

Crimes Against Humanity in Syria: the urgent debate in the UN Human Rights Council should be echoed by further action at the Security Council International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

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On the eve of August 22, 2011, a date set by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) for a Special Session on the situation of human rights in Syria, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Damascus Center for Human rights Studies (DCHRS) call upon the Member States of the HRC to adopt an unequivocal resolution and take all appropriate measures to urge the Syrian authorities to put an immediate end to the gross human rights violations underway in the country. Additionally the UN Human Rights Council should further its efforts to press the Syrian authorities to fully cooperate without any further delay with independent UN bodies. This includes, but is not limited to a UN commission of inquiry in order to enable an investigation on all alleged violations of international human rights law and to identify those allegedly responsible. Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad has assured UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, that military and security operations against protesters ceased a couple of days ago. Despite this, extensive and relentless repression continues to take place. The « widespread and systematic » nature of the attacks perpetrated by the Syrian authorities against the civilian population since the beginning of the uprising has amounted to crimes against humanity. This has been confirmed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the basis of the findings of her Office's report released on August 18.

FIDH and DCHRS support the HRC proposal to establish a Commission of Inquiry in order to further investigate all alleged violations committed against Syrian civilians and call upon the Syrian government to fully cooperate with the Commission and to immediately take all necessary steps to guarantee their full and immediate access to Syria.

However, recalling the Syrian persistent failure to cooperate with the UN bodies and the gravity, the scale, and the international character of the alleged crimes committed by the Syrian Government, FIDH and DCHRS reiterate their call to the UN Security Council Member States to take urgent and appropriate actions including to consider referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, as recommended by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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