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Urgent debate on the situation in Eastern Ghouta in the Syrian Arab Republic

2 March 2018

Intervention by H.E. Mr. Peter Matt
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Mr. President,

The current situation in Eastern Ghouta is appalling – it mirrors the playbook of the assault on Aleppo late 2016. Less than a week ago, we were gratified to see that the Security Council was – finally – able to agree on resolution 2401 to help relieve this suffering. However, there is no genuine will among conflict parties to implement this resolution, and some have even reinterpreted its terms to serve their national military interests.

Mr. President,

As one of 115 supporters of the ACT Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against mass atrocity crimes, we welcome the Security Council's demand for a ceasefire. However, this immediate ceasefire across the country has never been implemented [as senior UN officials have made abundantly clear]. While we welcome today's focus on Eastern Ghouta, we also

believe that the wider framework of SCR 2401 must not be ignored and should be reflected in the text put forward for adoption.

The siege of Eastern Ghouta cannot come as a surprise and to some extent is the direct result of our collective inaction. The conclusion drawn by the Syrian Arab Republic and its allies was clear: Systematic violations of international humanitarian law are a winning strategy. In this situation, it is of paramount importance to ensure accountability for these and possible future crimes. The one glimmer of hope is the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and we call on all States to fully cooperate with it. We are grateful that the importance of the work of the IIIM is reflected in the resolution before us today.

Thank you!