**Universal Periodic Review 22 – Syria**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. President,

Not long ago I served as Netherlands Ambassador to Syria; I saw a country with a history of 7000 years that was a great civilization.  After millennia, this Syrian government led by president Assad succeeded in just a few years to utterly destroy the entire meaning of the Syrian civilization.

In the UPR, we give recommendations to governments on how to fulfil the State’s human rights obligations[[1]](#footnote-1). However, where do we start with a government that has blatantly violated every existing international law?

The Netherlands recommends and urges the Syrian government to:

1. Stop bombing its own civilian population, including with the use of barrel bombs, chemical weapons and incendiary bombs contrary to International Humantiarian Law.
2. Release all those who are arbitrarily detained and put an end to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees, including those belonging to the moderate opposition that started the non-violent protest against the government.
3. Stop the Sieges of Syrien cities and towns, including of East-Aleppo, in breach of international humanitarian law. Humanitarian access must be immediately ensured to all the Syrian people in need.

If we want the Syrian population to have any kind of future - accountability is non-negotiable. There should be no misunderstanding over the endless list of human rights violations this government has committed. All these violations have been systematically documented, and the Netherlands will continue to support this process of evidence gathering, until this regime will one day be held accountable.

Without justice, it is hard to see how long-term peace can ever be achieved. The Syrian people deserve a better future.

Thank you Mr. President.

1. ([HRC res 5/1, para. 4 (b](https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/general-document/pdf/a_hrc_res_5_1_e.pdf)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)