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## **Amnesty International with other NGOs calls on UN Security Council to strengthen mandate of UN mission in Syria**

Amnesty International, together with the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), has today called on Security Council members to renew the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) and to ensure that it retains a strong human rights mandate when the Security Council discuss the future of the mission on 18 July 2012.

In a joint [open letter](#) sent today to the ambassadors of all 15 UN Security Council members, the four organizations have recommended that the resolution renewing UNSMIS should include a “strong and adequately staffed human rights component, providing the mission with sufficient expertise, including gender and children’s rights experts, and equipment to document and report on crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave human rights abuses committed by all sides. UN human rights monitors should have a rapid reaction capability to investigate specific incidents and a permanent presence in a few cities outside Damascus. Moreover, such staff need adequate protection and support – both internationally and locally - in order to pursue their work effectively”.

The organizations are also calling on the Security Council to demand that Syria grant full access to UNSMIS monitors and to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, including full and without notice access to all detention centres, acknowledged and unacknowledged, as well as unconditional access to political prisoners at all times. The organizations insist that UNSMIS regularly and publicly publish its findings on human rights violations.

“Next week’s Security Council discussions provide an opportunity to revisit and improve the mandate of the UN mission in Syria, and to allow it to better address the human rights crisis in the country,” said Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Director.

“The Security Council’s members must grasp this opportunity to stop the spiral of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria and also put in place strong measures to ensure justice, truth and full reparation for victims.”

In the letter the four organizations also reiterate their long-standing call for the UN Security Council to refer the situation of Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Amnesty International spokespeople available on this letter and in the coming days:

- In New York, José Luis Diaz, head of Amnesty International’s office at the UN in New York is available in English or Spanish.
- Amnesty International spokespeople are also available from London.

Contact: for more information and to arrange interviews, please contact the Amnesty International Press Office on +44 (0) 7413 5566 or email [press@amnesty.org](mailto:press@amnesty.org)