

Joint-statement by Centre Europe – tiers monde (CETIM) and the International Federation for the Protection of the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic & Other Minorities (IFPRERLOM)

Interactive dialogue with the International Commission of Inquiry on the Syria Arab Republic

Oral statement

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Mister President,

The population of the Northern and Eastern region of the Syrian Arab Republic suffers from widespread and systematic human right violations, that are mainly the result of a proxy war in the form of foreign armed presence and involvement of big powers. A situation that has worsened following the 2018 and 2019 military occupations by Turkey and Turkish-backed militias.

In this context, the bombings, killings, detentions, abductions, tortures became a daily reality for the people. This is denying the full exercise of self-determination, needed for the people to freely determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. A situation that is pushing tens of thousands of civilians to leave their homes and migrate abroad.

We would like to express our deep concern about the issue of water in the region. Indeed, the report of the Commission states that people “in the north and north-east of the country faced an acute water crisis”, but without clearly saying the right reasons why. In fact, it is precisely in the current context of military occupation that the right to water is systematically violated. The occupying forces are controlling the water sources and the construction of dams causing water shortages. The violation of the right to water has serious implications for the fulfillment of the people’s right to health, to food and to life of the people. The use of water as a mean of war is a heinous illegal practice, which contravenes the provisions of international humanitarian law, as well as the two International Covenants on human rights.

We call upon the International Commission to investigate on the concrete effects of the military occupation on all human rights and to urge the Turkish State, as well as the other foreign States armed forces, to retreat immediately and unconditionally from the region and to stop its logistical, political and financial support to armed militias and mercenary forces.

I thank you for your attention.

Geneva, 18th of March 2022