

Secretary-General's Remarks To League of Arab States Summit UN Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon 29 March
2012 Yo

ur Excellency Mr. Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq,
Your Excellency Dr. Nabil El Araby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This summit comes at a momentous time for Iraq and the Arab world. I congratulate the people and Government of Iraq for hosting it.

Indeed, after so many years of suffering – repression, sanctions, war and economic hardship – our collective presence in Baghdad is a testament to the great strides Iraq has made.

This summit in Baghdad clearly shows that Iraq is regaining its place in the Arab world and the wider international community. The days of the Saddam Hussein regime are well behind us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the Arab League's first Summit since the remarkable series of events that have transformed the Arab region. The lessons are eloquent and clear. The winds of change will not cease to blow.

For decades the people of the Arab world have seen tyrannies topple and democracies emerge in Europe, Asia and Africa. Now they see it is their time. (...)

(...) My message to you is simple. It draws on all that we have seen and all that we know. Listen. Listen to the people. The road to democracy is not easy. But other regions have gone through similar transitions. You can count on the United Nations for support.

We are strongly committed to promoting peace and stability, sustainable development and human rights throughout the Arab world.

Helping countries in transition is one of the top priorities for my second term. (...)

(...) The United Nations has long cooperated with the League, but today those ties are much, much closer and are bringing more tangible results. We saw it in Libya, and we see it now in Syria.

Our designation of my distinguished predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan, as our Joint Special Envoy on Syria is a striking example of our work together.

The conflict in Syria is on a dangerous trajectory with potential ramifications for the entire region. The Government has failed to fulfill its **responsibility to protect** its own people.

Instead it has subjected citizens in several cities to military assault and disproportionate use of

force.

I know you have been working hard over the past few days here in Baghdad to forge a united front on this worsening crisis. It has been at the top of my discussions with numerous world leaders over the past few days, including Mr. Elaraby your Secretary-General.

As you know, the Syrian government has written to the Joint Special Envoy, Mr. Kofi Annan, accepting his six-point plan, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council.

I share Mr. Annan's view that this is an important initial step that could bring an end to the violence and the bloodshed, provide aid to those people who are suffering, and create an environment conducive to a political dialogue that would fulfill the long-held legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

It is essential that President Assad put those commitments into immediate effect. The world is waiting for commitments to be translated into action. The key here is implementation. There is no time to waste.

At the same time, I call on the opposition to fully cooperate with Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan's proposal. And I appreciate the work done by those of you here today to ensure this violence stops immediately.

Mr. Annan is working urgently with all parties, including the opposition, to secure that implementation and to get an inclusive political process in place. I sincerely appreciate his tireless efforts and the evident support he is receiving from the international community. (...)

To read the full address, see

[here](#)

.