



Sant'Anna
School of Advanced Studies – Pisa

Colloquium on the impact of illicit trade on Human Rights: the case of Syria

on the occasion of XX Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the ICC
15 December 2021, 16:00 -17:30

For the past decade the conflict in Syria has led to a de-facto partition of the country between various areas of influence and the control of the Syrian territory remains strongly fragmented. In these conditions of armed competition among actors that aim at different, and sometime, contradictory political goals the violations of international norms and human rights continue to be perpetrated daily. International legality and the rule of law have been constantly violated by all parties in the conflict to establish the “rule of might”. National laws and international conventions protecting the rights of individuals have been crushed by terrorism, foreign interventions and regional and geopolitical logic that have turned Syria into contested territory.

The massive level of violence witnessed in Syria for the past decade diverted the attention from the economic and trade interests of the warring parties. The conflict has determined the complete collapse of all socio-economic structures within Syria, compounded for the past 18 months by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the emergence of an unregulated and informal economic and trade system within Syria, which is fueled on the one hand by the need to acquire financial and economical resources to feed the military operations but also on the will to gain and amass political power to avoid accountability and establish a system of impunity based on the rule of might.

While the international community has established various mechanisms, such as the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry and the IIIM, to monitor and report the massive human rights violations perpetrated by all warring parties in Syria; and several other UN and International agencies work to assist and support Syria’s neighboring countries in countering the regional effects of the conflict, the focus and attention of the economic and trade repercussions of the conflict in Syria have been mostly limited to the exploitation of antiquities, narcotics and sanctioned goods.

This colloquium aims at highlighting how illicit trade and war economies have severe and tangible human rights costs by eroding the rule of law, increasing human suffering, laying the groundwork for a future based on impunity, unchecked power and criminality. Exacerbated by a complex and intertwined regional conflict, illicit trade flourishes in Syria, increasing criminal and terrorist profits, fueling political instability and human suffering and ultimately prolonging the conflict. It is critical that the international community, civil society and the private sector acquire an increased awareness on the nexus between illicit trade and human rights violations against individuals and communities, as a basis for greater commitment to counteracting illicit trade.

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PROGRAM

Co-Chairs: Hussein Sabbagh, Euro-Syrian Democratic Forum
Niccolò Figà-Talamanca, No Peace Without Justice

Panel:

Mr. Mohamad Almrwah, Syrian human rights activist and researcher

Mr. Yaser Alfarhan, Syrian lawyer and member of the Syrian Constitutional Committee.

Luca Poltronieri Rossetti, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

György Tatár, Budapest Center for Mass Atrocities Prevention

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