

UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria: A new wave of violence is the last thing Syrians need

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Geneva, 10 October 2019 - The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic notes with grave concern the military offensive and aerial campaign being launched in northeast Syria on 9 October. The last thing Syrians need now is a new wave of violence.

The Commission implores all parties to exercise caution and restraint to avoid an escalation of hostilities in northeast Syria, and the dire consequences that would follow for the already fragile humanitarian and human rights situation in the country.

Civilians have already begun to flee the fighting. Hundreds of thousands of civilians may be impacted by any operations along the border as hostilities will likely cause the destruction of vital civilian infrastructure and impede civilians' access to desperately needed humanitarian assistance. This population is already highly vulnerable, many having been displaced multiple times due to the conflict or having been forced to live under ISIL rule.

Furthermore, more than 100,000 previously displaced individuals, the majority of whom are women and children with presumed links to ISIL fighters, are lingering in makeshift camps, including Al-Hol, Al-Roj, and Ain-Issa, with limited access to basic services and at risk of radicalization in the absence of age and gender-sensitive rehabilitation programmes. The Commission emphasizes that children caught up in an armed conflict should primarily be seen as victims in need of protection.

Any new military campaign may lead to insecurity and chaos, risking circumstances under which a resurgence of ISIL could occur.

The Commission repeats that there is no military solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and reminds all parties to engage in dialogue to de-escalate the situation and prioritize the protection of civilians and respect for humanitarian and human rights law.

Background

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which comprises Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Chair), Ms. Karen Koning AbuZayd, and Mr. Hanny Megally has been mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council to

investigate and record all violations of international law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic. Its reports can be found on the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic's [webpage](#) and [Twitter](#) page.

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