



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT

by

H. E. Mr. Michal MLYNÁR
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic
to the United Nations

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Debate of the General Assembly
under agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict
on the

**Report of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the
Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes
under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011**

New York, 21 April 2021

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this meeting and for your introductory remarks. I would also like to thank the Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, for introducing the 4th to 7th reports on the implementation of the mandate of the Mechanism covering a period of two years.

Mr. President,

Confronted with endless accounts of horrific crimes committed on Syrian territory and the lack of any tangible response, especially in the field of accountability, the General Assembly decided to take action by resolution 71/248. The Assembly emphasized the importance of ensuring „*credible and comprehensive accountability*“ for serious international crimes as part of any political process to end the crisis in Syria. Today, the mandate and functioning of the Mechanism remain relevant as ever for closing the impunity gap and ensuring accountability for crimes committed by any party in the Syrian conflict.

The Mechanism is a unique and pioneer structure in international efforts to ensure accountability. By collecting, analyzing and preserving evidence, it assists and facilitates criminal proceedings carried out by national authorities, as well as regional or international courts. By requiring the recipient jurisdiction to respect international human rights law and standards, including the right to a fair trial, the IIIM contributes to strengthening Rule of Law and due process. The total of 93 requests for assistance received from 11 jurisdictions clearly manifest the value of the Mechanism and the number of processed requests underline its tangible contribution. As far as the use of the evidence gathered by the IIIM is concerned, all potential jurisdictional grounds, including universal jurisdiction have to be taken account by national authorities.

Mr. President,

In order to benefit from the full potential of the Mechanism, States have to assist it in carrying out its mandate. Besides that, cooperation of the IIIM with entities of the UN system and other international bodies is of utmost importance. In this respect, Slovakia fully supports the recommendations contained in report A/75/743, whereby the United Nations and other international organisations are requested, *inter alia*, to ensure full access for the Mechanism to materials that are held within the United Nations system concerning crimes in the Syrian Arab Republic and to ensure full cooperation and coordination of United Nations agencies with the Mechanism.

In the same vein, States have to make sure that national investigative and prosecutorial authorities can smoothly cooperate with the Mechanism, thus helping advance its mandate

and, at the same time, benefiting from its work. Considering the fact that an organisation needs predictable, stable and sustainable financing, Slovakia supported the inclusion of the IIIM in the UN regular budget in previous years and will continue to support the provision of the required funds therefrom.

Last but not least,

I wish to underline the profound appreciation to Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel and her team for all the work accomplished so far in making the IIIM a fully functional and operational institution. Their task has been made even more demanding due to the current pandemic and its various consequences, including the difficult financial situation of the Organisation.

To conclude, Mr. President,

Slovakia continues to be a firm supporter of the Mechanism. We are convinced that bringing perpetrators of international crimes to justice, while having a victims-centered approach, is a basic requirement for the solution of conflicts and subsequent reconciliation efforts. Effective accountability mechanisms should also serve as a standing warning to any potential perpetrators of crimes under international law that their acts will not go unpunished.

I thank you, Mr. President.