

United Nations General Assembly
Resolution calling for the expulsion of Libya from the Human Rights Council
2 March 2011
Statement by New Zealand

Mr President -

New Zealand has watched with concern the continuing grave developments in Libya and therefore applauds the adoption of this resolution.

We express solidarity with those courageous Libyans who are seeking an end to a totalitarian regime; we strongly condemn actions that have slaughtered hundreds of civilians; and we extend condolences to the bereaved and injured.

The Libyan regime's systematic use of deadly force, including aerial and rocket attacks against civilians, evokes memories of other such violations by tyrants, and may well be crimes against humanity.

These attacks violate the rights to life, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

No regime has the right to turn its own country, and the lives of its own people, into "a living hell".

On Friday, in an historically important move, the Human Rights Council decided it could not silently stand by and watch such grave human rights abuses.

New Zealand welcomed and supported the Council's resolution; we have supported this General Assembly's decision to exercise its power to suspend the rights of any member of the Council which commits gross and systematic human rights violations; and we co-sponsored the resolution to that effect.

Mr President -

Libya was a member of the Human Rights Council.

Respect for human rights was one of the pillars on which this United Nations was founded.

The United Nations' membership has, therefore, placed Libya in a position of the greatest trust and responsibility.

Libya sought that Council role, and has a special responsibility to uphold the highest standards of human rights.

The Libyan Government has grossly abused that trust.

There is no evidence whatsoever that it is, in any way, protecting its citizens from human rights abuses.

Indeed, tragically, everything indicates to the contrary.

New Zealand urges Libya to respect the will of its people.

We call on the Libyan authorities to work with the international community to bring about a peaceful solution to the crisis, to ensure humanitarian assistance is available to those in need, and to uphold their responsibility to protect their citizens

New Zealand urges accountability for those responsible for attacks on civilians, and welcomes the Security Council's decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court.

Mr President –

This has been an important moment for the credibility of the United Nations.

We, today, had a responsibility to say we will not tolerate these insults to human rights, and would not allow such a violator to sit at our human rights table; and the people of Libya had a right to expect that we would act accordingly.

Mr President –

We have now discharged that responsibility.