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Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

19 September 2016

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

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein thanks the Commission for its professionalism in continuing its work in a climate that is characterized by a lack of responsiveness from intergovernmental bodies. The situation in Syria is a well-documented human rights crisis at a massive scale, with atrocity crimes being committed as a matter of course by the conflict parties. We are appalled by the COI's report on the surge of attacks against medical workers and medical facilities in the last months and that even away from the battlefield, civilians continue to be suffering from gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Liechtenstein condemns the deliberate targeting of medical workers and facilities as well as civilians in Syria in the strongest possible terms.

Mr. President

The response from the Security Council, the GA and also HRC has been deeply disappointing and very ineffective. We routinely adopt resolutions that have proven in the past to have no effect. A special focus should be given to accountability. We continue to call on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, as the ICC is a Court of last resort, it will only be able to prosecute those most responsible. A silver lining are efforts underway in some countries to prosecute perpetrators under the principle of universal jurisdiction. We have organized an event on the topic with like-minded States earlier this year in at the UN in New York and will be planning to do the same next year here in Geneva. It is key in our view that in the pursuit of a political solution an accountability dimension is included as there will be no peace in Syria without justice.

In light of undertakings by some States to prosecute perpetrators, we would like to ask how does the Commission work with States who are carrying out judicial proceedings against individuals who have committed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Syria?

Thank you, Mr. President