On 15 March 2021, the world is commemorating the 10th anniversary of the devastating conflict in Syria. This is an occasion for the international community to take a comprehensive look at the conflict which has killed more than 400,000 people and displaced millions, caused tremendous human suffering and had a devastating impact on the social foundations and the sustainable development of Syria. Civil society organizations have proven an important source of information and played a key role in advocating for a political solution, in preserving evidence of the crimes committed, and in providing assistance to the people of Syria.

This event is designed as a civil society roundtable for an exchange on the political, humanitarian, justice and socio-economic dimensions of the conflict. Member States are invited to engage with the civil society actors in an interactive segment. The following dimensions will be discussed:

**Political Dimension:** The conflict in Syria started when Syrians took to the streets in order to peacefully protest for change and reform, to which the Syrian regime responded with oppression and attacks on the civilian population amounting to crimes against humanity. While originally internal in nature, the conflict has quickly developed into a civil war with direct and indirect involvement of third States and had a destabilizing effect on the region and displaced millions of people internally and refugees in border regions or neighboring countries. In spite of the serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law and the crimes committed against the civilian population and the destabilizing effects on the region, the Security
Council has been unable to end hostilities and bring about a peaceful solution. On no less than 16 occasions, efforts in the Council to bring an end to the conflict and to provide for accountability have been blocked by the use of the veto.

**Justice and Accountability:** Evidence of the serious crimes and violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law, in particular by the Syrian regime but also by other actors is vast and well documented, for instance by the Commission of Inquiry, Board of Inquiry, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Joint Investigative Mechanism, and numerous civil society organizations. While Russia and China vetoed the proposed referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court in 2014, the General Assembly created in 2016 the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious crimes, and there are ongoing trials under the principle of universal jurisdiction that can bring the Syrian people a step closer to justice and accountability. National reconciliation and sustainable peace in Syria will not be possible without justice and accountability for the most serious crimes committed during the conflict.

**Humanitarian Situation:** A decade of conflict has caused immense human suffering with death, injury, displacement, destruction, poverty, hunger and insecurity. With over 5.6 million people having fled the country and 6.6 million internally displaced, the Syrian conflict is the largest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. The need for humanitarian assistance is immense – 13 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, and another 10.1 million people (including 5.5 million Syrian refugees) in the region. The overall need for humanitarian assistance inside Syria during 10 years of conflict has amounted so far to approx. 28 billion USD. The UN estimates that 4.2 billion USD are required for humanitarian assistance inside Syria in 2021.

**Socio-economic Impact:** The conflict has also had a disastrous socio-economic impact and a strong negative effect on the social foundation of Syria. The country has experienced destruction, war economies, corruption, mismanagement, inflation and currency depreciation. Shortages of essential goods, lack of basic services, unemployment and food insecurity remain major challenges and add to the suffering of Syrians. More than half of Syria’s children continue to be deprived of education, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated fragile education, health and social systems.
Welcoming Remarks

Amb. Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations

Moderator: Nicola Reindorp, Crisis Action, Chief Executive Officer

Panel Discussion (1:00-1:30 pm)

Dima Moussa, Syrian Opposition Coalition, Founding Member of the Syrian Women’s Political Movement, Member of the Syrian Constitutional Committee

Richard Gowan, International Crisis Group, UN Director New York

Amanda Catanzano, International Rescue Committee, Senior Director for International Programs Policy and Advocacy

Bill Wiley, Commission for International Justice and Accountability, Founder and Executive Director

Dr. Karam Shaar, Economist and Policy Analyst, Non-resident Scholar Middle East Institute

Roundtable with Civil Society (1:30-2:00 pm)

Civil Society organizations are invited to participate in the discussion.

Interactive Segment with Member States (2:00-2:30 pm)

Member States who wish to deliver remarks (2-3 min) are invited to register via newyork@LLV.LI

The event will be virtual. Please register in advance via:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZModOqqpjrEtxA2eumW9ZsKxQZISwcpptx

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the event.