

Silence is not an option! Syrians cannot afford to wait! International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) 13 September 2011

In a letter addressed to the League of Arab States Secretary General Nabil al-Arabi, 176 local and international civil society organizations working in the Middle East commend the League for its initiatives to install reforms in Syria and call for Syrian President Assad's forces to cease the violent attacks against civilians. The letter further calls for the League to put a monitoring and reporting mechanism in place to enforce benchmarks.

We, the undersigned representatives of (176) local and international civil society organisations working in the Arab world, welcome the League of Arab States' (LAS) efforts to find a solution to the human rights crisis in Syria.

We commend the League for including in its thirteen points plan a clear demand for the cessation of violence, the release of all political prisoners and compensation for victims of the crackdown.

While the LAS initiative is commendable, we are concerned that it lacks guarantees and benchmarks to ensure its successful implementation. In order to ensure the principles set forth in the LAS plan are fully respected by the Syrian authorities, clear and publicly established criteria based on international standards are necessary. An effective mechanism of monitoring and reporting to ensure the cessation of violence as well as the implementation of reforms on the ground should be an integral part of the Arab League's initiative.

In addition, an effective Arab approach cannot avoid the principle of accountability for the serious human rights violations the regime has and is committing at the moment. Thus in any meeting with President Assad, we urge the Secretary General to reiterate that Syria should grant access to the Commission of Inquiry mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate human rights violations in Syria.

We hope that the Government of Syria will respond to the LAS initiative. In case the Syrian authorities refuse to cooperate and to commit massive human rights abuses, we urge the League to support sanctions against Syria and its rulers, including through the UN Security Council. (...)

Citizens of the Arab world share the desire to see an end to the bloodshed in Syria and to see the Arab League act as the leading regional organization to protect and uphold the common values of the Arab world at this critical and historical moment. We trust the League will now play a more active and instrumental role in ending these grave human rights violations against the Syrian population. **Read the full [letter](#) .**