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## **UN urged to issue resolution on Syria bloodshed**

World leaders must take immediate concrete action to respond to the crisis in Syria, Amnesty International said today, amid reports that the death toll since mass protests began in March had risen to more than 1,600 people.

The call came ahead of a key UN Security Council debate set for Wednesday at which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is to deliver a report on Syria.

Some 53 people are said to have been killed across Syria since Saturday, bringing the total number of reported fatalities to over 1,600 people.

At least five civilians were reportedly killed in the central town of Hama on Tuesday.

“Any honest examination of the facts of the horrific situation in Syria should be more than sufficient to persuade the Security Council to come up with a legally-binding resolution, not just a meek statement. A mere diplomatic appeal to the Syrian authorities to end the ongoing violence against civilians will fall far short of what the situation demands,” said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International’s Director for Middle East and North Africa.

“The UN must also impose a complete arms embargo on Syria as well as freezing the overseas assets of President Assad and his senior associates,”

The Syrian government is facing increasing pressure to end its crackdown on anti-government protesters, amid widespread international condemnation.

Turkey's foreign minister met President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus on Tuesday in a reported attempt to persuade the Syrian leader to end the violence against civilians.

In a rare move, Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah summarily recalled his country’s ambassador from Damascus on Monday and condemned Syria’s brutal crackdown on protests, calling for an end to the army’s “killing machine”.

Most Arab countries have also condemned the violence, leaving Syria increasingly isolated. The Gulf Co-operation Council, made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar, has denounced the excessive use of force against the demonstrators, while the League of Arab States has vowed to use “step-by-step persuasion” to resolve the conflict.

A joint Brazilian, Indian and South African official delegation was due to arrive in Damascus on Tuesday to urge the Syrian authorities to end the violence.

Kuwait and Bahrain have also recalled their ambassadors to Damascus.

Many of the more than 1,600 people killed are reported to be protesters and local residents shot by live ammunition from the security forces and the army.

Thousands of others have been arrested since the protests began, with many being held incommunicado at unknown locations.

“The crimes committed by Syrian security forces appear to be part of a widespread, as well as systematic, attack against the civilian population, and so to amount to crimes against humanity” said Malcolm Smart.

“The UN Security Council must also refer the situation in Syria to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as it did with Libya’s government in February, following the violent repression of protests there,” he added.