24th session of the  
Human Rights Council  
Item 4

Report of the independent international commission  
of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic  
Interactive Dialogue  
Delivered by Renate Bloem

Thank you Mr. President,

CIVICUS, in reading the abhorrent 10th update of the commission of inquiry on Syria, wishes in response to quote Mazen Darwish, head of Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression. He speaks from the prison of Damascus, where he has been detained since February 2012 by Syrian Security Forces. His words came when receiving the Bruno Kreisky award in June 2013, and his friends had asked CIVICUS to make them known. I quote:

“I asked myself why a firm fighter and a statesman pushed his nation to permanent neutrality leaving voluntarily the ecstasy of victory and the joy of winning, till I have realized that there is no winner in wars, everybody is a loser, and there is nothing good in war except its ending.

From Baghdad to Budapest, Lebanon to Prague and from Vietnam to the two Koreas, I have learnt that there is nothing good in war except its ending, and from the victims of wars .. to the victims of tyranny in our Arab world ... I have learnt that the road to democracy is as far from the path of extremism and terrorism as it is from dictatorships and tyranny.

Yes .. we want freedom and dignity and justice and yes we deserve it, but it surely is not the freedom of dying under torture or slaughtered, it is not to be killed by a shell from a jet or a by car bomb, it is the freedom of life on the basis of sharing and coalition between the universality of human rights values and the privacy of local social relations in order to reshape global human sphere that makes life itself a moral human experience and we look at it as more owned by others than us....” End of quote

CIVICUS urges the Syrian government to give finally access to the Commission to hold perpetrators of crimes against humanity to account. CIVICUS further urges the Council and all those who lead now a substitute war of their own interests in Syria to heed the recommendations of the Commission and open wide the current window of opportunity towards halt and control of chemical weapons, but beyond towards halt to all killings and towards a new beginning of peace talks on the basis of the 2012 Geneva communiqué.

Thank you, Mr President