

**United Nations Human Rights Council
24th Regular Session, 9 to 27 September 2013
Agenda Item 4**

**ICJ Oral Statement in the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on
the Syrian Arab Republic**

SYRIA: CIVILIAN POPULATION MUST BE PROTECTED

16 September 2013

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Distinguished Members of the Commission of Inquiry,

Following your update, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) calls on the Human Rights Council to continue to give attention to the situation in Syria, including by requesting the Security Council to urgently take effective measures aimed to halt the large-scale loss of life and to end indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians and civilian objects, as well as any use of chemical weapons.

The perpetrators of these attacks, and other such violations, must be brought to justice. The Council should specifically request the Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court. The referral should cover violations by Government forces and those by opposition armed groups.

States individually and collectively have a responsibility to prevent war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The Syrian authorities have comprehensively failed to discharge their obligation to protect the civilian population. To the contrary, they have been responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those documented in your various reports. Action by this Council and by the Security Council, taken in accordance with the UN Charter, is needed to end the suffering of the Syrian population, prevent further violations, and avert the downward spiral of this increasingly sectarian conflict.

The civilian population continues to bear the brunt of a conflict that has resulted in more than six million refugees and internally displaced persons, living in dire conditions. States, including the member States of this Council, should bolster humanitarian relief efforts and extend the reach of such efforts inside Syria. States should also provide concrete assistance, on an urgent basis, to neighbouring countries facing challenges in hosting the growing influx of refugees.

I thank you.

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