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**UN Human Rights Council  
Thirty-fourth session, 27 February – 24 March 2017**

**Item 6:  
Consideration of UPR reports**

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

Mr. President,

Amnesty International estimates that since 2011, 17,723 persons have died as a result of torture or other ill-treatment in detention centres across Syria. As many as 13,000 individuals have been killed in a widespread and systematic practice of extrajudicial executions, carried out in weekly mass hangings in Saydnaya Military Prison. In the past six years, tens of thousands have been subjected to enforced disappearance, the majority at the hands of government forces.<sup>1</sup>

We welcome the recommendations made to Syria to end enforced disappearances, summary executions, torture and sexual violence and bring those responsible to justice.<sup>2</sup> We urge Syria to implement these recommendations without delay and provide reparations to the victims and their families.

We are concerned about the use of unfair trials and the practice of trying civilians in military courts which do not conform to international fair trial standards. We urge the government to ensure that all detainees are registered and held in recognized places of detention, with access to lawyers and medical care, and regular visits by their families. We also urge the government to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, *It breaks the human: Torture, disease and death in Syria's prisons* (Index: MDE 24/4508/2016), 18 August 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/4508/2016/en/>.  
Amnesty International, *Human Slaughterhouse: Mass Hangings and Extermination at Saydnaya Prison, Syria* (Index: MDE 24/5415/2017), 7 February 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/5415/2017/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/34/5, recommendations 109.152-109.166

In light of the widespread and systematic nature of the human rights violations that have taken place, some of which may amount to crimes against humanity, we call on Syria to allow for an independent investigation and ensure that its findings are communicated to the families of the victims.

In line with many recommendations made during the review,<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International reiterates its call on Syria to grant independent international monitors, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, full co-operation and unhindered access to all prisoners and allow them to carry out unannounced inspection visits to all detention facilities, to investigate all alleged crimes under international law and violations of international human rights law.

Amnesty International notes Syria's statement in the Working Group that the definition of the crime of torture in the new draft Criminal Code is in line with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.<sup>4</sup> We urge the government to move expeditiously towards ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as recommended during the review.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you, Mr. President,

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<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/34/5, recommendations 109.44-109.62, and 109.83

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Syrian Arab Republic*, A/HRC/34/5, 27 December 2016, paragraph 16.

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/34/5, recommendations 109.3 and 109.6