



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention of H.E. Karl Lagatie, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

**United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting
on Syria and accountability**

New York, 29 November 2021

Mister President,

We welcome the organization of this important arria-formula meeting.

I would like to thank Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel for her enlightening presentation and commend her work and that of her team. I also thank the briefers for their powerful interventions.

Today I will address three points: justice as a key element in the process leading to durable and sustainable peace in Syria; the much-needed cooperation and support of all IIIM stakeholders; and, finally, the importance of comprehensive and inclusive justice.

Firstly, I would like to stress the relevance and importance of the mandate of IIIM in the search for a durable and sustainable peace in Syria. Since the start of the Syrian conflict ten years ago, the parties have continuously and repeatedly violated international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The victims number in the hundreds of thousands. Relatives and survivors continue to demand that all perpetrators be held accountable for their acts, a significant number of which can be characterized as war crimes, crimes against humanity and even the crime of genocide. Peace and justice should not be seen as opposing goals, but rather as mutually reinforcing.

Secondly, the effective implementation of the IIIM's mandate depends on the good cooperation of all member states, civil society, as well as the United Nations system and other international organizations. Belgium encourages all States which have not yet done so to adopt a framework for cooperation with the IIIM. Belgium for its part updated its legislation in 2019. The cooperation with the IIIM

is proceeding with regularity, speed and efficiency. Since last year, the number of cooperation requests has risen. Furthermore requests are becoming more and more specific. My country will continue to support adequate funding for the IIIM from the UN regular budget.

Thirdly, I would like to commend IIIM's commitment to a comprehensive and inclusive approach to justice, in particular with regard to different categories of victims and survivors. Belgium welcomes the development of specific strategies with respect to sexual and gender-based crimes as well as crimes against children. This approach contributes to the recognition of all the victims and survivors and as such to the achievement of lasting peace in Syria.

Mr President,

In conclusion, I wish to highlight that it is crucial for furthering the essential work done by the IIIM that the financing proposal for the mechanism is adopted by all Member States. Belgium remains committed to dialogue with all parties involved on the continued financing of IIIM under the regular budget.