



UN Security Council Arria-formula meeting

Transitional justice and missing persons in the Syrian Arab Republic

New York, 21 July 2026

3PM – 6PM, Trusteeship Council Chamber

**Introductory remarks by H.E. Mr. Olivier Maes
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg**

Thank you Ambassador Lassen, dear Christina,

Colleagues, distinguished guests, dear families of the missing,

It is an honor for Luxembourg to co-sponsor this Arria-formula meeting with Denmark, Colombia and the Syrian Arab Republic.

As you have reminded us, dear Christina, hundreds of thousands of people went missing during the Assad regime, and the fate of a vast majority of those remains unknown. This creates incredible hardship for those left behind, both in Syria and abroad.

In an effort to bring closure to the families and to clarify the fate of the missing, in June 2023 the General Assembly adopted resolution 77/301, by which it decided to establish, under the auspices of these United Nations, the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP). Luxembourg was honored to lead the core group of Member States who worked hard to establish the IIMP, under very challenging circumstances, three years ago.

Throughout our joint work on resolution 77/301, we have always put the dignity of the missing and the well-being of their families at the forefront of our efforts.

The families were the driving force behind the creation of the IIMP, and we are heartened to see that they remain engaged and that their perspectives are included in the work of the Institution. It is particularly moving to see the representatives of the Syrian families, brave Syrian women being here with us today.

Since the fall of the Assad regime and the establishment of the Syrian transitional authorities, new pathways have opened to clarify the fate of the missing. The fact that the Head of the IIMP, Assistant Secretary-General Karla Quintana and her team have been able to conduct numerous working visits to Syria has been crucial for the progress of the work of the Institution, and we hope that the cooperation can be strengthened in the future.

We are encouraged by the ongoing national efforts and welcome the participation of the Heads of the Syrian National Commission for the Missing and the Syrian National Commission on Transitional Justice in today's meeting. The process of clarifying the fate of the missing indeed needs to be Syrian-owned, nationally led, and internationally supported.

We hope today's meeting will help strengthen the cooperation and trust between all relevant actors in Syria and in the international community to ensure the right of families to know the fate and whereabouts of their missing relatives and receive adequate support. It is a humanitarian imperative. It is also an imperative for peace. Addressing the issue of missing persons is crucial in efforts towards national reconciliation and sustainable peace in Syria.

Thank you.