



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

1 June 2012

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Madam President,

The International Commission of Jurists calls on the Human Rights Council, as a matter of the utmost urgency, to request that the Security Council immediately refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to take concerted and united action with the General Assembly to end the ongoing massacres in Syria.

The consequences of inaction are particularly clear given the recent massacre in Houla of over 100 individuals, including nearly 50 children. Even following international outcry over the massacre, widespread arbitrary killings have continued unabated, including the extrajudicial execution of 13 individuals, the bodies of which were found on Wednesday near Deir al Zour. These ongoing massacres demonstrate the need for the international community to take strong action to end the impunity with which the Syrian army, security services, and *Shabiha* militias are acting.

All actions taken to date by this Council, the Arab League, the General Assembly and the Security Council have patently failed to stop the escalation of the unlawful attacks against the civilian population perpetrated by the Syrian regime.

Madam President,

Although Syria continues to claim that it is committed to the Annan peace plan, Syrian authorities refuse to accept responsibility over the massacres or to take any meaningful measures to end the bloodshed. The supposed ceasefire and presence of UN Monitors on the ground have failed to deter attacks on civilians.

What occurred in Houla is endemic of the wider situation facing the Syrian population, which has been subjected to widespread and systematic human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and summary and extrajudicial executions. These violations *prima facie* amount to crimes against humanity. The Human Rights Council must therefore request the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC as a matter of urgency.

I thank you.

Statement delivered by: Mr Alex Conte, ICJ Representative to the United Nations
alex.conte@icj.org +41 79 957 2733

Further contact: Alice Goodenough (alice.goodenough@icj.org)