



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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NEW YORK, 20 APRIL 2017

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

**SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER**

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Madam President,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on the situation in the Middle East in the framework of an open debate. Indeed there are a number of critical issues that the Security Council needs to address under this agenda item. Prospects for a two-State solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seem to fade and hard won security gains for both sides are in jeopardy while settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories continue. These settlements are illegal under the Geneva Conventions in particular, and the Security Council has expressed itself accordingly in its resolution 2334 of December 2016. Liechtenstein shares the concern of many that we are currently moving further away from a peaceful settlement of the conflict and calls on all involved to fully respect the international legal framework, including by the Security Council, and to recommit to the two-State solution as the only viable and sustainable avenue to peace in the region.

Madam President,

The crisis in Syria has again occupied the Council throughout the month. Unfortunately, once again without a result for the people of Syria who continue to suffer mass atrocities in plain sight. The inability of the Council to put an end to these atrocities, let alone to provide some form of accountability, are in stark contravention to its designated role to maintain international peace and security, with particular responsibilities bestowed upon the five permanent Members. The failure of the Council to act, at the expense of the Syrian people, constitutes a serious political and institutional challenge for the United Nations. Recent efforts, notably among the elected Members, to bridge the political divide are a welcome sign of engagement to help restore the functionality of the Council, while so far unfortunately without tangible results.

Madam President,

By signing the ACT Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes 112 States, including a majority of Security Council members, have committed to preventing and ending mass atrocity crimes. The Council, however, was unable to develop any response when one of the oldest and strongest norms of warfare was repeatedly violated – the absolute prohibition of chemical weapons at all times, in all circumstances –, let alone in the many other instances of well-documented war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria. Liechtenstein will continue its advocacy to broaden support and strengthen implementation of the Code that we also consider an important contribution to the Secretary-General's efforts to put preventive diplomacy at the center of the United Nations.

Madam President,

Pervasive impunity has characterized the Syrian conflict since its beginning and continues to fuel it. There is growing momentum within the United Nations membership and from civil society around the world towards – finally – ensuring accountability for the crimes committed

in Syria. The General Assembly has shown resolve by creating the Syria accountability mechanism (IIIM) on 21 December 2016. The need for such a mechanism was illustrated even more forcefully last week when yet another resolution on Syria was vetoed. The IIIM offers the only promising path towards accountability for the crimes committed, justice for the Syrian people and a sustainable peace for the country. We call on all States to continue their political and financial support for it.

I thank you.