OHCHR Fact-Finding Mission to Syria
Terms of Reference

Mandate

1. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/S-16/1 requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to dispatch urgently a mission to the Syrian Arab Republic:

   - To investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law,
   - To establish the facts and circumstances of such violations and of the crimes perpetrated, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability;
   - To provide a preliminary report and oral update to the Council at its seventeenth session;
   - To submit a follow-up report at the eighteenth session.

The resolution further requested the High Commissioner to organise an interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic during the Council’s eighteenth session.

Cooperation of Syrian authorities

3. The Human Rights Council called upon the Syrian authorities to fully cooperate with the Fact Finding Mission.

4. As per established best practices, such cooperation shall include complying with requests of the Fact-Finding mission for assistance in collecting the required information and testimony. It shall, in particular, guarantee to the Mission:

   a. freedom of movement throughout the territory of Syria;

   b. freedom of access to all places and establishments, including prisons and detention centers of relevance to the work of the Fact Finding Mission;

   c. freedom of access to all sources of information, including documentary material and physical evidence, freedom to interview representatives of governmental and military authorities, community leaders, civil society and, in
principle, any individual whose testimony is considered necessary for the fulfillment of its mandate;

d. appropriate security arrangements for the personnel, documents, premises and other property of the Fact Finding Mission;

e. protection of all those who are in contact with the Fact Finding Mission in connection with the inquiry; no such person shall, as a result of such appearance or information suffer harassment, threats of intimidation, ill-treatment, reprisals, or any other prejudicial treatment.

f. privileges, immunities and facilities necessary for the independent conduct of the inquiry. In particular, members of the Fact Finding Mission shall enjoy the privileges and immunities pursuant to the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

5. The Fact Finding Mission may approach third States with a request for cooperation in the collection of material or information relevant to the case.

Composition of the Mission

6. The Fact Finding Mission will be headed by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, and will be composed of 16 staff members with relevant human rights expertise, as well as the necessary administrative, logistic, security and technical staff.

8. The Human Rights Council requested the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to provide all administrative, technical logistical and security assistance required to enable the above-mentioned mission to fulfil its mandate.