

President of Human Rights Council appoints International Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Syria

12 September 2011

 Share   

RELATED

PRESS RELEASES

[Colombia: Independent UN body finds systemic racism against people of African descent](#)

PRESS RELEASES

[Human Rights Council Concludes Sixty-First Regular Session after Adopting 38 Resolutions](#)

PRESS RELEASES

[UN Syria Commission releases report on July massacres and other grave violations committed in Suwayda and calls for expanded accountability measures](#)

12 September 2011

The President of the Human Rights Council, Laura Dupuy Lasserre today appointed three high-level experts as members of the Commission of Inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, as mandated by the Human Rights Council. The three Experts are Ms. Yakin Erturk Mr. Sergio Pinheiro, and Karin Abu Zeid*. Mr. Pinheiro will serve as Chair of the Commission.

The Council resolved to establish the independent, international Commission of Inquiry at the end of its seventeenth Special Session on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic on 23 August 2011.

The Commission's mandate is to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, to establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible with a view of ensuring that perpetrators of violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable.

The same resolution requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the full administrative, technical and logistical support needed to enable the Commission to carry out its mandate.

The Commission is due to make public its findings to the Council as soon as possible, and in any case before end of November 2011. In addition, the commission of inquiry will present a written update to the report on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in an interactive dialogue with the participation of the High Commissioner at the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council in March 2012.

The President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre underlined the importance for the Syrian authorities to fully cooperate with the Commission.

(*)The Members of the Commission of Inquiry are:

Mr. Sergio PINHEIRO (Brazil) was a research coordinator at the Centre for the Study of Violence, and professor of political science (retired) at the University of São Paulo. He has also taught at Columbia University, Notre Dame University, Oxford University, and the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris. He published many articles, essays, and books on social history, democracy, violence, and human rights. Among them, he has published, with co-editors Ignacy Sachs and Jorge Wilhelm, Brazil: A Century of Change (University of North Carolina Press, 2009). He was commissioner and rapporteur on children with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Organization of America States. In 2003, Pinheiro was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as independent expert, to prepare an in-depth study on violence against children. He also held the position of UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burundi from 1995 to 1998 and in Myanmar from 2000 to 2008. He was also a member of the former UN Sub-Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights. He served as Brazil's secretary of state for human rights under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and as rapporteur of the Brazilian government's National Human Rights Plans of 1996 and 2002.

Ms. Yakin ERTURK (Turkey) holds a PhD in development sociology from Cornell University. She is currently a professor of sociology and the head of the Gender and Women's Studies Programme at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, Turkey. Between 1997 and 1999 she was director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for the United Nations in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She served as director of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) at its headquarters in New York from 1999 to 2001. In August 2003, she was appointed special rapporteur for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a post she occupied until December 2009. She was recently elected by the ministers of the Council of Europe to serve a four-year term in the European Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT). Ertürk has worked for many national and international agencies on rural development and women in development projects. Her academic areas of interest include: international human rights regimes; identity politics, conflict and violence against women; globalization and population movements; household labour use patterns; and women in development.

Karin ABU ZEID (USA) became an Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, appointed to the post of Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in August 2000. On 1 April 2005, she became the Acting Commissioner-General and the UN Secretary-General appointed her to the post of Commissioner-General on 28 June 2005. From her base in Gaza, she helped to oversee the education, health, social services and micro-enterprise programs for 4.6 million Palestinian refugees. Since September 2000, her work has concentrated on providing emergency assistance to, and generating employment for, the victims of the current crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory. Before joining UNRWA, Karen worked for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for 19 years. She began her humanitarian career in Sudan in 1981, dealing with Ugandan, Chadian and Ethiopian refugees fleeing from war and famine in their own countries. From Sudan she moved to Namibia in 1989 to help coordinate the return of apartheid era refugees, a successful repatriation operation which led to elections and independence. A year later the Liberian civil war erupted and Karen moved to Sierra Leone to head the UNHCR office in Freetown, initiating a new emergency response that settled 100,000 Liberians in 600 villages along the Liberian/Sierra Leone border. From 1991-93 in UNHCR's Geneva Headquarters, Karen directed the South African repatriation operation and the Kenya-Somali cross-border operation. She left Geneva to go to Sarajevo as Chief of Mission for two years during the Bosnian war. Four million displaced and war-affected people were kept alive by UNHCR's airlift and convoy activities, while thousands more were protected from ethnic cleansing by a UNHCR presence.

For information on the Human Rights Council 17th Special Session on the "Situation of human rights in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya", please visit: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/17/index.htm>

Learn more about the Human Rights Council: <http://www.ohchr.org/hrc>

For more information and media inquiries, please contact Cedric Sapey, Public Information Officer: (+41 (0) 22.917.96.57 or +41 (0) 79.477.44.11 or csapey@ohchr.org)

For use of the information media; not an official record

For use of the information media; not an official record

Tags

[Syrian Arab Republic](#)
[Human Rights Council](#)
[Inquiry and fact-finding missions](#)

Our Work

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the leading United Nations entity in the field of human rights, with a unique mandate to promote and protect all human rights for all people.

Latest

[Feature Stories](#)
[Media Center](#)
[Meetings & Events](#)

Resources

[Databases](#)
[Library](#)
[Publications](#)

Connect

[Contact Us](#)
[Follow us](#)
[Work With Us](#)

Global Social Channels

