

Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with Chair of International Commission of Inquiry on Syria Human Rights Council 17 September 2012 The Human Rights Council this morning held an interactive dialogue with Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Pinheiro, introducing the Commission's report, said that the gross violations of human rights in Syria had grown in number, pace and scale. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians in the form of air strikes and artillery shelling levelled against residential neighbourhoods were occurring daily. There were grounds to believe that Government forces and the Shabbiha committed war crimes, gross violations of human rights and crimes against humanity; similarly, that anti-Government armed groups had perpetrated war crimes, including murder, extrajudicial executions and torture. International criminal law held perpetrators responsible for such violations individually including superiors and subordinates and whether military or civilian; and the Commission recommended that the Council forward its report to the Security Council.

Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the report focused on the status of the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 19/22 and outlined relevant developments until 20 July 2012. It noted the further deterioration of the conditions in the country, with a rise in attacks on population centres by the Government forces, who were using heavy weapons and mechanised infantry as part of a campaign to clear anti-Government armed groups. Government forces continued to commit numerous human rights violations, and victims again included women and children, and there were increasing reports of anti-Government forces carrying out abductions, torture and ill-treatment of captured members of Government forces. (...)

(...) During the interactive dialogue speakers condemned the escalation of violence and human rights violations in Syria and reiterated the finding by the Commission that there was credible evidence suggesting that both Government and anti-Government forces had committed violations. Speakers reiterated the individual responsibility for crimes committed and called for accountability for perpetrators, reiterating the call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Others indicated the negative impact of sanctions against the Syrian people and the dire humanitarian situation. Political dialogue and an inclusive political transition were the only way to overcome conflict and violence. Speakers called on the Council to further extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry and reiterated their support for the work of the Joint Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi. (...) See full [news brief](#). S
ee the Independent International Commission of Inquiry's full [report](#)