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UN Security Council’s resolution on Syria “underwhelming”

The resolution voted today by the UN Security Council endorsing the implementation of Kofi Annan’s plan to end the violence in Syria is a positive but belated development that must be followed up with vigorous monitoring in order to ensure the human rights of Syrians are protected, Amnesty International said.

The resolution calls for the full implementation of a six-point plan by Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan – which calls for a cessation of violence, the initiation of a political process and the respect for a range of human rights.

“The adoption of Kofi Annan’s plan could lead to a marked improvement in the human rights situation in Syria. However, the Syrian government has shown it cannot be trusted to respect its commitments so a credible, vigorous monitoring operation will be essential to keep all parties to their obligations,” said José Luis Díaz, Amnesty International’s Representative at the United Nations.

The resolution also approved the immediate deployment of 30 unarmed observers to Syria.

Amnesty International also said that if there was a sustained cessation of armed violence in Syria, the Security Council should establish a larger observer mission with the expertise and resources needed to effectively monitor all parts of the plan, including the commitments of the government to:

- protect civilians;
- intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons;
- ensure freedom of movement throughout the country for journalists and a non-discriminatory visa policy for them and
- respect freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully as legally guaranteed.

“It is positive to see the Security Council finally condemning the violence in Syria and calling for those responsible for widespread human rights violations to be held accountable. However, after a year in which over 8,000 people were killed and thousands arbitrarily detained and tortured mostly at the hands of the Syrian forces, today’s compromise resolution appears underwhelming,” said José Luis Díaz.