



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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SECURITY COUNCIL - ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

I want to pay tribute to those who have survived atrocities committed by the regime in Syria and those who have not given up in the fight for a peaceful and free country in the future and to our two briefers who very well represent all these people.

Today's discussion should have a focus on the interplay of peace and justice. The armed conflict in Syria is the best possible illustration that sustainable peace can only be achieved if supported by genuine accountability efforts. Those who bear the greatest responsibility for attacks on the civilian population and for countless war crimes cannot be part of a political arrangement that charts a peaceful future for the country. A look at other situations – Sudan or Myanmar – makes it clear what happens when those who commit atrocity crimes with impunity are allowed to occupy political leadership positions. So most importantly in discussing solutions to the conflict in Syria, the Council should stop discussing this in a silo approach that treats the humanitarian, political and accountability dimension separately.

The task of ensuring sustainable peace is undoubtedly not the sole responsibility of the Security Council. Nevertheless, its actions are decisive for laying the basis for the relevant long-term efforts. Meaningful accountability work must be part of this. It is well known and has been mentioned here that the Council has the possibility of referring situations to the International

Criminal Court. But past experience also shows that such referrals have been a mixed blessing for accountability efforts, as they were not backed up by the necessary resolve in the Council to ensure the required cooperation. In addition, the current political climate in the Council is not conducive to additional referrals – while it must be said again that the ICC was established precisely for the purpose of holding those most responsible for mass atrocity crimes committed in situations like Syria. But the Council has various other options to do meaningful accountability work. Other ways to prevent and end atrocity crimes. It can call on conflict parties to respect international humanitarian law, call on States to investigate and prosecute crimes committed in their national systems and take measures if these calls are not headed. This would have gone a long way to bring about a different dynamic in the situation of the Syrian conflict. But the message that was heard by the regime was the opposite, namely that committing war crimes and crimes against humanity is a winning political strategy.

The Council should also welcome efforts undertaken in accordance with the principle of universal jurisdiction – incomplete and indeed imperfect, as we have just seen, as they can be. But in the case of a situation like Syria these remains for the time being the only path to accountability. A key player in these efforts is of course the IIIM which the General Assembly created five years ago, not least in light of the vetoed ICC referral in the Council. We welcome the briefing by the Head of the IIIM today and express our strong support for its excellent work. Its template has been replicated in other situations. The IIIM has established itself quickly as part of the institutional landscape in the UN system. But for the work of the IIIM to take its full effect, accountability must be part and parcel of the political track and all serious efforts to chart a path for the country to sustainable peace. Voices from outside the Council are crucially important to support the relevant efforts inside the Council, and we will continue to be very vocal in this respect.

Thank you.