



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
15 April 2021  
English  
Original: Arabic

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## Human Rights Council

Forty-seventh session

21 June–9 July 2021

Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

### **Letter dated 29 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council**

I am writing to you on the instructions of my Government concerning the Brussels V Conference – Supporting the future of Syria and the region, to be held on 29 and 30 March 2021, which was mentioned during the forty-sixth Session of the Human Rights Council.

This conference is being held for the fifth time in a row without the participation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the only legitimate representative of the Syrian people recognized by the United Nations, which raises significant questions about the legitimacy of the conference and the goals, objectives and results envisaged by its sponsors.

The outcome of the previous conferences included pledges of support for the Syrian people and the mobilization of financial resources by international and non-international organizations, but the reality on the ground has repeatedly shown the inability of these conferences, in the form that the sponsoring States have consistently adopted, to achieve any of these objectives.

In order to fulfil the stated goals of the Brussels series of conferences and their alleged concern for the humanitarian situation in Syria, the sponsoring States would have to work with the Syrian Government to confront terrorism, the main cause of human suffering in Syria, and strive to overcome the economic hardships that affect the daily life of Syrians, rather than tightening the stranglehold on the Syrian people by continuing to impose successive packages of coercive unilateral measures, with no regard for the inconsistency of these measures with a range of provisions of international law, including the principles and rules of treaty and customary law, peremptory norms and others. Perhaps the most notable aspect of these illegal measures is their negative impact on human rights, which is exacerbated in cases of long-term application and in situations requiring targeted countries to take extraordinary measures at the national level, such as health emergencies that need to be tackled through international cooperation and solidarity, as has been evident in dealing with the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The rights to life, health and a decent life have been at the top of the list of human rights that have been affected by these measures.

The selfishness of the sponsors of this conference has continued to undermine the international cooperation and solidarity required to address the global threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even calls by the United Nations Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to lift coercive unilateral measures to enable States to respond efficiently to the pandemic have been completely ignored. Reaffirming their grave negative effects on human rights in Syria, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of



unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Ms. Alena Douhan, has in recent times repeatedly called for the lifting of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria that violate the human rights of the Syrian people and impede the work of international humanitarian organizations.

Contrary to the claims by the European Union that its coercive unilateral measures have specific and targeted objectives and that they include humanitarian exemptions to ensure that they do not affect the continued delivery of humanitarian goods and services and the work of vital sectors to ensure the delivery of these services, there is no doubt that these provisions are, in fact, either non-existent, not practically applicable or governed by complex and opaque red tape, making them mere theoretical ideas used by targeting States to justify their unlawful unilateral measures and promote their related policies. This makes the States and institutions of the European Union lose all credibility when talking about helping Syrians and alleviating their suffering. It also confirms their participation and fundamental responsibility for the unjust war on Syria and the suffering of Syrians.

The Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns these conferences and considers them to be blatant interference in the internal affairs of Syria, which is the prerogative and jurisdiction of the Syrian people and their legitimate Government. The only assistance that these States and institutions can provide to the Syrian people is to fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolutions related to the fight against terrorism, including ceasing all forms of support and addressing the consequences of their policies in that regard, respecting the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and not interfering in its affairs, and lifting all unilateral coercive measures that have exhausted the Syrian people and deprived them of their basic rights.

Deciding on the future of Syria is the exclusive right of the Syrian people, and political and economic pressures will not undermine their free will. Before the unjust war against them, the Syrian people achieved excellent levels of development using their own capacities and defeated terrorism. They are capable of reconstructing what has been destroyed by takfirist terrorism and its supporters and building the bright future that Syrians aspire to in a Syria whose territory and people are united, through a free and independent national decision and not the decisions of States that operate crudely in complete contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations and in a way that undermines the foundations of the global international order.

I would be appreciative if you could circulate the present letter as a document of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 4.

[*Signature*] Hussam Edin Aala  
**Ambassador/Permanent Representative**

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