

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA, GENEVA

16th Special Session of the Human Rights Council

The Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

Friday, 29 April 2011

Intervention by India

Mr. President,

We remain deeply concerned at the recent events in Syria. The escalation of violence poses a serious challenge to the stability in the country, with deep ramifications for the region and beyond. We deplore any violence from any side. We earnestly hope that calm is restored at the earliest without any further violence. We look to the Government to take the lead in building upon its recent reform measures, in acting with restraint, and in demonstrating its commitments to respect international human rights law, including its responsibility to protect its population. We urge the Syrian Government to facilitate greater access to media and information so as to enable an accurate assessment of the situation, including allegations of violence by demonstrators and the deliberate instigation of such violence. 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.

Mr. President,

2. Given its rich history, its role in the region and its socio-cultural fabric, Syria stands at an important crossroads. We take positive note of the significant announcements made by the Government in recent days aimed at political reform, including lifting of emergency, the abolition of the Supreme State Security Court, the procedures to

exercise right to peaceful assembly and the assurance on a forthcoming law on establishing new parties. We hope that it would be possible for the Government to consider expediting some of these reforms through a suitable and inclusive political dialogue, including through measures that defuse the situation and meet the aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. We take note of the setting up by the Government of a Commission of Inquiry into the violence during the demonstrations.

Mr. President,

3. Actions of the international community should not inadvertently complicate the situation by inflaming it further, or endanger the unity and territorial integrity of the country. While we should strive to enhance the credibility of the Council by emphasising strongly the protection of basic human rights in situations of severe, motivated and extensive political violence, 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. The history of the region, and of past actions of the international community relating to the region, should serve as an illuminating guide.

4. We would like to reiterate the value of seeking, and working with, cooperation of the country concerned. Our delegation looks forward to 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, Mr. President.

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