of origin or another location of their choice, and takes note of the recent finding of the Commission of Inquiry that the Syrian Arab Republic does not yet offer a safe and stable environment for the sustainable and dignified return of refugees or for the 6.8 million displaced persons inside the country;

39. *Demands* that the Syrian regime and all other parties to the conflict ensure the full, immediate, unimpeded and sustained safe and unhindered access of the United Nations and humanitarian actors, including to besieged and hard-to-reach areas such as Rukban, that the Syrian regime cease to impede the ability of the United Nations and humanitarian actors to move through the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic and beyond, especially in the light of the restricted humanitarian space and worsened humanitarian situation following the failure to reauthorize the Ya'rubiyyah border crossing in Security Council resolutions [2504 \(2020\)](#), [2533 \(2020\)](#), [2585 \(2021\)](#), [2642 \(2022\)](#) and [2672 \(2023\)](#) and to extend for as long as humanitarian needs require the use of the Bab al-Hawa, Bab al-Salamah and Ra'i crossings and that all parties preserve the Fish Khabur border crossing and other crossing points along the Turkish borders with the Syrian Arab Republic, and allow sustained deliveries of humanitarian assistance to persons in need across the Syrian Arab Republic, including through commercial routes, consistent with Security Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2254 \(2015\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2401](#)

(2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021), 2642 (2022) and 2672 (2023);

40. *Strongly condemns* the reported killing of detainees in Syrian military intelligence facilities, and calls upon the Syrian regime to release all unlawfully held detainees, including women, children and the elderly, and to facilitate information about those still in detention as well as those who died while in detention by the Syrian regime, returning their remains, with full transparency regarding what happened to these individuals, and urges the regime to immediately reverse its abhorrent use of mass detentions and torture as means of silencing and repressing political opposition and political activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and other media workers and of depriving Syrian citizens of their rights to freedom of expression and of opinion, both online and offline;

41. *Calls for* the appropriate international monitoring bodies to be granted access to detainees in all prisons and detention centres, including all military facilities referred to in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry;

42. *Demands* that all parties take all appropriate steps to protect civilians and persons hors de combat, including persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and stresses that, in this regard, the primary responsibility to protect the population lies with the Syrian regime;

43. *Strongly condemns* the damage and destruction of the cultural and historical heritage of the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular that of Palmyra and Aleppo, and the organized looting and trafficking of Syrian cultural property, as outlined by the Security Council in its resolutions 2199 (2015) of 12 February 2015 and 2347 (2017) of 24 March 2017, remains alarmed by damage to cultural and historical property that occurred in Aleppo following the earthquakes of February 2023, affirms that attacks and looting intentionally directed against cultural property may amount to war crimes and a serious violation of international humanitarian law, underlines the need to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice, and calls upon the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, within its mandate, to review and closely monitor the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic for the preservation of cultural and historical heritage in the Syrian Arab Republic;

44. *Notes with concern* the significant increase in humanitarian needs throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, compounded by the lack of access to water and electricity, which continues to undermine the stability and security of the whole region, worsening the humanitarian situation and humanitarian actors' ability to respond to humanitarian needs;

45. *Stresses* the situation of particular concern in north-west Syrian Arab Republic, particularly Idlib, strongly condemns the attacks on civilians and first responders and civilian infrastructure where ongoing violence, including air strikes, continues to cause death and injury among civilians and first responders, as well as devastating damage to civilian infrastructure, including health-care and educational facilities, and welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Board of Inquiry mandated to investigate the destruction of and damage to facilities on the United Nations deconfliction list and United Nations-supported facilities;

46. *Expresses deep concern* in particular about violence in the north-west, including air strikes, and the impact on civilians of that violence, stresses the urgent need for the immediate cessation of military hostilities in Idlib and the surrounding areas, for the prioritization of the protection of all civilians, including those displaced, and for full, timely, immediate, unrestricted and safe humanitarian access, including cross-border access, recalls the Additional Protocol to the Memorandum on the Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-escalation Area, signed by the Russian

Federation and Turkey on 5 March 2020, and stresses the importance of continuing work towards preserving calm on the ground and creating the necessary conditions for the safe, dignified and voluntary returns of displaced people;

47. *Calls upon* all Member States, relevant United Nations bodies, international organizations and civil society to coordinate efforts with the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and proactively focus attention on the issue of missing persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including those subjected to enforced disappearance, and recalls the importance of the full and meaningful participation of victims, survivors and their families in such efforts;

48. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic,¹⁵ supports its findings, takes note with appreciation its recommendations, and therefore requests an informal briefing from the Secretary-General before 28 February 2024;

49. *Urges* all parties to the conflict to take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, personnel of the specialized agencies and all other personnel engaged in humanitarian relief activities, including national and locally recruited personnel, as required by international humanitarian law, without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access, stresses the need not to impede or hinder these efforts, recalls that attacks on humanitarian workers may amount to war crimes, and notes in this regard that the Security Council has reaffirmed that it will take further measures in the event of non-compliance with its resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2234 \(2015\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2286 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2401 \(2018\)](#), [2449 \(2018\)](#), [2585 \(2021\)](#) and [2642 \(2022\)](#) by any Syrian party;

50. *Urges* the international community to support the leadership and full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all efforts aimed at finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis, as envisaged by the Security Council in its resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and all subsequent resolutions of the women and peace and security agenda;

51. *Reaffirms* that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, reiterates its commitment to the national unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and urges the parties to the conflict to abstain from actions that may contribute to the continuing deterioration of the human rights, security and humanitarian situation, in order to reach a genuine political transition, based on the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria of 30 June 2012, consistent with Security Council resolutions [2254 \(2015\)](#), [2268 \(2016\)](#) and [2585 \(2021\)](#), that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for a civil, democratic and pluralistic State, with the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of all women at all levels, where there is no room for sectarianism or discrimination on ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender or any other grounds, and where all persons receive equal protection, regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity, and further demands that all parties work urgently towards the comprehensive implementation of the final communiqué, including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring the continuity of governmental institutions.

50th plenary meeting
19 December 2023

¹⁵ [A/76/890](#).