



Brussels/Geneva 20 December 2012. The independent international Commission of Inquiry on Syria on Thursday released its latest periodic update, covering the period 28 September to 16 December 2012.

“The report is very gloomy, it paints an extremely bleak picture of this devastating conflict and the continuing serious Human Rights and Humanitarian law violations, by both sides; the government troops and the rebel groups,” the chairman of the Commission, Paulo Pinheiro told a press conference in Brussels.

The new 10-page update, is an interim report but the Commission is due to deliver its findings to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2013.

The commission warns that the conflict has become overtly sectarian in nature, with Government forces and supporting militias attacking Sunni civilians, and reports of anti-Government armed groups attacking Alawites and other pro-Government minority communities.

“We have indicated this in previous reports but this has become increasingly clear”, said Mr. Pinheiro.

The update report also highlights the presence of foreign fighters, some with links to extremist

groups, and the radicalisation of some of the Syrian anti-Government fighters is highlighted.

Expressing his concerns on the “internationalization” of the conflict Mr. Pinheiro declared the Commission’s support for the efforts of Lakhdar Brahimi, the joint Special Representative of the UN and the Arab League. “We think also that this is a war where no military victory is possible. I think is is a great illusion that providing arms to one side or the other, will bring nearer an end to the crises. The only solution is a political and diplomatic settlement.”



The Commission, which comprises Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro (Chair), Ms. Karen AbuZayd, Ms. Carla del Ponte and Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn, has been mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate and record all violations of international human rights law.

The Commission has already interviewed 1,200 witnesses and victims of Human Rights violation, including 100 since the last update. The investigators were not allowed to enter Syria but Mr. Pinheiro says: “We had not access to Syria, but that does not mean we did not have access to information in Syria.”

The full 10-page update can be viewed at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SY/ColSyriaDecember2012.pdf>