

Statement on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria

WILPF

WILPF commends the Commission of Inquiry's efforts to bring to light the blatant human rights violations and abuses in Aleppo. We remain alarmed by the patterns explicitly addressed in the Commission's report highlighting how the Syrian government and its supporters deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure in Aleppo, namely hospitals, markets, residential buildings and bakeries, in order to compel armed groups to surrender.

Yet again, the Commission's findings reflect how civilians and particularly women and children were the most disproportionately affected by the brutality of violence, including that exercised by anti-government armed groups. The Commission reports, for example, that "throughout Aleppo, bombardments of residential buildings disproportionately affected those who typically spent more time at home: women and children."

Mr. Pinheiro, the Commission's report tackles a myriad of blatant violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law in Aleppo between July and December 2016. However, it lacks a gender perspective on the particular impact of the documented violations on women, and does not include gender disaggregated data. In addition, the report does not refer to sexual and gender-based violence crimes, not even once, despite local sources suggesting that threats and/or actual exercise of rape, sexual violence and sexual harassment were utilised in Aleppo, particularly by government and pro-government forces for persecution and retaliation purposes. Did the Commission receive such information? If so, could you please elaborate on why it was not reflected the Commission's report? Was it because the Commission did not have access to victims and witnesses? Or, were such claims dismissed for lack of supporting evidence?

Mr. President, WILPF strongly believes that the situation in Aleppo is a protracted crisis and a manifestation of the collective failure and inaction by the international community. While numerous States are attempting to sponsor peace, most of them have regrettably been involved in worsening the situation, either by [supporting war criminals](#) or by [engaging more significantly in arms transfers to Syria](#). We therefore echo the Commission's call on all States to immediately cease the supply of weapons to warring parties and curb arms proliferation in Syria and urge the Human Rights Council to support that call in its response to the situation in Syria.

Despite the prospect for accountability being dim on the sixth anniversary of the Syrian revolution, WILPF will continue to call for justice for victims of crimes perpetrated in Syria by the government, armed groups, and States, such as the Russian Federation.

A/HRC/34/64, 2 February 2017

Paragraph 25, A/HRC/34/64

“The Commission recommends that the international community: ... “Curb the supply of weapons to warring parties and their proliferation, particularly cluster munitions and incendiary weapons, which are indiscriminate when used in civilian-inhabited areas and pose a threat to civilians for years after the cessation of hostilities;” paragraph 109, A/HRC/34/64