



---

## Human Rights Council passes resolution on Syrian Arab Republic in Special Session

AFTERNOON

29 April 2011

The Human Rights Council this afternoon adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The resolution, adopted with 26 votes in favour, 9 votes against and 7 abstentions, calls on the government of Syria to, among other things, put an end to all human rights violations, protect its population, fully respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, allow access to the internet and telecommunications networks, and lift censorship on reporting. The resolution also urges the Government to release all prisoners of conscience and arbitrarily detained persons, refrain from reprisals against people who participated in peaceful demonstrations, launch a credible and impartial investigation into human rights violations and prosecute those responsible for attacks on peaceful protesters, and to enlarge the scope of political participation aimed at ensuring civil liberties and enhancing social justice.

The resolution requests the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to urgently dispatch a mission to the Syrian Arab Republic to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability, and to provide a preliminary report and oral update on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic to the 17th session of the Human Rights Council.

Before the adoption of the resolution, the Human Rights Council continued a debate that it had begun this morning by hearing from Observer States and representatives of non-governmental organizations. During the afternoon discussion, speakers said that people would not endure oppression forever and the Human Rights Council must show it can react to such shocking violent events. Speakers said they were appalled by the violent attacks on peaceful demonstrators and called on Syria to cease violent actions against people practicing their freedom of assembly and expression. The escalation of



violence in Syria posed serious challenges to the stability of the country and the region as a whole and Syria should facilitate greater access to media and information to allow an assessment of the situation. People took note of the recent positive reforms in the country and encouraged the Syrian Government to accelerate the implementation of these reforms. Speakers cautioned however, that the actions of the international community should not inadvertently complicate the situation by inflaming it further or endangering the unity and territorial integrity of the country.

Some speakers said they felt convening the Special Session was excessive, politicized and lacking in any dialogue and one more example of the double standard in the Human Rights Council. While noting that governments should listen to their people, some speakers decried what they called the selective use of human rights by some parties to fulfil political ambitions. The Human Rights Council ran the risk of establishing mechanisms of domestic interference. Mutual respect and genuine cooperation should guide the Council's work in promoting and protecting human rights, including when dealing with the human rights situation in a specific country. The international community should engage constructively with Syria to find a peaceful solution.

The passage of the resolution came after a day of discussion during the Special Session, the Council's 16th and the third Special Session to be held since December 2010. The previous two sessions were held on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya respectively. During the morning session, the Council heard from Kyung-Wha Kang, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, and a videotaped message from Olivier de Schutter, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, on behalf of several Special Procedures.

Speaking this afternoon were representatives from the following Observer States: the Netherlands, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Australia, Honduras, Germany, Italy, India, Nicaragua, Peru, Lebanon, Bolivia, Denmark, Indonesia, Venezuela, New Zealand, Canada, Panama, Belarus, Viet Nam, Iran, Turkey, Paraguay, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sudan, South Africa, Portugal, Israel, Austria, Botswana, Sweden, Iraq and Algeria. A representative from UNICEF also spoke.



Representatives of several non-governmental organizations also took the floor, including: the International Federation for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, CIVICUS, the International Commission of Jurists, the Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies, United Towns Agency for North South Cooperation, Human Rights Information and Training Centre, the Arab Organization for Human Rights, Reporters without Borders International, Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme, Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Initiatives pour le Dialogue (CIRID), United Nations Watch, Amnesty International, Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development and Espace Afrique International.

Syria spoke as the concerned country before the vote and said that the resolution was an unbalanced text and that it had demonstrated an attitude of openness and had given concessions to reach an acceptable draft which was based on a positive dialogue and constructive cooperation. However, their openness and positive spirit had clashed with the obstinacy of the United States delegation that was determined to send a wrong message to the world and keep the resolution as it was. They called upon Members States for whom constructive dialogue and cooperation was dear to vote against this draft resolution

Pakistan, Argentina, China, Cuba, the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan spoke in explanations of vote before the vote.

Speaking in a general comment after the vote were Brazil and Hungary on behalf of the European Union.

The next regularly scheduled session of the Human Rights Council will be from 30 May to 17 June 2011 in the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

#### Statements

BOUDEWIJN J. VAN EENENNAAM (Netherlands), said they were shocked by the excessive use of force by the Syrian authorities and by the many deaths of demonstrators exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. There were reports that lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and peaceful demonstrators continued to be persecuted and arbitrarily arrested. These developments clearly demonstrated that the Syrian authorities ignored calls by the international community to put an immediate end to the use of violence and had



chosen to crush the protests by using brutal force. Faced with these troubling developments, the Human Rights Council could not remain silent and the Netherlands called on the Syrian authorities to end their violent response and to abide by their international commitments with regard to ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Netherlands could not conceive of Syria as a member of the Human Rights Council under the current circumstances.

GERARD CORR (Ireland), expressed grave concern at recent human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially regarding the right to life, to freedom of association, speech and assembly. Ireland reaffirmed these rights and expressed great concern at the disproportionate use of force against individuals peacefully exercising these rights in Syria. Ireland deplored the deaths of peaceful protestors and said that this Special Session was a further signal to Syria that it had to change course radically. Developments in Syria were deeply disquieting and Ireland hoped there would now be a readiness on the part of the Syrian authorities to heed the concerns of the international community and to pull back from the brink, and move forward on a path of reconciliation and dialogue.

Mr. U.L.M. JAUHAR (Sri Lanka), said that it was of the firm view that when requesting country specific sessions it should be done in consultation with the concerned country to encourage dialogue. Sri Lanka said that there should be help with the capacity building needs of the concerned State. There should be an elimination of double standards and the Council should engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation. The amendments proposed by the Organization of Islamic Conference deserved serious deliberation by the Council.

MAHMOUD AFIFI (Egypt), on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that they had followed with great attention the development of the events in Syria and they were convinced that the dialogue among all the parties was the best method to reach a solution that could meet the aspirations of the Syrian people. These people had the right to demonstrate peacefully and express their opinions in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Egypt said that the Arab League had a very important role in this situation and they confirmed that they were confident that Syria would be able to deal with the current difficult situation and face



these challenges in order to strengthen dialogue with the members of the Human Rights Council.

PETER WOOLCOTT (Australia), said that actions by the Syrian security forces had led to the deaths of around 450 peaceful protestors. Australia supported the Secretary-General's call for an investigation into the violence and for the appointment of a Special Representative to Syria to report on developments. Australia called on Syria to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people by engaging in inclusive dialogue and by implementing genuine political and economic reform without delay. Syria should not be represented on the Council and Australia called for the immediate withdrawal of Syria's candidacy to the Council.

ROBERTO FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras), said that the situation of human rights in Syria had acquired a new sense of urgency and all Special Procedure mandate holders had reported the scale of arms used to hide restriction of the freedom of the press and the numerous killings among other serious violations. These violations required the immediate attention of the Council. Honduras joined the efforts to find a response to protect the rights of the Syrian people and protect human rights throughout the world. The Council must select which urgent cases to deal with and must protect vulnerable people. Honduras welcomed the fact that the Council was discussing the human rights situation in Syria.

KONRAD SCHARINGER (Germany), said that Germany was concerned by the worsening situation in Syria and the violence of security forces against peaceful protestors. Germany regretted that Syria had ignored appeals by the international community to engage in dialogue to resolve the problem. The recent Special Session on Libya demonstrated the Council's determination to hold its members accountable for human rights violations. People would not endure oppression forever. The Human Rights Council must show it can react to such shocking violent events.

LAURA MIRACHIAN (Italy), was concerned about the current situation and condemned the violations carried out by security forces against peaceful demonstrators and called upon the Syrian authorities to release all political prisoners and human rights defenders and to fully investigate the facts. Those responsible should be identified and held accountable for their crimes. They called upon the Syrian authorities to quickly



implement the announced reforms in order to establish a democratic society and they trusted that the country, with a long standing civilization, would find its way towards the future.

GOPINATHAN ACHAMKULANGARE (India), said that the escalation of violence in Syria posed serious challenges to the stability of the country and the region as a whole. India urged the Government of Syria to facilitate greater access to media and information to assess the situation. India noted the positive recent reforms and encouraged the Government to accelerate the implementation of these reforms.

Actions of the international community should not inadvertently complicate the situation by inflaming it further or endangering the unity and territorial integrity of the country.

NESTOR CRUZ TORUNO (Nicaragua), said that the Special Session on Syria was one more demonstration of the double standards and of the increasing proliferation of political dialogue within the Council. The State of Nicaragua was an active member in defending the principle of self-determination and they believed that the government would be able to achieve this only through dialogue. Nicaragua urged all Member and Observer States to privilege dialogue and cooperation with Syria and to prefer this to condemnation measures that could hinder the finding of peaceful solutions.

FERNANDO ROJAS SAMANEZ (Peru), said that it condemned the violent repression in the Syrian Arab Republic against democratic demonstrators. Peru called for the immediate end of the use of violence and for the protection of the rights to freedom of expression and assembly. There should be an investigation into the loss of life in Syria and the authorities should promote a process of dialogue to resolve the situation. There were positive steps taken by the Government, such as the lifting of the emergency law, but the Government must find a solution that rested on the legitimate demands of the Syrian people.

NAJLA RIACHI ASSAKER (Lebanon), said that they knew that the role of the Council was about establishing a real dialogue to help countries protect human rights. Holding this Special Session and discussing the approval of a resolution were not fitting for the role conferred to the Council, which was to have a dialogue free of politicization and double standards. The Government had responded to the requests of the international community by lifting the state of emergency. They certainly supported the measures



taken by the Syrian government and regretted all loss of life. Lebanon believed that all States had to take necessary measures to guarantee the security of their citizens. They supported all good intentions in Syria to try to press on with the democratic process of reforms.

ANGELICA NAVARRO LLANOS (Bolivia), said that it defended human rights for all and deeply regretted the loss of life in all Arab countries. The enemy was not the people but the imperialist power that desired to control resources such as oil and gas. The masses were ignored for a long time and Governments should heed the rights that their people had demanded. Bolivia respected the principle of people's self determination and urged the international community not to apply double standards and to respect the principle of the fundamental charter, including the sovereignty and independence of all States.

STEFFEN SMIDT (Denmark), welcomed the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria. It was important that the international community put significant pressure on both President Assad and the newly formed government. Specifically, Denmark underlined the reference to resolution 60/251 and stressed that it was the responsibility of States to elect to the Human Rights Council only those candidates that were best qualified to fulfill the mandate of promoting and protecting human rights.

DIAN TRIANSYAH DJANI (Indonesia), said that constructive dialogue, mutual respect and genuine cooperation should guide the Council's work in promoting and protecting human rights, including when dealing with the human rights situation in a specific country. The fundamental obligation of the government was to listen to their citizens and people should be allowed to avail themselves of the right to express their views democratically without fear of repression and violence. Indonesia highlighted the value of opening a dialogue between the Government and the population to further their civil, economic, and political rights. The international community should engage constructively with Syria to find a peaceful solution.

FELIX PENA RAMOS (Venezuela), said that they saw Syria flagged by a humanitarian conflict and President Hugo Chavez had condemned the situation in Syria. Venezuela stood on the principle of peace and conciliation in the world and they were for a peaceful solution in Syria that brought national unity. They had a deep friendship that



... tied them to the country and they feared the conflict could deepen and seriously destabilize the region. They believed that the Council was running the risk of establishing mechanisms of domestic interference.

WENDY HINTON (New Zealand), said that it condemned the killings of innocent protestors in Syria. New Zealand said that all members of the Council should uphold the highest standards for membership to the Council. New Zealand joined calls for an independent and impartial inquiry that brings those responsible for the violations to justice. The Syrian Government should respect the will of its people.

MARIUS GRINIUS (Canada), called upon the government of Syria to immediately stop using force against peaceful demonstrators and to respect the human rights of its people. Freedom of assembly and freedom of expression were fundamental pillars of democracy. Inspired by peaceful popular movements for democracy taking place elsewhere in the region, Syrians were looking to enjoy the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which they were entitled. Canada stood resolutely with the people of Syria who were courageously and peacefully demanding democratic reforms and human rights.

GRISSELLE RODRIGUEZ (Panama), said that the Human Rights Council should speak out to protect the innocent victims of human rights violations not only in Syria but in every country. Panama called on the Syrian authorities to abstain from the use of force against its civilians, especially women and children. Wherever human rights violations occurred there should be an independent and transparent investigation and Panama urged the Government of Syria to extend an invitation to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights to investigate the concerns in the country.

MIKHAIL KHVOSTOV (Belarus), said that they were not convinced that there were any objective reasons to convene a Special Session on Syria and their considerations were based on facts rather than on the personal interpretations of some countries. The Council should not promote a policy of double standards and they expressed solidarity with the position expressed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and they thought that the resolution would not lead to effective dialogue and to the improvement of the situation in Syria. Belarus was against any further escalation of tension around Syria.





VU DUNG (Viet Nam), said that Viet Nam appealed for calm and restraint so that a peaceful solution could be found. There should be a respect for non-interference in independent countries and Syria should be encouraged in its reforms to ensure better conditions for its citizens. The international community should give Syria enough time to carry out these reforms without external interference in the country.

SEYED MOHAMMAD REZA SAJJADI (Iran), said that holding a Special Session on the human rights situation in Syria by the request of some countries demonstrated that the Council had been abused to favor the political considerations of some countries and this undermined the credibility of the United Nations human rights machinery. Iran highlighted the abuse by the Council of its mechanisms and the increasing interference in the internal affairs of States. They welcomed the efforts made by the Syrian authorities to lift the state of emergency and establish a law on peaceful assembly and encouraged the country to take further steps and to increase dialogue with all the parties concerned. They supported the establishment of an investigating commission to investigate the crimes committed in Syria.

OGUZ DEMIRALP (Turkey), said that it felt deep concern and sorrow for the great number of deaths in Syria. The country's stability was of great importance for Turkey. It was not possible to analyze the developments in Syria without understanding the changes occurring in the society. Civil society should be understood and violence should not be the means of communication between the Government and civil society. The Government of Syria should continue its reform efforts with determination and Turkey welcomed the lifting of the state of emergency and other reforms. Social peace should be restored and Turkey called on the Syrian authorities to act with self-restraint and to allow the voice of the people to be heard. Turkey said that the international community should support Turkey through cooperation and dialogue.

RAUL MARTINEZ (Paraguay), expressed concern for the situation occurring in the Syrian Arab Republic and said that in holding this discussion the Council should keep in mind the principle of non-selectivity and universality. More attention should be paid to the Special Procedures of the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights. Paraguay launched an appeal for dialogue between the parties involved.



SO SE PYONG (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), said that it welcomed the recent steps taken by the Government of Syria including the lifting of the state of emergency and other reforms. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea disagreed with the practice of double standards in the Council and the singling out of Syria while ignoring the violations of human rights perpetrated by those that had sponsored this Special Session. Human rights should be promoted by dialogue and the Council should live up to its principles of non interference and respect for the sovereignty of individual States.

HAMZA OMER HASSAN AHMED (Sudan), said that they were not in agreement with the holding of a Special Session on Syria after many efforts made by the Arab League and they would instead give preference for an internal solution of the crisis instead of a direct condemnation. There was no need to discuss this matter inside the Council and they found that the draft resolution was selective and politicized. They rejected any attempts to deprive any state of its sovereign right to submit its candidacy to the Human Rights Council.

JERRY MATTHEWS MATJILA (South Africa), said that it regretted the loss of life in Syria and called for restraint by all the parties in the conflict. South Africa encouraged the Government of Syria to move swiftly to implement the necessary reforms towards democratization in accordance with the aspirations of its people. The Syrian authorities should initiate an open, transparent and all-inclusive process with its people to address their grievances in order to guarantee their fundamental political rights and freedoms. South Africa warned the Council against pursuing an approach of continued selectivity and inequality which would call into question the credibility of the Council.

RICARDO EDUARDO PRACANA (Portugal), welcomed the convening of this Special Session, called on Syria to stop the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators and took note of the Syrian decision to proceed with political reforms. However, these measures could not be implemented together with continuous repression and rights violations. Portugal supported the call to the Syrian government to investigate all the violations of human rights law. Portugal supported country visits by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and called upon the Government of Syria to facilitate their work.



AHARON LESHNO-YAAR (Israel), said that the true purpose of this Council was to ring the alarm bells before a catastrophe occurred. In this respect, this Special Session was timely and hopefully would contribute to stopping further killing of innocent civilians in Syria. The brutal violence being used by the Syrian Government against its own people was abhorrent and deplorable. Israel joined the voices of the international community in condemning such outrageous violence and called upon the Government of Syria to stop repressing its own people.

GEROLD VOLLMER (Austria), said they were seriously concerned by the widespread violation of human rights in Syria and they had supported the convening of this Special Session. These violations were unacceptable and they called on the Syrian Government to refrain from the use of force on peaceful protesters and to guarantee the rights of freedom of assembly and expression and to enter into a genuine dialogue with all parts of society. They were similarly worried by numerous reports of attacks on journalists and violations of the freedom of the press. The Syrian authorities should start investigations and fully cooperate with all the Special Procedures of the Council.

MOTHUSI BRUCE RABASHA PALAI (Botswana), said that it believed it was right that this Council was convened to address the grave situation in Syria today. The international community should not accept inaction in such a situation. The violent crackdown could not be accepted. Respect for the aspirations of the people yearning for democratic reform should be a cornerstone for those given the privilege to govern. Botswana hoped the Syrian government would engage in an open and constructive dialogue to ensure and protect the human rights of its people.

JAN KNUTSSON (Sweden), strongly condemned the indiscriminate violence and killings in Syria of people who wished to express themselves freely and peacefully. There were several credible reports that hundreds of people in the streets all over Syria had been killed. They deeply regretted the death of many protesters and were concerned by the limitations placed on freedoms of expression and the media, including violence against journalists and persecution of bloggers and others who wished to communicate freely. Syria had presented its candidature to become a member of the Human Rights Council. However, the credibility of this Council would be damaged if Syria was elected a member of the Council.



ABBAS KADHOM OBAID ABBAS (Iraq), said that it was with great pain and regret that it witnessed the loss of life in the brother country Syria. Iraq called for fundamental freedoms and human rights, which were directly linked to the protection of public order. Iraq condemned any demonstrations that included violence against public order and also excessive violence from authorities and said it hoped a balance would be struck between rights and the protection of public order and property. There should be a general culture of freedom and liberty in all societies; liberty was the guarantee that would build trust among the people.

BOUALEM CHEBIHI (Algeria), wanted to apologize on behalf of the Algerian ambassador who could not attend the meeting due to health reasons. At the moment, Algeria had close links to Syria and they supported what was said by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, Palestine on behalf of Arab Group and Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

ERIK NYMAN (UNICEF), said that it was concerned as the number of children killed in Syria kept rising. As of 27 April, 19 had been reported killed while many more had been injured. A siege was being imposed in Dara'a and other cities such as Douma and Moadhamiya. The lives of children were being put at risk and the Government of Syria had the obligation to ensure that children were protected and not being tortured and to fully investigate and address all allegations of torture without delay.

RADWAN ZIADEH, of International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, in a joint statement with Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, said that they were fully aware that the Council could put an end to the use of force and violence by the Syrian security services, who were immune from accountability according to Syrian law. It was becoming obvious that international crimes were being perpetrated by the Syrian authorities and the international community urgently needed to wake up to this and take action.

JULIE DE RIVERO, of Human Rights Watch, said that the Council should strongly voice its condemnation of the brutal abuses committed by setting up an independent international investigation into the fatal shootings by Syria's security forces of peaceful protestors and other human rights violations. The Council must send a clear message



that Syria had lost any legitimate claim for a seat as a member of that body and the Council should condemn Syria's behavior, launch an investigation into the violations and remain seized of the situation until all perpetrators were brought to justice. RENATE BLOEM, of CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, said that the recent developments in the Arab region and the peaceful people's revolutions, including in Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, reflected the climax of people's peaceful resistance and struggle against corruption, and the violation of their political as well as economic and social rights. What they were witnessing was the result of the escalation of violations of human rights which were guaranteed by the core international human rights treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Citizens of the region were in need of protection and promotion of their rights and they were seeking to regain their human dignity.

ALEX CONTE, of International Commission of Jurists, said they strongly condemned the human rights violations in Syria and people had been arrested including scores of children. The Human Rights Council should take urgent action to dispatch an independent United Nations-led investigation into the human rights violations in Syria. The Syrian authorities should fully cooperate with the investigation and allow media and human rights organizations to have access to the country. The ICJ welcomed the draft resolution calling on Syrian authorities to immediately release all detained persons.

NAEL GEORGES, of Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, said that they knew that many peaceful demonstrations were occurring at a time where there were weapons being fired and victims falling because of these demonstrations. Many people were arbitrarily detained and force was used against innocent people who were legitimately exercising their rights. The violence reached its apex when real live bullets were fired against demonstrators. The Council must condemn what was happening in Syria.

KHOURI ELIAS, of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, said that there were two responses, one by the Government to promote reform and the other to consider an invasion of a sovereign country. The Syrian people had been living in peace and harmony and categorically refused any external interference and support. The people and the army desired public order and security.



AL-ASBAHI EZZADIN, of Human Rights Information and Training Center, said that the non-governmental organizations encountered real difficulties in gathering accurate information on the number of people killed and wounded as the abuses against peaceful demonstrators continued and the number of innocent people wounded and killed increased every day. The other side was the complete media blackout and the lack of independent media outlets that transmitted news; Syria remained a closed country in the area of free expression, press freedom and non-governmental organizations.

MESKOUR HICHAM, of Arab Organization for Human Rights, said that in Syria the authorities had increasingly used deadly force just to create an atmosphere of terror. At least 1,700 citizens were detained including political activists, intellectuals and human rights defenders. These human rights violations were a systematic pattern in Syria. The Arab Organization demanded that the international community enforce its commitment to take all necessary and effective measures to assure the safety of the Syrian people and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

HELENE SACKSTEIN, of Reporters without Borders - International, said they learned yesterday that the activity by Al-Jazeera had been frozen and a number of people were brought to trial on the charge of violating the prestige of the State and disseminating false information, influencing racial struggle and perturbing the purity of the nation. Furthermore, an Al-Jazeera journalist was arrested and others were arbitrarily detained. One should not shoot the messenger because they did not create any problem and they had to fulfill their duty to report.

BIRO DIAWARA, of Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme, said that prevention was better than treatment and therefore this Special Session would continue to improve the work and effectiveness of the Council's work on human rights violations. The redeployment of heavy artillery by the Syrian authorities against its people was surprising and a credible investigation should be carried out to bring those responsible to justice. It was crucial that Syria cooperate with the mechanisms of the Council so that the Government could respond to the aspirations of its people.

ALFRED GONDO, of Centre indépendant de recherches et d'initiatives pour le Dialogue (CIRID), said that many migrants were daily victims of increasingly restrictive



migration policy and governments were refusing to provide them protection. They asked how could they work with the complicity of silence and they condemned the indiscriminate crimes, extrajudicial killings and torture occurring in Syria.

It was time for the Council to establish a high level mission to carry out investigations in the country.

LEON SALTIEL, of United Nations Watch, said that it was time for the Council to focus more on the human rights of the victims – the right to life, freedom from torture and arbitrary detention, freedom of speech and assembly – and less on the feelings of the perpetrators. The Security Council should exercise its responsibility to protect the civilian population and the International Criminal Court should prepare to arrest and prosecute the President of Syria for war crimes and crimes against humanity. This Council should condemn Syria's bid to become a member of this body.

PETER SPLINTER, of Amnesty International said that many detainees were held in incommunicado detention at undisclosed locations and were at high risk of torture and other ill-treatment. They had received harrowing first-hand testimony of torture and other ill-treatment, including severe beatings with sticks, rifle-butts and cables, electrocution and sexual assault, that had been meted out to detainees, some of them children.

LOAI DEEB, of Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development, said that many organizations were concerned with the situation in Syria. Following peaceful demonstrations in many cities, the Government of Syria had chosen military means, including torture against innocent civilians, to deal with these protestors. This Council should establish a fact-finding commission to find those responsible for these crimes, including those belonging to the ruling family and the security forces.

AWA N'DIAYE, of Espace Afrique International, said that the civil society in Africa could not remain silent in the face of the horror that was affecting the region. The right to peacefully demonstrate and the right to freedom of expression had to be protected and the Council had to make sure that the innocent and vulnerable population was protected. The international force must ensure that the rights of people were respected and they appealed to the Council to establish an international legal society for a democratic transition throughout the world.



### Summary of the Resolution

The resolution, which will be referred to as A/HRC/S-16/1, calls on the government of Syria to, among other things, put an end to all human rights violations, protect its population, fully respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, allow access to the internet and telecommunications networks, and lift censorship on reporting. The resolution also urges the Government to release all prisoners of conscience and arbitrarily detained persons, refrain from reprisals against people who participated in peaceful demonstrations, launch a credible and impartial investigation into human rights violations and prosecute those responsible for attacks on peaceful protesters, and to enlarge the scope of political participation aimed at ensuring civil liberties and enhancing social justice.

The resolution requests the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to urgently dispatch a mission to the Syrian Arab Republic to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability, and to provide a preliminary report and oral update on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic to the 17th session of the Human Rights Council.

### Introduction of Resolution

EILEEN CHAMBERLAIN DONAHOE (United States of America), speaking in introduction of the resolution entitled, “The Current Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in the Context of Recent Events”, said the text as revised was circulated to all missions and the United States thanked all countries for their constructive comments.

### Statement by Concerned Country before the Vote

FAYSAL KHABBAS HAMOUI (Syria), speaking as a concerned country, said that they were in the presence of an unbalanced text that did not give a good image to the extremists that had always believed in violence and this message encouraged this attitude of continued violence, killings and acts of sabotage against civilians. They had demonstrated an attitude of openness and had given concessions to reach an acceptable draft which was based on a positive dialogue and on constructive cooperation among everyone in the room. However, their openness and positive spirit





had clashed with the obstinacy of the United States delegation that was determined to send a wrong message to the world and keep the resolution as it was. They called upon Members States for whom constructive dialogue and cooperation was dear to vote against this draft resolution.

#### Explanations of Vote before the Vote

ZAMIR AKRAM (Pakistan), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that Special Sessions of the Human Rights Council should be used sparingly and unfortunately many of those who voted in favour of convening this Session had questionable motives for holding it. The outcome of this Session should be balanced and impartial. The situation in Syria was not unique to Syria and it was unjustified to only pick on Syria when such situations had occurred in other countries. Naming and shaming was an approach that Pakistan believed was counterproductive. The Human Rights Council should conduct its work based on its founding resolution that emphasized dialogue and engagement. It would have been more productive to have had a result from this Special Session which engaged the concerned country and with the resolution it will now be difficult for any sovereign state to accept such intrusion and intervention in their sovereign affairs. Pakistan would call for a vote on the resolution.

ALBERTO J. DUMONT (Argentina), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that they were closely monitoring the situation in Syria and believed that citizens must be ensured full participation in political life. They called on Syria to respect human rights and to not repress peaceful civilian demonstrators. The resolution must be achieved through dialogue without foreign interference and they rejected any military solution to the conflict. They welcomed that the draft resolution mentioned article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter.

XIA JINGGE (China), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that China was always in favour of resolving human rights problems with constructive dialogue and opposed any humiliation of States by naming them. China was also against double standards in the work of the Council. China studied the draft resolution proposed by the United States and believed it would only increase tension in the country and create a dangerous precedent for the region. China discussed this



resolution with the sponsoring country to make changes and regretted that these efforts were not successful. China would be in opposition to the resolution proposed by the United States of America.

RODOLFO REYES RODRIGUEZ (Cuba), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, supported freedom of information and used Wikileaks as an example. Cuba wondered if the Human Rights Council was increasingly becoming a tool of the military power of the Pentagon and of its allies. They said that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was responsible for thousands of civilian victims and they were surprised by the rhetoric of the developed countries. Cuba pointed out that when the Council spoke about economic, social and cultural rights there was discussion about the financial implications, but when the subject was interference and intervention all the money in the world seemed to be available. This was one of the reasons the Council was discredited.

VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV (Russian Federation), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that this initiative was of a confrontational nature and violated the principles of universality and non-selectivity that were fundamental to the Human Rights Council. This resolution rejected the spirit of cooperation and true dialogue with the interested party as evidenced by the unwillingness of the co-sponsors to adopt changes to the resolution. Russia would be voting against this draft and called on other countries to do the same.

GULNARA ISKAKOVA (Kyrgyzstan), speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that they respected the Syrian government. They had a similar situation over a year ago in April when the President of the Council was ousted and they thought that they had to cooperate with both the internal and the international community in order to establish the real reasons and ensure that there would not be similar events in the future. They believed that the text of the draft resolution showed the intent of the Council and the international community to work together with the Syrian government and therefore they would support it.

Explanation of Vote and General Comments after the Vote

MARIA NAZARETH FARANI AZEVEDO (Brazil), speaking in an explanation of the vote after the vote, said it regretted there was not a consensus outcome. Brazil said it was



close to a solution for a consensus and stressed that the Council's deliberation was taking place while similar actions were occurring in other parts of the region. Brazil was concerned with the human rights situation in Syria and the mission to be carried out in the Syrian Arab Republic should be done with great consideration for impartiality and non-selectivity.

ANDRAS DEKANY (Hungary), on behalf of the European Union, speaking in an explanation of the vote after the vote, said they were grateful that the resolution had been adopted by a large majority. On paragraph 8 of the adopted text they expressed their regret that this text was introduced at a late stage. They felt that the substance of the amendment fell outside of the mandate of this Council and should not be in a Human Rights Council's resolution. Hungary reiterated that according to the resolution 60/251 members of the Council should abide by the highest human rights standards and this element should have been reflected in the resolution.

#### Voting Results

Votes in Favour (26): Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Zambia.

Votes Against (9): Bangladesh, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Gabon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan and Russian Federation.

Abstentions (7): Cameroon, Djibouti, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Uganda and Ukraine.

Absent Countries (4): Angola, Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar.