



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM – PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to offer some comments on draft resolution A/71/L.39, entitled “Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic,” just adopted by the Assembly. The situation in Syria is the defining crisis of our time, both with respect to human suffering and to the inability of the Security Council to take effective action to address the unfolding humanitarian tragedy. Nothing illustrates the political paralysis in the Council more starkly than the repeated use of the veto in connection with moderate resolutions that pursue the primary goal of alleviating the suffering of the civilian population in the country. But also where the Council has been able to forge agreement, the results have been depressing: just about a year ago, resolution 2254 was adopted unanimously and gave hope that a political solution to the conflict in the country may be in reach. The reality today shows that there is no political process to speak of and that some of the parties to the conflict openly pursue a military solution to the conflict. While very large parts of the country’s civilian population have been affected, the situation in Aleppo has become the tragic symbol of the failure of the international community to live up to its obligations and to prevent further mass atrocities that are slowly unfolding before our eyes – even though a majority of the Council’s members have committed themselves to the Code of Conduct regarding action against mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

In this situation, the involvement of the General Assembly is an urgent necessity, and we thank our colleagues from Canada for having taken the lead in this respect. We fully support the resolution just adopted and hope that it will have the immediate impact needed on the ground that it aims to achieve. At the same time, we also believe that more action is needed by this Assembly in an area referenced in the text just adopted – the area of accountability. The conflict in Syria has been characterized from its start by an utter disregard for the most basic standards of international human rights and international humanitarian law. The violations committed have been documented and reported on extensively, in particular by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council five years ago. Many of them amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes: the use of chemical weapons, the indiscriminate shelling of civilian targets, the use of starvation as a method of warfare are among those war crimes that are committed in a systematic and widespread manner. Torture, enforced disappearances, sexual violence are among the many gross human rights violations that have been committed as a matter of policy and as part of a systematic attack against the civilian population of Syria. Just yesterday, we have learned that hundreds of men and boys are unaccounted for, having crossed from rebel-held areas in Aleppo to areas under Government control. Since the referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court was vetoed in the Council more than two years ago, there has been no serious effort in the Council to ensure accountability and end impunity. It is therefore imperative that the General Assembly steps in and enables the international community to at least take one decisive step forward in this respect: to prepare files that can serve as the basis for criminal proceedings in a court or tribunal that may in the future be able to exercise jurisdiction. My delegation has been working very closely with others in order to produce a text that will propose the creation of such a mechanism. We will consult more widely with the membership in the coming days, with the view to a possible expeditious adoption of a resolution to this end.

I thank you.