



Amnesty International Public Statement

**UN Human Rights Council Thirty-fourth session,
27 February - 24 March 2017**

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

14 March 2017

AI Index: MDE 24/5868/2017

Thank you Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the report of the Commission of Inquiry and echoes the Commission's grave concerns regarding the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the gross abuses and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict.

Over the last year Amnesty International has published research findings revealing widespread and systematic use of torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance by government forces that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.¹ In February 2017, Amnesty International released a report documenting the Syrian government's secret campaign of mass hangings and extermination at Saydnaya Military Prison. The report estimates that between 5,000 and 13,000 people were extrajudicially executed in mass hangings at Saydnaya between September 2011 and December 2015.² Most of those executed are civilians who include humanitarian workers, journalists, political activists, and human right defenders.

Mr. President,

Amnesty International considers it imperative that the Commission be granted full and unhindered access to Syria, and able to carry out unannounced visits to all detention facilities to investigate and monitor conditions. We also call on the Commission to undertake a special investigation into extrajudicial executions at Saydnaya Military Prison.

Amnesty International calls on the government of Syria to put an end to extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and torture and other ill-treatment and make clear to all government forces and militias that such violations will not be tolerated.

¹ Amnesty International, *It breaks the human: Torture, disease and death in Syria's prisons* (Index: MDE 24/4508/2016), 18 August 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/4508/2016/en/>.

² Amnesty International, *Human Slaughterhouse: Mass Hangings and Extermination at Saydnaya Prison, Syria* (Index: MDE 24/5415/2017), 7 February 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/5415/2017/en/>

It also urges the International Syria Support Group, particularly Russia and the United States, to call on all parties to the conflict to provide immediate and unhindered access for recognized international detention monitors to all persons deprived of their liberty, without prior notification. They should also urge all parties to unconditionally release all those who are currently arbitrarily detained for their human rights, humanitarian and media work.

Finally Mr. President,

Amnesty International urges all Member States to ensure that national asylum systems identify survivors of torture among Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers and provide the psycho-social support necessary for their rehabilitation.

Thank you Mr. President.