

Appeal to the “Friends of Syria” Conference

23 February 2012

One hundred forty-four international and Middle Eastern NGOs signed the following letter to the “Friends of Syria” group ahead of their meeting in Tunis on 24 February.

We the undersigned, representing 144 international and Arab NGOs from over 20 countries, call on the “Friends of Syria” conference, to be held on February 24th in Tunis, to seek an international strategy to end the human rights violations in Syria. As fears of civil war grow, the “Friends of Syria” should exercise pressure on all groups responsible for the unlawful use of force against civilians to cease such acts of violence immediately. All groups should respect human rights and guard against sectarian violence.

We call on the “Friends of Syria” conference to formulate an international consensus on the Syrian crisis in support of ending human rights abuses and international crimes based on Arab League Resolution 7446 and UN General Assembly Resolution 11207. In particular, we urge the conference to:

1. Reiterate a **unanimous call on the Syrian authorities to commit to the December 19 protocol agreement signed with the League of Arab States** to immediately release all detainees held from the beginning of the uprising to the present day, including human rights defenders, end the use of torture and forced disappearances, stop all forms of violence regardless of their source in all cities and residential areas, guarantee peaceful protests are not attacked by Syrian security forces.

2. Fully **enforce and monitor the implementation of targeted sanctions on the Syrian authorities** wherever they have been adopted and ensure other countries also adopt and enforce similar sanctions against the authorities and those implicated in human rights abuses and international crimes including through an arms embargo.

3. **Urge the Syrian government and armed groups to facilitate the delivery of independent and impartial emergency aid proportionate to needs, ensure the evacuation of injured people in places under fire,** and call for effective access for humanitarian organizations, as well as journalists, and human rights advocates to monitor the situation on the ground. **Particular attention should be directed to safe access to civil hospitals and adequate delivery of medical care in accordance with international law.**

4. Press for **accountability for crimes against humanity** including through UN Security Council referral to the International Criminal Court.

While we highly appreciate the intense efforts already under way to address the Syrian crisis, we believe that the conference in Tunisia must pave the way for a more robust international consensus that can pave the way for effective UN Security Council action. (...) **Read the full**

letter and **list of signatories.**

