



Human Rights Council
56th Session

ID on oral update of COI on the Syrian Arab Republic

Commissioners,

In its recent report, the Commission highlighted the violence that continues to take place across Syria. Closing the accountability gap in Syria is as critical now as it was at the outset of the crisis. Throughout the conflict, government and pro-government forces have engaged in grave violations of human rights and international crimes. In fact, there is credible evidence to suggest that all 11 crimes against humanity enumerated in the Rome Statute have been perpetrated by government actors.

For over thirteen years, the international criminal justice system has not protected or achieved accountability for Syrian victims of crimes against humanity. Impunity persists for high-level Syrian officials responsible for these crimes, despite minor victories convicting low-level officials in domestic courts under the principle of universal jurisdiction. The International Criminal Court, which has the legal mandate to prosecute high-level officials, has been viewed as inaccessible for Syrian victims due to the incorrect belief that the Court lacks territorial jurisdiction.

The precedent established in Myanmar/Bangladesh gives the ICC jurisdiction to investigate crimes against Syrian victims. Like the Rohingya, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were deported. They were forced from Syria to Jordan by a coercive campaign waged by the Syrian government comprised of indiscriminate targeting and killing, arbitrary detention and torture, siege warfare, and destruction of property. At least part of these crimes took place on the territory of Jordan, a State Party to the Rome Statute.

Member States that are party to the Rome Statute are in a unique position to deliver justice for Syrian victims. They can do this by using the power given to them under Article 14 of the Rome Statute to make referrals to the ICC, just like they did in relation to Venezuela, Ukraine, and Israel/Gaza. Syrian victims of international crimes have clearly voiced their wish for the Syrian government's crimes to be investigated and the perpetrators to be brought to justice. They should not be forgotten in the global fight against impunity. It is time for States Parties to act on Syria.

Legal Action Worldwide calls on Member States to

❖ Promptly refer the situation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan/Syrian Arab Republic to the ICC under Article 14 of the Rome Statute, either individually or as part of a group referral.

Thank you.