

AI Index: PRE 01/261/2011  
23 May 2011

## **EU Syria sanctions must prompt tougher UN action**

New European Union sanctions on President Bashar al-Assad of Syria should prompt the UN and Arab League to take tougher action against Syria over its violent crackdown against protesters, Amnesty International said today.

The European Union today imposed fresh sanctions on Syria, including personal asset freezes and travel bans on President al-Assad and other senior government figures.

“We welcome the measures that the EU and the US government have now taken against President al-Assad and those around him, but the danger is that this will prove to be too little too late,” said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International’s Director for the Middle East and North Africa. “The UN Security Council must now take more determined action on Syria and follow the precedent it set when Colonel al-Gaddafi’s government began attacking its own people in Libya.”

“This is precisely what the Syrian government has been doing for weeks and it is high time that the Security Council also referred Syria to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.”

“The Security Council’s failure to take similar action is sending entirely the wrong signal to the government in Damascus. Syria’s leaders must be told, and be told firmly, that they will not escape accountability and justice for the crimes that are now being committed under their authority in Syria.”

Amnesty International has the names of more than 720 people killed by the Syrian security forces during the past two months of unrest and demonstrations sparked by protests throughout the region. These included 60 people killed on Friday 20 May and Saturday 21 May.

Thousands more are believed to be detained incommunicado and to be at risk of torture, which has been used systematically by the Syrian government over many years.

“The Arab League must also step up and take firm action on Syria,” said Malcolm Smart.

“The UN and the Arab League need to take action to impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Syria, and global asset freezes on President Assad and those around him.”