



Human Rights Council**Fifty-seventh session**

9 September–11 October 2024

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council
on 10 October 2024****57/21. Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic**

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions on the Syrian Arab Republic,

Reaffirming also its strong commitment to full respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic,

Condemning the grave situation of human rights across the Syrian Arab Republic, and demanding that the Syrian regime meet its responsibility to protect the Syrian population and to respect and protect the human rights of all persons within its jurisdiction, including persons in detention and their families,

Welcoming the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution S-17/1 of 23 August 2011, and that 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 2011,¹ noting with appreciation the work of the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry, and recalling the statements made by the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that crimes against humanity and war crimes are likely to have been committed in the Syrian Arab Republic,

Noting with grave concern the findings of the Commission of Inquiry, including its most recent report,² in which it documented continued violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including attacks against civilians and civilian objects, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and deaths in detention due to ill-treatment or lack of access to medical care and arbitrary arrests on return to the Syrian Arab Republic,

Strongly condemning the fact that a devastatingly high number of children in the Syrian Arab Republic continue to be subjected to grave violations and abuses of human rights law, as well as violations of international humanitarian law, as identified by the Secretary-General,³ and that the scale and recurrent nature of such violations and abuses will affect

¹ See A/78/772 and A/HRC/57/86.

² A/HRC/57/86.

³ See A/78/842-S/2024/384.



generations to come, and noting with deep regret the finding of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that almost one in 13 of those who have died as a result of the conflict was a child,⁴

Condemning the significant number of reports of abuses against children by the Syrian regime, including the targeting and torturing of children to punish them for their familial relationships, real or assumed, with political dissidents, members of the armed opposition and activist groups and the use of detained children to compel their parents and other relatives associated with opposition fighters to surrender, and noting that more than 5,000 children in the Syrian Arab Republic remain unjustly detained or disappeared by parties to the conflict,

Affirming the human right of everyone to education, which is enshrined in, inter alia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other relevant international instruments,

Strongly condemning the recurring attacks on students, teachers, schools and universities, the military use of educational facilities and the increasing trend of recruitment and use of children in the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, which impair the continued realization of the right to education in conflict situations and cause severe and long-lasting harm to individuals and societies, while noting in this context the efforts aimed at facilitating the continuation of education in the Syrian Arab Republic,

Noting with deep concern the findings of the Commission of Inquiry that children have suffered sexual and gender-based violence since the early days of the Syrian conflict, including children as young as 11 years old who were subjected to a range of forms of sexual and gender-based violence in regime detention facilities, and recognizing the profound effect that the conflict has had on children, and in this regard, noting the Commission of Inquiry's paper of 2020 entitled "'They have erased the dreams of my children': children's rights in the Syrian Arab Republic",⁵

Recognizing the need for a coordinated and effective survivor-centred approach in preventing and responding to such violence and abuse and for immediate and non-discriminatory access to services, such as healthcare and psychosocial support, to be provided to all survivors of such crimes, and underlining the need for effective and gender-sensitive measures to be in place to ensure the safety, confidentiality, privacy and broader protection of survivors and witnesses of sexual violence in accountability processes,

Reiterating its deep concern at the situation of the tens of thousands of individuals, including children, who have been forcibly disappeared and those missing and detained in the Syrian Arab Republic, first and foremost by the Syrian regime, calling in this regard for the cooperation of all parties with the newly established Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, demanding that all parties immediately cease the practices of involuntary or enforced disappearance and kidnapping, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2474 (2019) of 11 June 2019 and applicable international law, and demanding also that all parties to the conflict cease the ongoing use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and sexual and gender-based violence in places of detention and all related violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law,

Recalling the earthquakes of February 2023, reiterating its deepest condolences for the 8.8 million people in the Syrian Arab Republic affected by them, and noting the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation since then, affecting populations already in vulnerable situations,

⁴ See A/HRC/50/68.

⁵ Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/documentation>.

Noting the impact of the earthquakes on the 2.4 million children who were already out of school prior to the earthquakes and others at greater risk of human rights violations and abuses, in addition to the existing crisis, and how their suffering has been heightened by impediments to the rapid, safe, unhindered and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to all people in need in the Syrian Arab Republic through all available modalities,

Noting also that since 2011, the Syrian Arab Republic has received 54 recommendations and observations concerning the right to education from human rights mechanisms, namely the universal periodic review, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Noting with concern the findings of the Commission of Inquiry that, throughout the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, women and girls have been targeted on the basis of their gender and that, according to its 2023 paper entitled “Gendered impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on women and girls”, further harm has been inflicted through obstacles to their exercise of their rights, including their rights to property and inheritance entitlements and to freedom of expression, a lack of justice and redress for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and legal barriers to the conferral of nationality to children for access to education and to other rights,

Expressing concern that girls have been uniquely affected by the conflict, as it has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and increased their vulnerability and caregiving responsibilities, further limiting their access to education and reducing their future power in decision-making processes relating to their own lives and their communities,

Noting with concern the situation of internally displaced persons, and of persons in camps, as described by the Commission of Inquiry, the majority of whom are women and children, who are especially vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, which includes killings, physical, verbal and sexual abuse, neglect, movement restrictions, child, early and forced marriage and child labour and trafficking, and who often lack access to food, water and sanitation, education, a livelihood and healthcare, including mental healthcare,

1. *Expresses grave concern* that the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic continues and that the conflict has been marked by consistent patterns of gross violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, strongly condemns all violations and abuses and the ongoing human rights situation, demands that all parties to the conflict immediately comply with their respective obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and emphasizes the need to ensure that all those responsible for such violations and abuses are held to account;

2. *Reaffirms* the importance of establishing appropriate processes and mechanisms to achieve justice, reconciliation, truth and accountability for violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, and reparations and effective remedies for victims and survivors, and the prerequisite role that accountability and transitional justice mechanisms, with the meaningful participation of victims, can play in any effort to bring about a sustainable, inclusive and peaceful conclusion to the conflict, welcomes in this regard victim-led initiatives on truth and justice, also welcomes the significant endeavours of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and 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 2011, while noting the important role that the International Criminal Court can play in this regard, and demands that the Syrian authorities cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and the Commission of Inquiry by granting the Commission immediate, full and unfettered access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic;

3. *Deeply deplores* the fact that the civilian population continues to bear the brunt of the conflict and that civilians, and objects indispensable to their survival, continue to be the target of deliberate and indiscriminate attacks, including with prohibited weapons and

munitions, by all parties to the conflict, notably by the Syrian regime and its State and non-State allies;

4. *Expresses grave concern* in this regard at the continued and escalating violence, including air strikes and the use of cluster munitions, and the resulting civilian deaths and casualties, including children, and the destruction and military use of civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities and schools, and cultural property across the Syrian Arab Republic, demands that all parties comply immediately with their respective obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and emphasizes the need to ensure that all those responsible for violations and abuses are held to account and that civilians are protected;

5. *Condemns* the attacks against civilian objects, such as schools, as reported by the Commission of Inquiry,⁶ and the negative effects of the ongoing conflict on the rights and welfare of children, including their access to schools, medical care and healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance and decries the violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, as applicable;

6. *Recalls* the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention on the Rights of the Child to respect and ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child, and its obligation under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, and calls upon all parties, first and foremost the Syrian regime, to take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by the conflict;

7. *Urges* all parties to immediately respect and protect the full enjoyment by children of all their human rights, and to prevent, and to protect children from, all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, child, early and forced marriage, denial of humanitarian access, exploitation, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and violations and abuses, including the recruitment and use of children in the armed conflict, in contravention of international law, and attacks on schools, in contravention of international law;

8. *Also urges* all parties to ensure that children affected by the conflict receive appropriate assistance, including access to identity documentation, education, justice and healthcare, including the provision of mental health and psychosocial support, strongly condemns the use of schools for military purposes, in contravention of international law, and encourages the Commission of Inquiry to continue its investigation and documentation of violations and abuses of the rights of the child;

9. *Expresses grave concern* at the dire humanitarian conditions across the Syrian Arab Republic, demands that all parties to the conflict maintain rapid, unhindered, safe and sustainable humanitarian access and ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches its intended recipients, also demands in this regard that all parties consent to humanitarian operations into the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, through all modalities, including cross-border and cross-line modalities, and notes that humanitarian aid must be delivered on the basis of need and guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;

10. *Recalls* the findings of the Commission of Inquiry and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that the Syrian Arab Republic does not yet offer a safe and stable environment for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees or for those displaced inside the country, and calls upon the Syrian authorities to protect returning refugees and internally displaced persons from human rights violations and abuses and to help to create the conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees;

11. *Strongly reiterates* the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire, the call of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria for a complete, immediate and nationwide ceasefire throughout the Syrian Arab Republic and the recommendation made by

⁶ A/HRC/39/65.

the Commission of Inquiry to immediately institute a permanent ceasefire in order to provide the space for Syrian-led negotiations, including the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women, and for the restoration of respect for human rights, and urges all parties to the conflict to direct their efforts to enact such a ceasefire;

12. *Strongly supports* the efforts of the Special Envoy to make progress in the political process and the work of the Constitutional Committee to advance further aspects of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) of 18 December 2015, deplores the stalling of efforts to engage meaningfully and in good faith with the political process, and urges all parties to the conflict, and the Syrian authorities in particular, to advance all aspects of resolution 2254 (2015);

13. *Supports* efforts to ensure that children and youth in the Syrian Arab Republic are represented and empowered to play a meaningful role in the political process and that a key component of any political settlement is access to justice for child victims of abuses and violations;

14. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*48th meeting
10 October 2024*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 26 to 4, with 17 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Paraguay, Qatar, Romania, United States of America

Against:

Burundi, China, Cuba, Eritrea

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam]
