



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
126<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
Kampala (Uganda), 31 March to 5 April 2012



Assembly  
Item 2

A/126/2-P.3  
20 March 2012

**CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE REQUESTS FOR THE  
INCLUSION OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM IN THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA**

**Request for the inclusion of an emergency item  
in the agenda of the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
submitted by the delegation of Canada**

On 20 March 2012, the Secretary General received from the delegation of Canada a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"The situation in Syria".

Delegates to the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II), and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Canada on Sunday, 1 April 2012.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL BY  
THE ADVISER OF THE CANADIAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

Ottawa, 19 March 2012

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

The Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Group wishes to propose an emergency item entitled:

"The situation in Syria"

for inclusion in the agenda of the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

Please find attached an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution in support of this request.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Joseph JACKSON  
Adviser of the Canadian  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

## THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

### *Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Canada*

Since March 2011, Syrian citizens have staged protests for democratic reforms in various cities across Syria. The Syrian Government has met these peaceful protests with a violent crackdown that, according to the United Nations (UN), has killed over 7,500 and wounded many others. Thousands of civilians have been detained arbitrarily and there are credible reports of summary executions and torture. Fearing for their lives, thousands of Syrians have fled to neighbouring countries, including Turkey and Lebanon, giving rise to a serious humanitarian crisis in the region. The significant deterioration over the last 12 months of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria poses grave risks to the country's civilian population and to international peace and security.

At the same time, international efforts to end the crisis in Syria have to date failed to produce urgently needed results. On 2 November 2011, the Syrian Government agreed to implement elements of the Arab League plan, which calls for the withdrawal of security forces and heavy weapons from cities, the release of political prisoners, talks with the opposition, and access for human rights workers and journalists. In December 2011, a delegation of Arab League observers also entered Syria to monitor progress on implementation of the plan. However, by January 2012, in the face of ongoing violence by Syrian security forces, the Arab League decided to suspend its monitoring mission. Syria's implementation of other elements of the Arab League plan has been either minimal or nonexistent. Relief groups have been permitted only limited access to besieged zones to deliver humanitarian assistance and evacuate wounded citizens. Access for journalists has been similarly limited.

While the UN Security Council has so far failed to reach agreement, on 16 February 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution strongly condemning "widespread and systematic" human rights violations by Syrian authorities. On 7 March 2012, accompanied by members of the Syrian Red Crescent Team, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Baroness Valerie Amos, was permitted to enter the district of Baba Amr in the Syrian city of Homs briefly. Baroness Amos said she was "devastated" by the extent of destruction she saw and wondered what had happened to the people who once lived there.

United Nations–Arab League special envoy to Syria, Kofi Annan, met with Syrian officials in Damascus on 10 March 2012, urging an end to the violence and for the Syrian Government to meet with a broad spectrum of opposition forces to discuss a political settlement within the framework of the Arab League plan. The day prior to his visit, Homs was once again subjected to shelling by Syrian security forces.

In light of the ongoing violence against civilians and the humanitarian crisis as well as the substantial risk to regional stability and security, the delegation of Canada would like to propose that "The Situation in Syria" be considered as an emergency item on the agenda of the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

## THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

### *Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of CANADA*

The 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

(1) *Recalling* the resolution on "Strengthening Democratic Reform in Emerging Democracies, including in North Africa and the Middle East", adopted unanimously by the 124<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Panama, 2011), which:

- urged all parties to refrain from violence and to ensure in particular that human rights are respected,
- called on all governments to respect the right to peaceful self-determination of peoples, and
- expressed concern for the humanitarian impact of the political changes in the region on vulnerable groups, particularly women and children,

(2) *Noting* the League of Arab States' November 2011 plan, agreed to by the Syrian Government, which called for an immediate end to violence against protestors, the release of political prisoners, the removal of all tanks and armoured vehicles from the streets, and the convening of a meeting in Cairo for dialogue with the opposition,

(3) *Noting* the repeated calls by the United Nations and the Arab League for the Syrian Government to honour its commitment to the plan and also to permit the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the evacuation of wounded persons,

(4) *Noting* the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 16 February 2012 which strongly condemned "the continued widespread and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities, such as the use of force against civilians, arbitrary executions, the killing and persecution of protestors, human rights defenders and journalists, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, interference with access to medical treatment, torture, sexual violence, and ill-treatment, including against children",

(5) *Noting* the United Nations Security Council's press statement of 1 March 2012 which deplored "the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria, in particular the growing number of affected civilians, the lack of safe access to adequate medical services, and food shortages, particularly in areas affected by fighting and violence such as Homs, Hama, Deraa and Idlib",

(6) *Alarmed* by the mounting loss of life and injury in Syria due to ongoing armed attacks by forces of the Syrian Government against its population,

(7) *Cognizant* of the serious humanitarian crisis and grave risk to regional stability and security posed by the Syrian Government's use of violence rather than dialogue to address calls for reform,

(8) *Expressing* its solidarity and sympathy with Syrian citizens who have been denied their human rights and whose peaceful calls for democratic reform have been met with imprisonment, threats and violence,

1. *Calls* for an immediate cessation to the violence and human rights violations and abuses in Syria and *further calls* for full adherence of all parties to international human rights and international humanitarian law obligations;
2. *Calls* for all parties to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 on women, peace and security;
3. *Commends* the efforts of governments and international organizations to bring about a peaceful end to the crisis in Syria;
4. *Urges* the United Nations and the Arab League to redouble their efforts to assist in bringing about an end to armed violence in Syria, to address the current humanitarian crisis, and to provide the basis for a negotiated settlement among contesting parties;
5. *Calls upon* all parties, in particular the Syrian Authorities, to cooperate fully and immediately with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to facilitate the unhindered and safe provision of humanitarian assistance and to allow the evacuation of the wounded from affected areas;
6. *Urges* the commencement of an inclusive political process in Syria to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people;
7. *Underscores* that this political process must be conducted in an environment free from violence, fear, intimidation, discrimination and extremism;
8. *Expresses* its hope that this process can lead to a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic and pluralistic political system, in which citizens are equal regardless of their affiliations, ethnicities, beliefs or gender;
9. *Underscores* the pivotal role the IPU can play in assisting fledgling democracies, in encouraging political reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and in upholding and protecting the principles of democracy, human rights and gender equality;
10. *Requests* the IPU Secretary General to report on the implementation of this resolution at the 128<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.