The findings of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria

29.11.2011

Source: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria presented its long-awaited report, as requested by the UN Human Rights Council. At a press conference in Geneva (Monday, 28 November), the authors of the report, Paulo Pinheiro (Chairperson), Yakin Ertürk and Karen Koning AbuZayd, shared their observations and recommendations with the media.

The Report Summary

“The deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic prompted The Human Rights Council to establish an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate alleged violations of human rights since March 2011. From the end of September until mid-November 2011, the commission held meetings with Member States from all regional groups, regional organizations, including the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, journalists and experts. It interviewed 223 victims and witnesses of alleged human rights violations, including civilians and defectors from the military and the security forces. In the present report, the commission documents patterns of summary execution, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, including sexual violence, as well as violations of children’s rights.

The substantial body of evidence gathered by the commission indicates that these gross violations of human rights have been committed by Syrian military and security forces since the beginning of the protests in March 2011. The commission is gravely concerned that crimes against humanity have been committed in different locations in the Syrian Arab Republic during the period under review. It calls upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to put an immediate end to the ongoing gross human rights violations, to initiate independent and impartial investigations of these violations and to bring perpetrators to justice. The commission also addresses specific recommendations to opposition groups, the Human Rights Council, regional organizations and States Members of the United Nations.

The commission deeply regrets that, despite many requests, the Government failed to engage in dialogue and to grant the commission access to the country. The Government informed the commission that it would examine the possibility of cooperating with the commission once the work of its own independent special legal commission was completed. The commission reiterates its call for immediate and unhindered access to the Syrian Arab Republic.”

Read the full report here.