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Item 4
Interactive dialogue with the International Commission of Inquiry
on the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. President,

Today, as the crisis in Syria enters its fifth year, the human rights situation there remains disastrous – war crimes and crimes against humanity are rife.¹ Civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict. The exposition of pictures of persons killed in the custody of government forces currently exhibited at the United Nations headquarters in New York is a tragic reminder of this.²

Torture and other ill-treatment were widespread before the crisis. They have since become even more widespread in the various detention facilities run by the government security forces. Persons detained by armed groups, in particular by the so-called Islamic State (IS), also suffer torture and other ill-treatment. The so-called Islamic State has been committing war crimes on a mass scale, including the summary killing of hostages and other abductees.

In light of this shocking situation, Amnesty International encourages the Commission of Inquiry and the Human Rights Council to do all within their power to improve the situation of persons arbitrarily detained, abducted and disappeared. Their situation is particularly acute and must be addressed with

¹ This statement is based on Amnesty International's written statement "Syria: The UN Human Rights Council must prioritize the situation of persons arbitrary detained, abducted and disappeared in Syria, A/HRC/28/NGO/152, 27 February 2015. (AI Index: MDE 24/1038/2015, 23 February 2015),

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/1038/2015/en/>

² Images of Syrian torture on display at UN: 'It is imperative we do not look away'
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/11/images-syrian-torture-shock-new-yorkers-united-nations>

the utmost urgency. Civil society in Syria has been stifled through the persecution of human rights defenders, peaceful political activists, journalists, media workers and medical and other humanitarian personnel, detained solely as a result of the legitimate exercise of their human rights.

The violations and abuses continue over one year after the adoption of Resolution 2139 (2014), demanding their end. The Human Rights Council must continue to look for ways to contribute to ending them, including by urging the parties to the conflict to ensure immediate and unfettered access for the Commission of Inquiry to all detention facilities, official and unofficial. The Human Rights Council should also continue to call for the release of all persons arbitrarily detained, abducted or disappeared as a result of the exercise of their human rights.

Thank you Mr. President.