

27th Session of the Human Rights Council – 16th September 2014

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria

Intervention by the Czech Republic

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic supports the intervention delivered on behalf of the European Union earlier in this debate.

We join others in thanking the Commission of Inquiry for its update on human rights situation in Syria. The information that has been collected clearly illustrates that the human rights situation has further deteriorated. In the light of the dramatic human rights situation, the Czech Republic calls on the Syrian authorities to grant the Commission of Inquiry immediate and unrestricted access to the country.

We witness widespread and systematic violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed by the government forces and non-state armed groups, most notably by members of the so called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic strongly condemns the extensive and systematic attacks against civilians, women and children as well as against ethnic, religious and other vulnerable groups including the Christian communities. We are appalled by systematically committed murders, torture, rape and sexual violence, hostage-taking and other serious human rights violations. Evidence is presented that the crimes committed by both, government forces and non-state armed groups, amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We are also deeply worried by indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombardment of towns and villages, including hospitals and other protected objects, which have led to the increased number of civilian casualties. In this respect, we condemn the alleged use of illegal and indiscriminate weaponry, such as chlorine gas, by the Government forces, which constitutes a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and is a war crime.

We call for an immediate end of violence; those responsible have to be held accountable and brought to justice. The message for the perpetrators must be unambiguous as there is no room for impunity for the atrocities repeatedly reported by the Commission of Inquiry. In this context, the respective important role the International Criminal Court can play needs to be reiterated.

We continue to believe that achieving a stable peace in this war-torn country and ensuring the much needed safety and legitimate rights of all Syrian citizens, has to be based on a

negotiated political settlement between the Syrian government and the democratic opposition. The Czech Republic calls with a great urgency on all sides of the conflict in Syria to stop violent actions and to cooperate with the new UN Special Envoy in finding a lasting solution.

Thank you, Mr. President.