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Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

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Intervention by H.E. Mr. Peter Matt,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes the ongoing work and efforts of the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. The latest report on the internal displacement of over 1 million people, due to an escalation of violence in six Syrian governorates, demonstrates once again an alarming lack of willingness of the Syrian authorities and other parties to comply with even the most basic principles of international humanitarian law.

And we face another imminent humanitarian catastrophe should there be a full-scale military offensive on Idlib. Unfortunately, given the past and current pattern of systematic gross violations of international law, the result would again likely be mass atrocities against the civilian population. We reiterate the imperative of accountability with regard to all crimes

committed under international law in Syria and to this end call on all States to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM).

Mr. President,

Let me take the opportunity to ask the views of the Commission on two specific items:

The Foreign Ministers of Liechtenstein and Qatar, together with more than forty other States, have recently sounded the alarm in the Security Council and the General Assembly about the increased issuance of death certificates by the Syrian authorities advancing natural causes of death for the thousands of persons who have perished in Syrian prisons. Of course there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. For us this practice reflects an extremely worrisome policy geared towards impunity by the Syrian authorities without fear of legal consequences. What are the views of the Commission about this development?

Secondly, I would like to refer to the recent work done by the Liechtenstein NGO "All survivors project" that puts a spotlight on the pervasive sexual violence and abuse against men and boys in Syria. We believe that sexual violence against men and boys is still too much of a taboo at the UN. Survivors are heavily stigmatized and reports are scarce, hindering accountability efforts and appropriate remedies and services for the survivors. What is the assessment of the Commission in this regard? Does the Commission have any suggestions how to increase awareness of this important issue?

I thank you.