



## **Statement of Ireland**

### **40th session of the Human Rights Council**

*Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*

**12 March 2019**

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Mr President,

Ireland thanks the members of the Commission for their report.

Ireland is deeply concerned by the scale of enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and deaths in custody in Government-controlled areas. Ireland is also deeply concerned about the widespread abductions for ransom, pillaging and extortion by non-state armed groups in other areas, as detailed in this report. Ireland condemns in the strongest terms the continued attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the documented attacks on medical facilities by pro-Government forces. Ireland calls on all parties to the fighting in Syria to take the necessary steps to ensure that civilians are not harmed. Ireland repeats its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and respect for de-escalation agreements.

Ireland calls on all parties in Syria to ensure full humanitarian access to all Syrians in need. In particular, Ireland is deeply concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation in Rukban, and condemns the routine, arbitrary obstruction of aid deliveries to this area by the Syrian authorities.

The security vacuum has led to impunity for these and other serious human rights abuses. Ireland underlines the need for accountability for crimes committed. Ireland supports the work of the UN's International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes in Syria. We also repeat our call for the situation in Syria to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

With regard to displaced persons and Syrian refugees seeking to return home, Ireland stresses that all returns must be voluntary, and supports the Commission's recommendations, including the need for an end to hostilities, unimpeded humanitarian access, and guarantees that returnees will not face ill-treatment.

Thank you.