



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



Assembly
Item 2

A/126/2-P.5
26 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 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
submitted by the delegation of France**

On 26 March 2012, the Secretary General received from the delegation of France a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 126th Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"An urgent need to end the bloodshed and massive human rights violations in Syria, to guarantee that humanitarian assistance reaches all Syrians in need, and to pave the way for an inclusive dialogue among all Syrians with a view to finding a lasting political solution".

Delegates to the 126th 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 126th Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of France 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- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the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
PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE GROUP OF FRANCE**

Paris, 19 March 2012

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I am honoured to inform you that the French IPU Group wishes to request the inclusion of the following emergency item in the agenda of the 126th Assembly:

"An urgent need to end the bloodshed and massive human rights violations in Syria, to guarantee that humanitarian assistance reaches all Syrians in need, and to pave the way for an inclusive dialogue among all Syrians with a view to finding a lasting political solution".

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

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Patrice MARTIN-LALANDE
President of the Executive Group of France

AN URGENT NEED TO END THE BLOODSHED AND MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA, TO GUARANTEE THAT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE REACHES ALL SYRIANS IN NEED, AND TO PAVE THE WAY FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE AMONG ALL SYRIANS WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A LASTING POLITICAL SOLUTION

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of France

For over a year now, Syrians have been demonstrating for recognition of their fundamental rights.

Their peaceful requests for freedom and democracy have been met with violence and repression by the Bashar al-Assad regime.

Damascus' power has not waned despite the most brutal means of trying to end by terror the vast protest movement it is faced with. The Syrian authorities are committing massive human rights violations by subjecting cities and towns to indiscriminate bombardment, by making thousands of arbitrary arrests and by using torture and other forms of ill-treatment. These facts were established in the UN Human Rights Council report of 23 November 2011.

This savage crackdown with devastating humanitarian consequences has unleashed a cycle of violence, for which the Syrian regime bears full responsibility. The disproportionate use of force and military attacks against civilians have in fact led the Syrian opposition to defend itself, with light weaponry, which is no match for the arms used by the Syrian Government.

According to the communication addressed to the UN Security Council on 28 February 2012 by Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the number of deaths caused by the Syrian crisis exceeded 7,500 on that date. The death toll has not ceased to rise since.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in several regions in Syria, particularly in urban areas bombarded by government forces, where the water, food and electricity supplies have been cut off. A total of 25,000 refugees are currently recorded in neighbouring countries and the number of internally displaced persons stands at about 200,000.

The few independent humanitarian agencies present in Syria cannot freely access the populations that have fallen victim to the crackdown, nor can they provide them with the necessary care. The Syrian Government refuses to open the hospitals to all wounded persons.

In Deraa, Hama, Homs, Douma, Zabadani, Idlib and many other towns or population centres in Syria, the Syrian regime has put in place a ruthless policy to eliminate any form of resistance and impose terror.

Today, Bashar al-Assad's regime has lost all legitimacy.

It is seeking to stoke the flames of interreligious conflict and create a spiral of violence and a resurgence of extremist ideas it hopes to capitalize on in order to remain in power. It represents a threat to all and to peace in the region.

Faced with this intolerable situation, the international community is mobilizing to urge the Syrian regime to put an end to the violence, resolve the humanitarian crisis and accept a lasting political solution.

Since 3 August 2011, the UN Security Council, through a statement issued by its President, condemned the widespread human rights violations and use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities.

As of 7 August, the League of Arab States has been asking the Syrian authorities to halt immediately all acts of violence and security campaigns against civilians.

On 29 April, 23 August and 2 December 2011, and subsequently on 1 and 23 March 2012, the UN Human Rights Council condemned the widespread, systematic and flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria.

In its resolutions of 1 and 23 March 2012 in particular, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the need to respond urgently to humanitarian needs and to ensure safe access to medical care. It requested the Syrian Government to put an end to all human rights violations and attacks against civilians and to authorize free and unimpeded access for UN bodies and humanitarian agencies. Lastly, it insisted on the need to end impunity and to hold to account the perpetrators of human rights violations, including those that might constitute crimes against humanity. In its resolution of 23 March, it decided to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria given the gravity of the situation on the ground and urged the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the Commission without imposing any restrictions.

On 2 November 2011, the League of Arab States adopted a plan of action appealing to the Syrian Government to halt the violence, release all arbitrarily detained persons, withdraw Syrian armed forces from towns and population centres, guarantee the freedom to demonstrate peacefully and authorize access, notably for the independent press and representatives of international institutions, to all areas in Syria. The Syrian Government stated that it would accept the plan without any change on the ground to its policy of repression. Given the absence of any progress, the head of the observation mission dispatched by the Arab League to monitor implementation of the plan resigned on 12 February.

On 22 January, the Arab League completed its plan for a roadmap, calling on President Bashar al-Assad to hand over power to the Vice-President with a view to forming a government of national unity. On 12 February, it requested the deployment of UN blue helmets to Syria.

On 16 February, the UN General Assembly adopted by a wide majority (137 votes for, 12 against and 17 abstentions) a resolution (66/253) at the proposal of the Arab Group expressing its full support for the Arab League Peace Plan.

On 24 February, an international Friends of Syria Conference, organized by the League of Arab States, brought together 60 countries and underscored the isolation of the Bashar al-Assad regime. This conference reiterated the international community's condemnation of the regime's decline into criminal acts and called for sanctions against the regime's policy of repression.

On 8 March, UNESCO condemned the human rights violations committed by the Syrian regime.

Furthermore, sanctions were imposed by States and groups of States in a bid to make the Syrian regime end its crackdown and meet the aspirations of Syrian citizens to democracy. The European Union gradually strengthened, starting from May 2011, the set of sanctions it had imposed against Syrian individuals or entities participating in or financing the crackdown. The Arab League and Turkey also imposed sanctions against the Syrian regime in late 2011.

Against the backdrop of this growing international support, Kofi Annan, appointed on 23 February as Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, met President Bashar al-Assad on 10 and 11 March with a view to negotiating a solution to the conflict.

On 21 March, the UN Security Council finally managed to adopt a presidential statement after China and Russia lifted their veto. The statement expressed its full support for the efforts of Kofi Annan and his six-point proposal as follows: commit to appoint an empowered interlocutor to address the aspirations of the Syrian people; a cessation of violence; the provision of humanitarian assistance; the release of arbitrarily detained persons; ensure freedom of movement for journalists; and respect for freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully.

The international community has not yet managed to weaken the Syrian regime. Given the urgency in humanitarian terms of resolving the Syrian crisis, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is duty-bound, as required by its Statutes, to express its support for UN efforts at the Kampala Assembly.

The Syrian crisis today constitutes a threat to peace. It can only be resolved in a lasting manner through a process of democratic reform culminating in free and fair elections and the appointment of a genuinely representative parliament.

By addressing the Syrian question at the 126th Assembly, the IPU will by the same token be working, as required by its Statutes, for peace and for building strong representative institutions.

For these reasons, the French IPU Group wishes to request that an emergency item entitled "An urgent need to end the bloodshed and massive human rights violations in Syria, to guarantee that humanitarian assistance reaches all Syrians in need, and to pave the way for an inclusive dialogue among all Syrians with a view to finding a lasting political solution" be included in the agenda of the 126th IPU Assembly.

AN URGENT NEED TO END THE BLOODSHED AND MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA, TO GUARANTEE THAT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE REACHES ALL SYRIANS IN NEED, AND TO PAVE THE WAY FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE AMONG ALL SYRIANS WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A LASTING POLITICAL SOLUTION

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of FRANCE

The 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* the resolution entitled "Strengthening democratic reform in emerging democracies, including North Africa and the Middle East" adopted by the 124th IPU Assembly (Panama, 2011), in which the Assembly "calls on all governments to respect the right to peaceful self-determination of peoples",
- (2) *Also recalling* the resolution entitled "Furthering parliamentary democracy in order to protect human rights and encourage reconciliation among peoples and partnership among nations", adopted by the 110th IPU Assembly (Mexico, 2004), in which the Assembly "underlines that the holding of truly free and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage, monitored by independent election authorities, is always of paramount importance in the establishment of parliaments reflecting national diversity and, particularly in countries emerging from violent conflict, is essential in consolidating and advancing the reconciliation process" and "calls on parliaments to respect the political rights of opposition parties and freedom of the press",
- (3) *Deeply concerned* by the excessive use of force by the Syrian authorities against civilians peacefully expressing their aspirations to freedom,
- (4) *Alarmed* by the use by these authorities of heavy military means, such as artillery and combat tanks, against towns and population centres and by resorting to mass murder, arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment of detained persons, in particular children,
- (5) *Also alarmed* by the humanitarian crisis and the ever growing number of deaths and injured persons as a result of the brutal crackdown by the Syrian security forces,
- (6) *Mindful* of the fact that the Syrian regime's policy of repression jeopardizes the region's stability,
- (7) *Underscoring* its strong attachment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic,
- (8) *Recalling* UN General Assembly Resolution 66/176 of 19 December 2011, as well as the resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council of 29 April 2011, 23 August 2011, 2 December 2011, and of 1 and 23 March 2012 on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and *underscoring* that the Council strongly condemns the systematic and widespread violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms that the Syrian authorities continue to commit,

(9) *Also recalling* UN General Assembly Resolution 66/253 of 16 February 2012, which "strongly condemns 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", and "calls for an inclusive Syrian-led political process, conducted in an environment free from violence, fear, intimidation and extremism and aimed at effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the people of the Syrian Arab Republic",

(10) *Further recalling* the statement issued by the President of the UN Security Council on 21 March 2012, in which the Security Council expresses its full support for the efforts of the Special Joint Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and his six-point proposal to commit to appoint an empowered interlocutor to address the aspirations of the Syrian people; a cessation of violence; the provision of humanitarian assistance in affected areas; the release of arbitrarily detained persons; freedom of movement for journalists; and freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully,

(11) *Considering* the League of Arab States plan of action of 2 November 2011 and their decisions of 22 January and 12 February 2012,

(12) *Saluting* the efforts of the international community, the League of Arab States and the Special Joint Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League with a view to reaching a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis in Syria,

(13) *Expressing* its solidarity with all those in Syria who demand the establishment of democratic institutions and recognition of their fundamental rights,

(14) *Also expressing* its sympathy with all the victims of the violence and its sorrow at the growing number of dead and wounded,

1. *Demands* that the Syrian Government end forthwith all the human rights violations and attacks on civilians, honour its obligation to protect its population and its obligations under international law;
2. *Insists* on the need to hold to account the perpetrators of human rights violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity;
3. *Demands* that the Syrian Government take the following measures without delay in accordance with the decisions of the League of Arab States: release all arbitrarily detained persons; withdraw all military and other forces from towns and population centres; ensure respect for the right to demonstrate peacefully and respect freedom of association, and guarantee free access for the media and representatives of international organizations to all areas in Syria with a view to establishing the truth about the events that have occurred since March 2011;

4. *Expresses* its full support for the efforts of the Special Joint Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States with a view to negotiating a lasting solution to the Syrian crisis and to the six-point proposal he presented to the Syrian authorities;
5. *Considers* that the process leading to the peaceful and complete resolution of the Syrian crisis should be led by the Syrians in the framework of an inclusive dialogue and should meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people to democracy;
6. *Urges* the Syrian Government to guarantee free access for humanitarian agencies to persons in need of assistance and to allow safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance;
7. *Appeals* to the parliamentarians of the world to continue to work resolutely for the peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis;
8. *Underscores* the pivotal role the IPU can play in coming to the assistance of emerging democracies, fostering political reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, and in upholding and preserving the principles of representative democracy, human rights and gender equality;
9. *Decides* to continue examining closely developments in the Syrian Arab Republic.