



Statement by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

[< Back](#)

العربية

01 June 2026**Delivered by:** Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

After 15 years as Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, I will conclude my mandate as of 1 June 2026 due to personal health reasons.

It has been an honour to stand with the Syrian people, to elevate their voices and to bring attention to the systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law that all parties to the conflict committed during this period. Hundreds of thousands of persons were arbitrarily detained, forcibly disappeared, displaced, or killed in Syria since 2011. Nearly every category of war crime and crime against humanity identified in the Rome Statute has been documented, leaving profound trauma across Syrian society and deeply weakening public confidence in state institutions and the rule of law. One of the key factors that allowed these crimes to continue unabated for all those years was the complete absence of accountability for the behavior of the Syrian government as well as the various armed groups that emerged during the conflict.

Today, Syria's trajectory is more hopeful. Recognizing the tremendous challenges facing the Syrian government, it is my sincere hope that the lessons learned from other transitions will help to rebuild the country on solid foundations based on legitimate and capable institutions, inclusive and transparent process in every aspect of public life, political inclusion, and an equitable economic recovery. Syrian civil society, which played a tremendous role throughout the conflict and has grown its expertise and capacities, must be a key partner in the transition.

To dismantle decades of authoritarian rule while simultaneously working to prevent retaliatory violence and ensure that human rights, accountability, inclusive governance and the rule of law prevail will undoubtedly be an arduous and long-term process that will require the participation of all Syrians. To ensure that victims of violence, repression and dispossession are equitably treated, a fair and just legal system, representative and professional institutions, and the protection of fundamental rights in the day to day lives of Syrian will be essential.

I am encouraged by the several important steps the government has already enacted and hope it will continue to put in place measures to ensure that the atrocities of the past never occur again, prioritizing full compliance with its international obligations while ensuring accountability. This includes both crimes committed by all actors during the Assad era, as well as more recent human rights and humanitarian law violations documented by the Commission of Inquiry in 2025. Turning the page on the past requires that the cycle of impunity be broken for good, with perpetrators of international crimes and atrocities held accountable through human rights compliant processes at all levels of responsibility, without fear or favor, and regardless of their affiliation.

Moreover, the support of the international community must be sustained and intensified to help Syrians recover from decades of authoritarianism, violence, and lawlessness. International actors should provide principled and constructive support for institution-building, economic recovery, accountability initiatives, humanitarian protection, and the strengthening of civil society. The international community must also ensure that all regional actors, in particular Israel, end destabilization efforts and cease ongoing violations of state sovereignty leading to human rights and humanitarian law violations.

Though I must step down from my role, I have no doubt that my fellow Commissioners will carry on the Commission's principled documentation of violations, engagement, and advocacy for the improvement of respect of human rights of all going forward.

The road ahead offers hope for a better future to Syria, and I will continue to hold the Syrian people dear as they forge ahead to build the Syria they have long aspired to.

[< Back](#)