

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE – COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

For immediate release

Geneva, 23 April 2011

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Syria: UN Security Council should act to protect the Syrian population against widespread unlawful killings

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today called upon the UN Security Council to take concrete measures to ensure the immediate protection of peaceful demonstrators and other persons whose lives are under threat by the ongoing violent crackdown by Syrian security forces. More than 330 people have reportedly been killed during the protests that began on 15 March against the Syrian regime in Daraa, Lathakia, Homs, Baniyas, Duma and other cities. The Syrian security forces, including members of the Presidential guard, and pro-regime militia, are believed to be carrying out these attacks.

The UN Security Council should, as a matter of urgency, consider options to ensure the immediate protection of the population in Syria. *"The international community has failed so far to protect the people of Syria from wide-scale human rights violations, including the right to life,"* said Wilder Tayler, ICJ Secretary General. *"The UN Security Council should address this deplorable situation in Syria with a view to establishing accountability for the perpetrators and justice for victims,"* Tayler added.

The Syrian authorities bear responsibility for upholding their legal obligations under international law. Under international standards, lethal force may only be used when strictly unavoidable to protect life, and may never be employed against persons assembling peacefully.

"The Syrian authorities must end immediately attacks against demonstrators, including the unlawful and disproportionate use of force, most of which has been lethal," said Wilder Tayler. *"They must respect the right to life and the freedoms of assembly and expression. Those ordering and carrying out these attacks, including those firing live rounds into crowds, must be held criminally accountable,"* Tayler added.

The Syrian authorities must immediately release the thousands of protesters who have been arbitrarily detained during the past five weeks. Scores of them, including children, were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. They must also allow international media and human rights organisations access to the country.

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The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising fifty-two of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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