



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

"Dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights"

United Nations Human Rights Council
Special Debate on the situation in Syria
28 February 2012

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

28 February 2012

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Madam President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) urges the Human Rights Council to support the findings of the Commission of Inquiry and to call on both the General Assembly and the Security Council to take effective measures to end the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including the large scale "shoot-to kill" policy executed against the Syrian population.

The ICJ is deeply concerned by the continuing deterioration of the situation in Syria. In the city of Homs, subject to an effective siege, the Syrian army continues the unlawful, deliberate and indiscriminate firing of explosive shells in populated areas, and targeting civilian objects. Syrian authorities must immediately end the siege of Homs, open all its crossings and ensure effective and safe humanitarian corridors.

Syrian authorities must also end their attacks on journalists and human rights defenders who have been witnessing, documenting and reporting on the ground. They should immediately and unconditionally release Mazen Darwish, a prominent Syrian human rights defender and Director of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression, and seven of his colleagues, who were arrested on 16 February 2012.

Madam President,

The report of the Commission of Inquiry has confirmed that systematic and widespread human rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity have been committed in Syria, including summary executions and other unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture and ill-treatment.

The Security Council should take meaningful steps to break the cycle of impunity, including by referring the situation to the International Criminal Court. The General Assembly should suspend the Syrian Arab Republic from participating in the work of the Assembly until its authorities comply with the Commission of Inquiry recommendations, and put a stop to the gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, and hold those responsible to account.

I thank you.