

Joint call by Civil Society to the UN Security Council: Urgent action needed to provide protection to civilians in Syria and to ensure accountability International Federation of Human Rights 19 December 2011

While the undersigned organizations recognize the draft resolution condemning Syria currently being discussed by the Security Council, the current text does not adequately address the severity of the situation on the ground and fails to support international accountability for crimes committed by the government of Syria. The undersigned civil society organizations from around the world call on the United Nations (UN) Security Council to hold an emergency meeting to adopt a resolution ensuring protection for victims of human rights violations in Syria and accountability for potential crimes, including crimes against humanity, committed by the Syrian authorities.

In particular, we call on the Security Council to pass a resolution that will:

- Condemn and call for an immediate end to all attacks against civilians, including within the context of peaceful protests
- Demand that the Syrian authorities abide by the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, and the efforts of the League of Arab States (LAS) to end all acts of violence, release all political prisoners, remove the military from civilian populated areas, and grant access to independent observers and international media
- Immediately refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for potential crimes against humanity, as highlighted in the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria presented on to the Human Rights Council on 2 December, which documented widespread and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms committed by the Syrian government;
- Demand the immediate cooperation of Syria with the LAS, as well as relevant humanitarian organizations, including granting them full access to its territory;
- Require states to suspend all military sales and assistance to Syria, as there is a clear risk that they will be used in the commission of serious human rights violations;
- Urge action by all relevant United Nations bodies to ensure the protection of Syrian refugees residing outside of Syria and provide for their humanitarian needs. (...)

In this context, we are deeply troubled by the continuous failure of the UN Security Council to effectively act on the matter. Since last October, when the Security Council failed to adopt a strong resolution to support efforts to ensure international accountability by the Syrian government for potential crimes against humanity as a result of a veto by Russia and China, and abstentions by South Africa, India, Brazil, and Lebanon, more than 2,500 more civilians have died in addition to thousands arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared. Unlike what is reflected in the current draft resolution, this period has also marked the failure of the Road Map initiated by LAS to end the bloodshed. The long negotiation process between LAS and the Syrian authorities ended with several obstacles imposed by the Syrian regime that make it highly unlikely that the mission of observers to Syria will take place. This is in addition to the holding of three Special Sessions at the UN Human Rights Council and the establishment of

two UN independent inquiry commissions – both denied entry into Syria– which reported the likelihood of crimes against humanity being committed by the Syrian government. (...) **Read full letter and list of signatories** and see the **letter to the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Dr. Nabil El Araby on ensuring effective targeted sanctions from 120 Arab and International NGOs.**