



Human Rights Conditions in Syria
Oral Statement during the consideration of the UPR Outcome
15 March 2012 12:00-15:00

Mme. President,

This is a joint statement by CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation and the Arab NGO Network for Development.

As noted by The Commission of Inquiry in its latest report presented to the Human Rights Council 19th session, Syrian Government *“has manifestly failed in its responsibility to protect the population; its forces have committed widespread, systematic and gross human rights violations, amounting to crimes against humanity, with the apparent knowledge and consent of the highest levels of the State.”* *“The grave and ongoing human rights crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is the consequence of a combination of factors, including a State that has failed to respond to the legitimate political, economic and social demands of its people.”*¹

Every single day, the use of military action is intensifying in Syria, the human rights and humanitarian conditions are deteriorating. On the contrary to the call of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Arab League and UN Special Envoy to Syria and international community, Syrian authorities have failed to put an immediate halt to use of excessive force and violence. Indeed, thus Syrian authorities did not take any serious steps towards the implementation of political reforms demanded by the people, except for assigning a committee to propose constitutional amendments and propose laws for political parties, associations and for the elections. These steps did not reflect the seriousness in responding to the quest for reform and political openness. Syrian authorities have not taken any steps neither to reform social and economic policies in line with international human rights standards and in accordance with the recommendations accepted during the human rights records revision of Syria during the Universal Periodic Review session (October 7th 2010).

The internal situation in Syria has reached a stage of severe complexity, whereby the provision of solutions is difficult. The proper and sustainable approach must be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which can only be pursued through democratic and transparent political process that reflects the choices of citizens.

¹ Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/19/69, Paragraphs 121 and 126.

In light of the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and following the latest resolution adopted on March 1st 2012 during the urgent session on Syria, we call on the Human Rights Council, to urge Syrian authorities to:

- Immediately cease the use of force and repression in all forms and release political prisoners
- Allow access of humanitarian groups and independent inquiry missions in all areas of Syria with no restrictions
- Take immediate measures to allow for safe areas for operation of humanitarian agencies that can secure needed support to medical personnel, needed equipment and medicines required to treat the injured.
- Take the proper measures to launch the political process and democratic dialogue mechanisms leading to human rights protection, peaceful transition of power, and maintenance of the cessation of military and security actions and violence against citizens, with a longer term vision towards establishing sustained democratic practice and reforming economic and social development policies and laws so as to ensure the economic and social rights of the Syrian citizen.
- Respect human rights and carry out immediate and serious steps to implement the outcome recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review and other UN treaty bodies.

Finally, stressing the importance of ensuring accountability and the need to end impunity and hold to account those responsible for human rights violations and crimes against humanity in Syria, we call upon the Human Rights Council members to ensure that the information and evidence included in Commission of Inquiry Report is communicated to the members of the Security Council, in order to enable a potential referral to the International Criminal Court.
