



» SYRIA

EMHRN Factsheet: ENP Memo 2013

EMHRN summary of ENP Syria Memo and recommendations for the next memo.

Credit: Reuters

Given the ongoing spiral of violence that followed the “Arab Spring” and widespread human rights violations perpetrated by the Syrian government against its citizens, the EU suspended its bilateral cooperation with the Syrian government and froze negotiations on an Association Agreement. In the absence of an Action Plan, a memo outlining EU action over the past year is issued.

Freedom of Association

The EU reiterates its support to Syrian civil society, making reference to the financial support granted through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

EMHRN calls on the EU to address the issue of political prisoners in next year’s memo.

Gender

The memo only makes reference to the importance of women in the peace process and the reconstruction of Syria.

EMHRN calls on the EU to address issues of protection and special needs of women during conflict, including the need for rehabilitation and protection of victims of rape and sexual violence who face both trauma and stigmatisation.

Justice

The section dealing with the question of justice fails to address the pressing needs for accountability in the Syrian conflict. Although one of the recommendations touches upon the EU guidelines on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the memo does not include a legal analysis of the situation in Syria under IHL.

The EU only states that it “strongly supported the mission of the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, and efforts aimed at ensuring accountability for crimes committed during the Syrian conflict”. Chief among the overlooked concerns are Syria’s exceptional courts that blatantly violate international fair trial standards, arbitrary arrests, as well as enforced disappearances and widespread use of torture.

EMHRN calls on the EU to include a focus on accountability and an appropriate analysis of the conflict under IHL in its next memo on Syria.

