



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

15 March 2012 – 19th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 6 – UPR Adoption Syria
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Delivered by: Mathieu Routier

Thank you Madam President,

Today marks the one-year anniversary of the Syrian revolution. For one year the Syrian people have been struggling for their rights to freedom, justice, and dignity, and for one year they have been killed, tortured and imprisoned on a mass scale by the Syrian authorities.

When the UPR Working Group gathered to review Syria in October, the brutal repression of the Syrian population had already cost more than 5000 lives. During its Review, Syria rejected recommendations to cooperate with and allow access to the Commission of Inquiry. It refused to immediately end violations of international human rights law, including violent reprisals against peaceful protestors, political activists and their families. It rejected recommendations to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people with a credible process for reform. During the UPR, as in the decades before it, and the months since, the Assad regime has shown no political will to reform its repressive policies and practices.

With one year gone by, and despite the laudable efforts of the Human Rights Council, the number of documented deaths likely exceeds 10000, with entire cities placed under military siege and subjected to almost daily shelling. No one knows how many of the thousands disappeared may also be dead. Yet, the Security Council has failed to fulfill its obligations, with some of its members – as well as some members of the Human Rights Council – blatantly standing in the way of accountability.

We cannot expect that an authoritarian government that has and continues to commit human rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity can benefit from, or engage meaningfully in the UPR process. The Syrian government has demonstrated time and time again that it refuses to stop killing, torturing, and terrorizing its citizens. It must not be allowed to do so with impunity, nor given the resemblance of legitimacy through the UPR process.

No amount of recommendations, whether accepted or rejected, has caused the Syrian government to halt attacks against its own citizens. The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with EMHRN and Syrian partner organizations, call on the Human Rights Council to adopt at this session a resolution demanding international accountability and referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Moreover, we call on the Council to postpone the adoption of the UPR outcome on Syria until the Syrian government is no longer carrying out Crimes against Humanity.

Thank you Madam President.