

Silence is not an option! Syrians cannot afford to wait: Arab and International civil society present measures to the League of Arab States to intensify leadership on Syria
International Federation of Human Rights

17 October 2011

**Your Excellency, Dr. Nabil El Araby
Secretary General, League of Arab States**

We, the 121 undersigned NGOs representing civil society working in the Arab world, call on the League of Arab States to deliver on the promises it made to the Syrian people in September and to properly address what the League itself called an "extremely worrying" situation. Its statement must now be followed by concrete measures to bring an end to the continuing violence against civilians.

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The international community and the League of Arab states have so far failed to fulfill their responsibility to protect the Syrian population. The crackdown is claiming more and more lives, and heavy weaponry continues to be used against unarmed civilians daily. The continued failure to respond to the mounting crisis in Syria will fundamentally delegitimize Arab leadership across the region. Leadership from the Arab League leadership is essential for any effective international response to the Syrian crisis.

We believe you can change the situation for the better. The current punitive measures adopted by governments so far will be limited in impact unless Syria feels pressure from corresponding measures within the region. Individual governments, whether acting alone or together, can send a powerful signal to the Syrian regime by threatening to withdraw diplomatic representation and suspending trade in Syrian exports.

The Syrian government has a fundamental responsibility to protect their population from mass atrocity crimes notably crimes against humanity. Instead, the regime is actively trying to provoke a civil war and stir sectarianism as a matter of policy.

The League of Arab States must act now in the interests of long-term peace and stability in the region and to prevent further loss of civilian life. We urge the League in the emergency meeting for the council of Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs to take all needed actions to fill the current vacuum in political leadership and address the crisis in Syria by:

1. Enforcing a policy of economic isolation of the Syrian regime as long as the crackdown continues,
2. Imposing restrictive measures on persons and companies of the Syrian regime directly involved in the crackdown so as to deprive the Syrian regime of financial revenues required to perpetuate the crackdown,
3. Isolating the Syrian regime diplomatically,
4. Requesting the chair of the Arab League's Human Rights Committee, to request a report on the situation in Syria which is a member of the Committee.
5. Supporting the efforts of the UNHRC fact-finding mission investigating alleged human rights violations,
6. Encouraging UNSC to increase pressure on the Syrian regime despite the failure of the October 4 UNSC meeting,
7. Enforcing a freeze to Syria's membership rights.
8. Enforcing a full arms embargo

We the undersigned ask the League of Arab States to follow up on its call for the Syrian regime to immediately stop the violence with real action. The current crisis demands leadership from the Arab League more than any other international actor. It is time to stand on the right side of history. It is time to save the Syrian people.

Signatories:

International Organizations: International Federation for Human Rights, AVAAZ, Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect

Egypt: Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Arab Forum for Alternatives, The Arab Program for Human Rights Activists (APHRA), Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, Annie Centre for Human Rights and Development, Civil Observatory for Human Rights, Citizenship Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Shumuu (Candles) for Human Rights, Egyptian Foundation for Refugees Rights (EFRR), The Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), South Center for Human Rights, The Arabic Media Crisis Network, Taha Hussein Foundation for Civic Education, Sudan Children Association, Egyptian Center for innovation and development, Maat Foundation for Peace Development and Human Rights, Bader Foundation for Social Development and Peace, Maan for Human Rights, The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP), New Generation Foundation for Human Rights-North Sinai, Freedom Center for Political Studies and Human Rights

Sudan: Al-khatim Adlan Center Enlightenment and Human Development, Sudan Development Association SDA, Civil Observatory for Human Rights, Darfur Democratic Platform, Sobat Center for Peace and Capacity Building, Solidarity trade union, Center for the Study of Human Development – Fanar, Global Center for Culture of Peace, Africa Centre for Human Rights, Darfur's Lawyers Association, Darfur Center for Promoting Peace, Darfur Media & Press Association, Dwana Organization for Human Development, CDA Community Development Association, Women for cultural and social Development Association, Arbab Cultural Center, Sara Fadil Organization for Peace and Development

Saudi Arabia: Human Rights First Society

Yemen: Social Democratic Forum, Sisters Arab Forums for Human Rights, Human Rights Information and Training Center, Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Democratic Freedoms, Media Women Forum, Community Development Foundation, Political Development Forum, The National Commission for the Defense of Freedoms (Hood), Partners Foundation for Future Development

Syria: Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies, National Organization for Human Rights

Morocco: Forum alternatives - Morocco, Democratic Organization of work in Morocco, National Association of unemployed graduates in Morocco, Badail Forum – Juosour, Development Association, Nibrass Community Association, Center of people's Rights, Lead Foundation, Moroccan Organization for Human Rights

Bahrain: Bahrain Youth Forums Society, Bahrain Center for Human Rights,

Mauritania: Northern League for Development of Democracy and Human Rights, National Commission for Human Rights in Mauritania, Arab Organization for Human Rights / Branch Mauritania, Mauritanian Association for the Protection of Democracy (Protection), Mauritanian gathering of Democratic Women, Mauritanian Association for the Promotion of Human Rights

Jordan: Observatory for Human Rights and Environment, Equality Center for Democratic Studies and Research, Justice Center for Human Rights Studies, Center for Civic Collaboration

Lebanon: Permanent Peace Movement, Lebanese Transparency Association, Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Monitor- Based In Lebanon)

Palestine: Conscience Foundation for Detainees Affairs, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, Human Rights & Democracy Media Center (Shams)

Tunisia: National Council for Liberties, Observatory of the Tunisian trade union rights and freedoms, Tunisian Organization for Democratic women

Qatar: National Human Rights Committee, Dr. Najeeb Alnauimi – Ex-Minister of Justice

Kuwait: Kuwait Organization for Human Rights, Citizens Against Corruption

Algeria: The Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights

Libya: Libyan Arab Association for Human Rights, Society for Human Rights

UAE: Emirates organization for Human Rights

Iraq: Iraqi Network for Human Rights

Regional Coalitions: Arab Coalition For Darfur (ACD)

Regional: Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), Middle East and North Africa Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict (MENAPPAC)

Total Number of organisations (accounting for coalitions): 121

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