

Statement by

**Ambassador Boštjan Malovrh**

**Permanent Representative of Slovenia**

at the

**UN General Assembly Meeting**

**Agenda item: 'Prevention of Armed Conflict'**

**Debate on the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**

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Thank you, Mr President,

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Head of the Mechanism Mrs. Catherine Marchi-Uhel for presenting the ninth report and for her dedicated and strong leadership since the creation of the Mechanism.

The Mechanism continues to demonstrate its value as a justice facilitator in the accountability ecosystem for international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. It continues to serve as an indispensable tool for the preservation and analysis of evidence and as a necessary link to the criminal proceedings in cases of serious breaches of the international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, and thus in bringing us a step closer towards impunity.

We welcome the progress made by the Mechanism regarding its structural investigation and providing increased support to the work of jurisdictions investigating and prosecuting such crimes.

Slovenia highly values the Mechanism's leverage in support of broader justice objectives, in particular efforts to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons, as well as it's continued fostering of the active role of victims/survivors in the pursuit of inclusive justice.

In prospects of justice for Syria, we call on all relevant stakeholders to continue engaging with the Mechanism. Joint investigative teams and cooperation with the Syrian civil society are important for facilitating justice and paving the ground for progress in national jurisdictions.

In this respect, we welcome the Mechanism's further expansion and diversification of its engagement with civil society actors and bolster its rights-based victim/survivor- centered approach that isgiven concrete expression through dedicated thematic strategies on gender, children and youth.

However, despite its success, the Mechanism remains only a partial answer to the accountability challenge of the Syrian conflict. While the Mechanism continues to demonstrate its value as an effective justice actor, it is of course not a court.

A crucial void therefore remains to be filled. Several States have stepped up and have undertaken criminal proceedings in their national courts based on the principle of universal jurisdiction. These proceedings are a step closer towards closing the impunity gap. However, more is needed to ensure justice for the victims of the Syrian conflict and beyond.

To ensure accountability for international crimes committed in Syria, we repeat our call to the Security Council to take effective action and to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC), in order to guarantee that all victims would receive justice.

Mr. President,

The Mechanism's creation constitutes a collective commitment to ensure credible and comprehensive accountability. Impunity for atrocities is not acceptable and perpetrators should be held accountable.

Slovenia has been supporting the Mechanism since its inception and will continue to support the Mechanism in its role of a justice facilitator and in pursuit of inclusive justice in the conflict in Syria.

I thank you.