

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA, GENEVA

18th Special session of the Human Rights Council
The situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

[02 December 2011]

Intervention by India

Madame President,

Syria has, both historically and in contemporary times, been an important country in West Asia. Its role in the Middle East peace process and in the stability of the wider region cannot be overstated. Prolonged instability and unrest in Syria, therefore, clearly have ramifications for the region and beyond. India remains concerned at the unfolding events in Syria that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians and security forces personnel. We deplore all violence, irrespective of its perpetrators.

2. We recognize the responsibility of all States to respect the fundamental rights of their people, address their legitimate aspirations and respond to their grievances through administrative, political, economic and other measures. At the same time, States also have the obligation to protect their citizens from armed groups and militants. While the right of people to protest peacefully is to be respected, States cannot but take appropriate action when militant groups, heavily armed, resort to violence against state authority and infrastructure.

3. Given the complexity of ground realities in Syria, we believe that engaging Syria in a collaborative and constructive dialogue and partnership is the only pragmatic and productive way forward. The international community should give time and space for the Syrian Government to implement the far-reaching reform measures announced by them. For this, it is also necessary that the opposition forces in Syria give up the path of armed insurrection and engage constructively with the authorities. We believe that the actions of the international community should facilitate an engagement of the Government and the opposition in a Syrian-led, inclusive political process and not complicate the situation by threats of sanctions or regime change.

Madam President,

4. During special sessions such as these, the Council must bear in mind that its credibility and legitimacy will be enhanced when it is seen to be dealing with similar situations in a similar fashion, and not sacrificing concern for human rights at the altar of political expediency and strategic opportunism. The condemnation of violation of human rights should be universal and not selective. We have noted the report of the Commission of Inquiry, which has acknowledged the violence perpetrated by armed groups against security forces. At the same time, we observe that the report has gone beyond its mandate in some respects, especially when it refers in judgemental tones to possible crimes against humanity and possible reference to the International Criminal Court. We would also like the efforts of the League of Arab States towards a peaceful solution of the situation in Syria to be taken forward.

5. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the value of actively seeking the cooperation of, and working with, the country concerned. While we note the action taken by the international community on this issue, we would like to highlight the need to maintain the territorial integrity and unity of the country. Our delegation looks forward to working with all the member and observer States of the Council, and reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Syria.

Thank you, Madam President.
