

Urgent NGO Appeal to End Syria's Ramadan Massacre

Request sent to all 47 UN Human Rights Council Members to Mandate a Special Rapporteur and Conduct Public Hearings

Aug. 18, 2011

Excellency,

We, an international coalition of non-governmental and human rights organizations, urge the UN Human Rights Council to end its silence on the atrocities now being committed by the Syrian regime against its own people, known as the Ramadan Massacre. We welcome the calling of a Special Session.

It is unconscionable for the world's top human rights body—which is pledged, under UNGA Resolution 60/251, to prevent human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies—to continue turning a blind eye to the state-sponsored massacre of civilians.

In recent weeks alone, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad has taken the lives of hundreds of innocent men, women and children in Latakia, Hama, Deir al-Zour and elsewhere.

We are deeply concerned that the council has failed to take prompt or effective action to protect the victims of Syrian mass killings. We regret that the council waited during months of bloodshed, while more than 400 were killed, before it held a single meeting in April. Although Syria was eventually condemned at that meeting, there has been no meaningful follow-up action for the victims.

We therefore call on the council now to use all measures at its disposal to end the bloodshed. Inter alia, we recommend that the Special Session do the following:

1. The council should **strongly condemn Syria** for its gross and systematic violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to life.
2. Given the inability of the High Commissioner's fact-finding mission to enter Syria, the council should request the mission to **conduct public hearings at the United Nations** office in Geneva, **featuring live, televised testimony by victims of the Syrian massacres**, some of whom have escaped to neighboring countries. The global pressure generated by such hearings would constitute a golden opportunity for the council to make a concrete and effective contribution toward ending the killings.
3. The Council should **end the protection gap by appointing a Special Rapporteur on the grave situation of human rights in Syria**. This independent investigator, acting as an early warning mechanism for the international community, should report to both the council and the General Assembly, delivering initial reports to the upcoming September sessions of both bodies. The monitoring should last until Syria's repressive Baath Party rule is replaced by a democratic government that respects basic human rights.
4. The council should take action to **hold the Syrian military and political leadership personally accountable for crimes against humanity**.

Sincerely,

1. Hillel C. Neuer, Executive Director, United Nations Watch, Switzerland
2. Yang Jianli, Initiatives for China - Former prisoner of conscience and survivor of Tiananmen Square massacre
3. Yang Kuanxing, Yibao - Chinese writer, original signatory to Charter 08, the manifesto calling for political reform in ChinaYang
4. Ali Al Ahmed, The Gulf Institute
5. Art Kaufman, Senior Director, World Movement for Democracy
6. Don Kraus, Chief Executive Officer, Citizens for Global Solutions
7. Afton Beutler, Worldwide Organization for Women, Switzerland
8. Shomik Chaudhuri, Institute of International Social Development, India
9. Amina Bouayach, President, Moroccan Human Rights Organization (OMDH)
10. Nguyễn Lê Nhân Quyền, Vietnamese League for Human Rights, Switzerland
11. Anki Flores, Anti-Racism Information Service, Switzerland
12. Duy Hoang, Viet Tan, Vietnam
13. Jean Stoner, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, USA
14. Sr Marlette Black, International Presentation Association, Australia
15. Tashi Albertini, President, Associazione Ticino Tibet, Switzerland
16. Judea Pearl, The Daniel Pearl Foundation, USA
17. Dickson M. David Ntwiga, Solidarity House International, Kenya
18. Gibreil I. M. Hamid, Darfur Peace and Development Centre, Switzerland
19. Jacqueline Kasha, Freedom and Roam Uganda & Sexual Minorities Uganda
20. Siaka Coulibaly, Executive Secretary, Civil Society Organizations Network for Development(RESOCIDE), Burkina Faso
21. François Ullmann, President, Ingénieurs du Monde, France
22. Héritiers de la Justice, Service des Eglises Protestantes pour les Droits de l'Homme et la Paix, Democratic Republic of Congo
23. Achut Prasad Gautam, Secretary, Nepal International Consumers Union
24. Phil ya Nangoloh, Executive Director, NamRights, Windhoek, Namibia
25. Ulrich Delius, Society for Threatened Peoples, Germany
26. Maiga Djingarey, Femmes et Droits humains (Women and Human Rights), Mali
27. Olanrewaju Suraju, Human and Environmental Development Agenda, Lagos, Nigeria
28. Stephen Ouma Bwire, General Secretary Uganda Journalists Union
29. Carlos E. Tinoco, Consorcio desarrollo y Justicia, Caracas, Venezuela
30. Karel Nowak, Secretary General, International Association for the Defense of the Religious Liberty, Switzerland
31. Keyvan Rafiee, President, Human Rights Activities in Iran
32. Bernard Schalscha, secrétaire général, France Syrie Démocratie
33. Dolkar Gyaltag, Tibetan Womens Organisation in Switzerland
34. Dr. Yael Danieli, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, USA
35. Jeff King, International Christian Concern, USA
36. Alain Jakubowicz, President, LICRA
37. Seng Xiong, International Fund for Hmong Development
38. Nazanin Afshin-Jam, Stop Child Executions, Canada
39. Myrna Lachenal, World Federation for Mental Health, Switzerland and Philippines
40. Naomi Ichihara Røkkum, Vice President, International Federation of Liberal Youth
41. Tae-Jin Kim, Free the NK Gulag, South Korea
42. Ratna Osman, Executive Director, Sisters in Islam
43. Daniel Feng, Foundation for China in the 21st Century

44. **Christina Fu, New Hope Foundation**
45. **Theodor Rathgeber, Forum Human Rights, Germany**
46. **Sr. Denise Boyle fmdm, Executive Director, Franciscans International**
47. **Richard Lawson, Founder, Global Human Rights Index, UK**
48. **Gary Bailey, MSW, ACSW, President, the International Federation of Social Workers, Switzerland**
49. **Sr Catherine Waters, OP, Catholic International Education Office (OIEC), Brussels and New York**
50. **Obinna Egbuka, Youth Enhancement Organization, Nigeria**