

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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Item 4

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International in the Inter-active Dialogue
with the International Commission of Inquiry on Syrian Arab Republic

Madam President,

Amnesty International considers that many of the human rights violations committed by the Syrian authorities since April 2011 in their repression of pro-reform protests amount to crimes against humanity. The OHCHR Fact Finding Mission on the situation in Syria and this Council's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic have made similar findings.

Amnesty International has the names of more than 6,500 persons reported to have been killed during or in connection with the protests since mid-March 2011. We are certain that many have been shot by security forces while participating in peaceful protests or attending funerals of people killed in earlier protests or during the bombardment of residential areas. Thousands of persons have been arrested or otherwise detained, and many held incommunicado at unknown locations where torture and other ill-treatment are rife. Many detentions amount to enforced disappearances. We have received reports of over 270 persons who have died in custody in highly suspicious circumstances. These and other human rights violations are being committed with absolute impunity.

While the overwhelming majority of alleged human rights violations have been committed by the state's security forces, Amnesty International is investigating reports of abuses committed by members of armed opposition groups, including kidnapping and killings. The organization condemns without reservation serious abuses by armed groups, including attacks that target

civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, torture and other ill-treatment, hostage-taking, and the killing of captives

Amnesty International finds it inexcusable that Russia and some other governments continue to rely on distorted and twisted suggestions of balance as a pretext for preventing this Council and the United Nations from acting in unison to demand an end to the gross and systematic human rights violations and crimes being perpetrated by the Syrian authorities.

Amnesty International urges the UN Human Rights Council to extend the mandate of the UN Commission of Inquiry and reinforce its capacity to monitor, document and report on international crimes and other human rights violations committed in Syria.

Thank you Madam President.