

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC – ADD.2

NETHERLANDS

- There is a profound lack of international access to the country, especially to areas of unrest and to detention facilities. Journalists cannot operate within Syria and the Fact-finding mission of the OHCHR was not allowed into the country. The Netherlands expects the Syrian authorities to grant access to the Commission of Inquiry as has been established by the Human Rights Council. Such a fact-finding mission could establish the true situation on the ground and could also enable outside parties to see whether there is any evidence for the claims that all violence currently occurring is carried out by gangs or criminals. When are the Syrian authorities going to grant access to the Commission?
- We continue to hear about large numbers of arrests and the widespread use of incommunicado detention by all Syrian security forces. This information is extremely worrying. These practices constitute a clear breach of the ICCPR and the Netherlands urges Syria to immediately release all those who are detained arbitrarily. Peacefully demonstrating is not a reason for detention. The Netherlands would like to inquire about the situation of Yahya Shurbaji, Amer Matar (brother of Ghiath Matar, who died at the hands of the regime), Najati Tayara, Shadi Abu Fakher and Omar al-Assad.
- The use of torture in detention facilities has been widely documented (International Commission of Jurists, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, OHCHR, all on the basis of interviews with people who personally experienced torture). The Netherlands urges the Syrian authorities to immediately end these practices and comply with the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which Syria is a party to.
- The Netherlands is deeply worried by the death of children at the hands of security forces. How does the Government of Syria envisage living up to its obligations under article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?