



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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NEW YORK, 22 FEBRUARY 2016

*AS DELIVERED*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY – INFORMAL MEETING

**BRIEFING BY THE CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON THE  
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**STATEMENT BY MR. STEFAN BARRIGA, MINISTER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES A.I.**

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for organizing this overdue briefing. We very much appreciate the work of the Commissioners, and we think it is important that the General Assembly be regularly updated on the work of the Commission. This is not just an issue for the Security Council and not just an issue for the big powers or any countries involved in the conflict. By now, this conflict has become a matter of direct relevance to all UN Member States. From our perspective as a small state, we value in particular what has been said by the Commissioners before, namely that the Commission serves as a voice for the victims, and that you bring those voices to us. We particularly appreciate that in looking at the events on the ground, you take the lens of the victims: It does not matter to a civilian killed whether that event can be labelled as terrorism, war crimes or something else, what matters is the crime committed.

We fail to understand why even today, the Commission is being accused of doing its work outside the country, when it is not allowed inside the country. We have no reason to doubt that you are exercising your functions expertly, with impartiality and in an evenhanded manner. In fact you are even remarkably diplomatic in your work. From our perspective, a government

should be held to a higher standard when it comes to the implementation of obligations under International law. If we cannot trust your judgement, than whose judgement and whose information are we supposed to trust?

It is important that the atrocities be properly documented and the Commission is the only body of international standing that does so at the moment. These reports are an indispensable record. We thank you in particular for sharing important information with criminal justice authorities in various countries.

Nevertheless, there has been a serious lack of progress on the justice dimension. The veto of referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court in the Security Council is just one example of this. The justice dimension has also been neglected in the peace talks taking place so far. The level and scale of atrocities committed make it clear to us that they cannot just be swept under the rug and that justice must be an integral part of the peace talks.

Thank you very much.