

**Press Release: DIRCO Must Push for President al-Assad to be Charged by the ICC**

Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa Ian Davidson, Shadow Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

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The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) must advocate in all possible forums for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to be charged by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity. (...)

(...) In addition, I will be asking the Minister to use South Africa's positioning on the Syrian issue to clarify the government's interpretation of the "

**responsibility to protect**

" as outlined in Resolution 1674 of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). (...)

(...) The UNSC has the power to refer cases to the ICC. As a serving member of the UNSC, South Africa has to actively promote the referral of the crimes of the Syrian regime to the ICC. The response of the international community to the state-sponsored violence in Syria is an important test case for the interpretation of the UN's "

**responsibility to protect**

" doctrine. (...)

(...) Continued delays in coordinating decisive action in Syria can be considered a failure by the international community to fulfill its "

**responsibility to protect**

". South Africa contributed to this failure when it did not support UN intervention in Syria when it was voted on in the UNSC in October last year.

Our support of the proposed UN resolution on Syria in February 2012 was a step in the right direction. DIRCO now has to send a clear message that South Africa will not shy away from international intervention when human rights and the lives of innocent civilians are at stake.

To read the full press release, see [here](#) .