

**United Nations Human Rights Council
23rd Regular Session, 27 May to 14 June 2013
Urgent Debate**

**ICJ Oral Statement in the Urgent Debate on the situation of human rights in the
Syrian Arab Republic**
**CALL FOR SECURITY COUNCIL REFERRAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN MEASURES**

29 May 2013

Check against delivery

Mr. President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) calls on the Human Rights Council to request the Security Council to take effective measures at its disposal to end the ongoing conflict in Syria and to protect all civilians, including by referring this situation to the International Criminal Court. The international community, in particular the Security Council, has failed so far to effectively address this crisis, protect peace and security in the region, and hold the perpetrators of gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law to account. Consequently, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are taking place unabated. The conflict is increasingly developing into an internationalized armed conflict.

Mr. President,

It is the civilian population that is bearing the brunt of an increasingly sectarian and radicalised conflict, as evidenced by the recent reports of mass killings of civilians by government forces in al-Bayda and Baniyas. Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilian areas by government forces and the direct targeting of civilian objects and essential infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and power and water supplies, have worsened the already dire conditions facing civilians within Syria. Anti-government armed groups have also been responsible for serious crimes under international law, including unlawful killings and cases of torture and other ill-treatment.

It is the responsibility of the whole international community, including member States of this Council, to end the suffering of the Syrian population, including by addressing the humanitarian crisis engulfing Syria, bolstering humanitarian relief efforts and extending their reach inside Syria, and assisting neighbouring countries that are facing increased difficulties in assisting the growing influx of refugees.

I thank you.

Statement delivered by:
Alice Goodenough, ICJ Middle East & North Africa Programme
(alice.goodenough@icj.org)
Further contact: Said Benarbia, ICJ Middle East & North Africa Programme
(said.benarbia@icj.org; +41 22 979 3817)