

Syria: Who You Gonna Call? Don Kraus (guest post) Care2 18 August 2011

(...) As Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's brutality escalates, so have the rebukes from the world community. Today President Obama announced the harshest financial sanctions yet against the Assad regime. And for the first time, the president has called for Assad to leave Syria, so the country can have a democratic transition. (...) Even Turkey, Syria's neighbor and ally, alarmed at the assault on unarmed protestors resulting in over 2000 civilian deaths, has weighed in with its foreign minister saying, "This is our final word ... these operations stop immediately and unconditionally." (...)

This is all sounding eerily familiar. Is Syria shaping up to follow in the footsteps of Libya, Darfur, the Congo and other conflicts, where mass atrocities result in international handwringing, declarations, and half measures that allow more conflict and civilian deaths? (...)

The good news is that compared to the years it took for the international community to react to the killings in Darfur and the Congo, international action is now happening at light speed. (...)

The bad news is that there are still very few effective tools available to the international community when a national leader is determined to inflict brutality on civilians to maintain control of a nation. Blatant murder committed by a head of state obligates the U.N. Security Council to send a firm message to Assad that there will be consequences for the continued use of overwhelming force against peaceful protestors. (...)

My organization,

[Citizens for Global Solutions has called for the Security Council to impose an arms embargo](#) on Syria and order a halt to the purchase of its oil and gas products until all Syrians are protected. The Council should also hold the Syrian political and military leadership personally responsible for their actions, by referring the case to the International Criminal Court. (...)

The U.N.'s Human Rights Council should conduct public hearings in Geneva featuring live, televised testimony by Syrian victims who have escaped to neighboring countries to generate global pressure for more effective means to end the killings. (...)

Earlier this year, the French successfully sent troops to stop mass killings and to allow for a democratically elected government to take root in Cote d'Ivoire. But no nation is stepping up to the plate in Syria. This is the moment when the international community should come together to fill the gap between its need to keep the peace and its ability to do so, by establishing a standing force made of individuals recruited from around the world by the United Nations. (...)

The bottom line is, until the U.N. has a true capacity to answer an international 911 call, the

resolution to Syria and future mass murder scenarios will be slow, messy and too little, too late for those who must endure them. (...)

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