



**United Nations Human Rights Council
17th Special Session, 22 August 2011**

Joint Oral Intervention on the Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

22 August 2011

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Madam President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) regret that this Council's resolution following the Special Session on Syria in April this year has fallen on deaf ears. We instead see that there have continued to be widespread unlawful killings, including summary and extrajudicial executions; enforced disappearances; torture and ill-treatment; arbitrary detentions; repression of human rights defenders; and continued restrictions on internet and phone communications, and on the ability of the media and human rights and humanitarian organisations to have access to Syria.

We welcome the Council's urgent calls for the Syrian authorities to immediately put an end to all human rights violations and unlawful acts of violence, as contained in the draft resolution. We urge the Council's membership to act with one voice. Against the background of a defiant response by Syrian authorities so far, and given the escalated situation in the country, a strong and unanimous message must be sent.

Madam President,

The report of the Fact Finding Mission on Syria found a pattern of widespread or systematic attacks against the civilian population that may amount to crimes against humanity. Those responsible of these attacks *in* command and *under* the command of the Syrian authorities, including members of the Presidential Guard, the Fourth Division of the Army and the *Shabbiha* "militia" forces must be held to account. Accountability for crimes under international law is paramount.

What matters now is action. The new Commission of Inquiry must have as wide a mandate as possible to enable it to establish the facts and circumstances necessary to ensure a comprehensive consideration of accountability issues. All the States represented in this room, who are either members of the Security Council or who can influence its membership, must take concerted efforts to push for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

I thank you.

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