

**SIERRA LEONE**

26th session of the UPR

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE

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Mr President,

Sierra Leone welcomes to the delegation from the Syrian Arab Republic and notes their UPR report.

This UPR should have provided Syria a vital opportunity to detail human rights progress in the country, however, given the severity of the ongoing conflict which has led to the death, forced displacement and statelessness of millions of its citizens, Sierra Leone considers it far more imperative to end the conflict and establish a lasting peace in Syria.

Sierra Leone however notes the government’s efforts to establish a National Strategy for Women and the efforts to address gender-based violence but believes that more should be done to stop trafficking in persons and body parts, end sexual violence and sexual slavery as perpetuated against women and children.

Women and children have been especially vulnerable during this five year conflict. My delegation believes the Citizenship Law and the Personal Status Code should be amended to ensure that women can transfer their nationality and also have guardianship of their children.

International humanitarian norms must be respected and the government must ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those desperately needing it. All the parties concerned must cease airstrikes in order for this to be possible.

Recommendations:

1. Ratify and accede to the ICPPED and withdraw its reservations to Articles 2 and 15 (4) of the CEDAW.
2. Cooperate with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry and allow it to access to Syria.
3. Amend the Penal Code and Criminal Code to eliminate mitigated sentences for rapists who marry their victims and for so called “honour crimes”.
4. Protect women and girls from child, early and forced marriage.
5. Adopt national legislation criminalising domestic violence.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone wishes the Syrian Arab Republic a successful UPR.

Thank you, Mr President.