

Human Rights Council 28th session

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SYRIAN ARABIC REPUBLIC, ITEM 4 18 MARCH 2015

Mr President

I deliver this statement on behalf of the International Service for Human Rights.

The Assyrian Human Rights Network shares the views expressed.

Mr President

On February 23rd of this year, Ramina, a 35 year old mother, and an Assyrian writer was kidnapped with her kids by the so-called Islamic State after it attacked 34 Assyrian towns in Hassaka province in Syria as mentioned by Mr Penero earlier today.

These attacks resulted in the abduction of 235 civilians, among them 89 women and 39 children, the killing of at least 10 civilians, the destruction of three churches, and forcibly displacing 1,400 families.

Assyrian civilians have also been subjected to indiscriminate attacks, such as attacking Assyrian village of Tal Nassri in November 2012 by the Syrian airforce which resulted in a number of casualties. Tens of assyrian activists and political leaders were arbitrarily arrested by the syrian authorities.

These egregious attacks, arguably amounting to crimes against humanity, reveal both the brutality of IS but also the lack of will of Syrian officials to protect their citizens.

In light of these horrific events, we call upon members of this Council, and the international community to take urgent measures in order to:

- 1- Provide protection to Assyrian Christians consistent with the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, through establishing a safe haven for them.
- 2- Provide displaced families with humanitarian relief
- 3- Take a firm stand against impunity for all international crimes committed against Chaldean Syriac Assyrian people, by referring these situations to the ICC.
- 4- Urge the Syrian government to release all persons arbitrarily detained including human rights defenders, and political leaders including the head of the Assyrian Democratic Organization Mr. Gabriel Mushe, and deploy extensive efforts as to obtain the release of 235 persons abducted by IS.

Mr. President

Ramina once wrote a poem saying "I will raise my voice, and make my songs fly so that the entire world will hear me"

This Council must not allow either the brutality of IS or the inaction of States to silence her voice.