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Towards Accountability for International Crimes in Syria: Concerted efforts by civil society, national prosecutors and international investigators

**Wednesday, 8 November 2017, 18:00 - 21:30
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin**

As one of the few countries with pure universal jurisdiction legislation, Germany is playing a key role in the fight for accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria. In the course of an ongoing structural investigation concerned with international crimes committed by the Syrian government, the Office of the German Federal Prosecutor heard testimonies from torture survivors who, together with Syrian lawyers Anwar al-Bunni ([Syrian Center for Legal Research & Studies, SCLSR](#)), Mazen Darwish ([Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, SCM](#)) and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#)), filed a [criminal complaint](#) against senior officials in the Syrian Military Intelligence Service in March 2017. As a further step, the group around Syrian military defector “Caesar” filed [a criminal complaint](#) together with ECCHR in September 2017.

Thanks to the tireless work of Al-Bunni and Darwish and the support of the [Heinrich Böll Foundation](#), ECCHR has since then worked on further criminal complaints addressing international crimes committed by the Syrian government in detention centers in various locations over the country.

On 8 November 2017, SCLSR, SCM, and ECCHR will, in cooperation with Amnesty International Germany, and Heinrich Böll Foundation, bring together stakeholders from Syria as well as from the national and international level including **Catherine Marchi-Uhel**, [Head of the UN International Impartial Independent Mechanism Investigating Serious Crimes in Syria](#).

Together, we will reflect on the ongoing and possible future efforts for accountability in Syria. The **first panel will be lead by Syrian torture survivors and activists**, who are at the heart of the criminal complaints in Germany against high ranking officials of the Assad government. The **second discussion will shed light on gaps in documentation and challenges of preserving evidence** in the context of judicial action addressing international crimes committed in Syria.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to this event and kindly ask you to register at anmeldung@boell.de

Program

18:00 - 18:15

Welcoming remarks

Barbara Unmüßig, [Heinrich-Böll Foundation](#)

Wolfgang Kaleck, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#))

18:15 – 19:00

Further steps towards accountability: Survivors and civil society in collaboration

- Yazan Awad, Syrian torture survivor and claimant/Air Force Intelligence detention center
- Shappal Ibrahim, Syrian torture survivor and claimant/Saydnaya military prison
- Anwar al-Bunni, [Syrian Center for Legal Research and Studies](#)
- Tarek Hokan, [Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression](#)
- Moderated by: Dr. Bente Scheller, [Heinrich-Böll Foundation Beirut](#)

19:00 - 19:30

Video: Saydnaya – Inside a Syrian Torture Prison by [Forensic Architecture](#) (20 minutes)
with opening and closing remarks (5 min.) by Forensic Architecture

- Introduction: Markus Beeko, [Amnesty International Germany](#)

19:30 - 19:45

Break

19:45 – 20:15

Keynote by Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of IIIM

- Introduction: Dr. Patrick Kroker, [ECCHR](#)

20:15 – 21:15

Paving the way for judicial action: Gaps in documentation and the challenges of preserving evidence

- Donatella Rovera, [Amnesty International](#)
- Bill Wiley, [Commission for International Justice and Accountability](#)
- Mazen Darwish, [Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression](#)
- Marie Forestier, [independent journalist and researcher](#)
- Matevž Pezdirc, [EU Genocide Network representative](#)
- Moderated by: Dr. Patrick Kroker, [ECCHR](#)

The event will be held in English and Arabic, with simultaneous translation.

We would like to inform you that photos will be taken during the event and that there will be a live stream via <https://www.boell.de/livestream>

Contact:

ECCHR: Anabel Bermejo, e-mail: bermejo@ECCHR.eu

Heinrich-Böll Stiftung: Birgit Arnhold, e-mail: arnhold@boell.de