

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA, GENEVA

17th Special Session of the Human Rights Council

The Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

Monday, 22 August 2011

Intervention by India

Madame President,

It is regrettable that since the 16th Special Session of the Human Rights Council on Syria in April 2011, the situation in Syria appears to have deteriorated further. Such violence is a set-back to our collective efforts to strengthen the peace process. We recall our statement made at that Session and remain deeply concerned at the situation in Syria as it poses a serious challenge to the stability in the country, with deep ramifications for the region and beyond. In bilateral talks, India has urged Syria to exercise restraint, abjure violence and pay heed to the aspirations of its people. An IBSA delegation to Damascus on 10 August 2011 had regretted the loss of life and expressed concern over the humanitarian impact of the violence. It called for an immediate end to all violence and urged all sides to act with utmost restraint and respect for human rights and international human rights law. While it is the responsibility of sovereign states to respond to the legitimate aspirations of its people, it is *their* prerogative to decide, in conformity with international legal standards, on the best course of action to maintain internal law and order and prevent violence.

Madame President,

2. We hope that the Syrian government will expedite the reform measures it has announced and be more responsive to the concerns expressed by the international community. We also call upon the opposition to engage with the government to implement the reforms, to meet the aspirations of all sections of the Syrian society. We welcome Syria's acceptance of the visit of the UN Humanitarian Mission and President Assad's message to the UN Secretary –

General, that all military operation had ceased.

3. We have noted the report of the Fact-Finding mission and the recommendations contained in the report. We have also taken note of the briefing of the Security Council by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 18th August 2011.

Madame President,

4. The Council should concentrate on the issue of Human rights rather than pronounce on political and other issues. While we strive to enhance the credibility of the Council, we should also be *perceived* as being even-handed, by dealing with similar situations in a similar fashion, and guided by prudence rather than strategic expediency.

5. The condemnation of violation of human rights should be universal and not selective. There are reports of the flow of arms into Syria and the Syrian Security forces have themselves suffered heavy casualties. Among the 1900 dead, Syrian government has pointed out there are over 650 security forces. There are also reports of attacks on minorities and acts of gruesome violence by extremist elements, which need to be condemned.

Madame President,

6. We would like to reiterate the value of seeking, and working with cooperation of the country concerned. Our delegation will continue working with all the members and observer States of the Council, and would support all measures that seek to restore peace by encouraging all sides to abjure violence in any form and resolve grievances through peaceful means.

Thank you, Madame President.
