

To: Ms Federica Mogherini, HR/VP of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Cc: EU Ministries of Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 06 July 2017

Re: Call for the EU to increase its financial support to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) on international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic

Dear High Representative,

EuroMed Rights and the undersigned Syrian human rights organisations have been engaged in monitoring and documenting violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and gross human rights abuses amounting to war crimes in Syria for the past six years, in efforts to fight against impunity and secure true justice, which is indispensable for any future meaningful, sustainable peace in Syria.

We highly welcome and support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) established by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2016 to collect, preserve, and analyse evidence of atrocity crimes committed by all parties to the Syria conflict. From the onset, we have expressed full support towards the IIIM, and especially as the IIIM will be based on previous and continuous data collection efforts of Syrian human rights organisations, as once functioning, will assist in establishing justice for the Syrian people.

Building a firm political and operational commitment to the IIIM is vital for accountability processes to function for Syrians, and the support of the EU and its Member States to the IIIM is fundamental in that regard.

We therefore call on the **EU to mobilise funds to increase its support well beyond 1.5 million EUR**. Although the financial contributions by 17 EU Member States are welcomed, we jointly call on the **Member States who did not pledge stronger contributions, or any at all, to increase their financial support significantly** as an expression of their collective interest in accountability for Syria.

The EU effectively supporting the functioning of the IIIM will be in line with its recent EU Strategy on Syria, adopted by EU Foreign Ministers on 3 April 2017, which places a strong emphasis on accountability, and specifically on the importance of providing the UN Syria accountability mechanism with sufficient resources. The co-chairs Declaration closing the 5 April 2017 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' conference in Brussels reiterated support, including through adequate financial means, for the IIIM, to ensure accountability for such systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of IHL and human rights in Syria.

Protection of civilians remains a priority item on our collective efforts, as deliberate targeting of civilians, sexual-based and gender-based violence and cruel attacks on medical and educational infrastructures committed by parties to the conflict continue – and any inability to hinder accountability mechanisms as the IIIM can dangerously result in additional mass abuses and hinder any sustainable peace process.

Furthermore, we call on the EU to take our pleas with the most serious consideration in the context of the upcoming G20 Summit in Hamburg on 7-8 July, during which the EU -as full member - and concerned Member States can raise them and urge the other G20 members to make significant contributions to the functioning of the IIIM.

We would appreciate receiving a response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Cosignatories:

EuroMed Rights

Assyrian Human Rights Network

Badael

Syrians for Truth and Justice;

Syrian Network for Human Rights;

Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research

Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression

Syrian League for Citizenship

Syrian Institute for Justice and Accountability

The Committee for the Defense of the Detainees of Opinion and Conscience in Syria

The Day After

The Syrian Center for Statistics and Research

URNAMMU

Violations Documentation Center in Syria