

Foreign Minister Gabriel on six years of conflict in Syria

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14.03.2017 - Press release 

On the sixth anniversary of the start of protests against the Assad regime in Syria and to highlight German support to the tune of one million euros for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in Syria, Foreign Minister Gabriel issued the following statement today (14 March) in Berlin:

“Six years ago today, peaceful protests began in Syria to bring about civil liberties, a more just society and an end to tyranny. These protests developed into the most horrendous conflict of our time. Half of the Syrian population has fled, more than 400,000 people have lost their lives as a result of the conflict and the country has been reduced to ruins. The most recent attempt to achieve a ceasefire has only had a very limited impact. More than 600,000 people are to this day denied access to humanitarian assistance, people are being starved and driven out - just as we have seen over the last few days in Al Waer near Homs.

We cannot sit idly by as human rights are disregarded and international humanitarian law is repeatedly violated in Syria, as civilian infrastructure is attacked from the air and there are widespread allegations that people are being tortured by Islamist terror groups and in prisons run by the Syrian regime. We have to lay the groundwork now so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice. They must never feel they are beyond the reach of the law.

That is why I pledged one million euros of support to ~~UN~~ (United Nations) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in Syria.

Despite all the setbacks, we need to continue our work to ensure the negotiations in Geneva to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria are continued. Only if earnest negotiations are conducted and the difficult questions concerning the country’s political future are tackled by all parties with the necessary will to reach a compromise can we end the horror experienced by the Syrian people. Especially now after six years of war, we will do our utmost to ensure that can finally happen.”

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