

7 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on Events in the
Syrian Arab Republic**

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
Your Excellency Mr. Nabil Al-Araby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,
Your Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Joint Special Envoy for the United Nations and the League of Arab States,
Mr. Ivan Simonovic, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting today at a tragic moment for the Syrian people.

On 25 and 26 of May, atrocities were committed in the region of El-Houleh and yesterday in Al-Qoubeir, West of Hama. Dozens of men, women and children under the age of 10 were killed, and hundreds were wounded. Civilians were deliberately shot at close range and severely abused by pro-regime elements.

Government artillery and tanks also shelled residential neighborhoods. I condemn in the strongest possible terms these appalling and brutal crimes.
Ladies and gentlemen,

The violence in Syria is ongoing. We cannot deny that innocent victims are dying on a daily basis, in grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

I would recall the words of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council on the 1st of June.

She indicated that these acts may amount to crimes against humanity and other international crimes, and said that they may be indicative of a pattern of widespread or systematic attacks against civilian populations that have been perpetrated with impunity.

Moreover, the High Commissioner for Human Rights repeatedly encouraged the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Such crimes require a transparent, independent and impartial international investigation. Those responsible must be held accountable.

I welcome the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on the 1st of this month, requesting the Commission of Inquiry to urgently conduct a comprehensive, independent and unfettered special inquiry. I also look forward to the results of the investigation announced by the Syrian Government.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On Syria, the General Assembly is carrying out its chartered responsibility related to international peace and security. The General Assembly offers the international community a viable mechanism in moments of deadlock of other UN bodies.

On the 16th of February, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/253, which called for the appointment of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, thereby implementing the provisions of Chapter 8 of the Charter.

On the 5th of April, the Joint Special Envoy addressed the General Assembly during an informal meeting, in order to present his six-point plan that had just been accepted by the parties.

In doing so, the General Assembly is playing a complementary role to the Security Council, which had already adopted resolutions 2042 and 2043, endorsing the six-point plan and establishing the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), which was promptly deployed.

I commend the courage and dedication of the UNSMIS observers. Ensuring their safety and security must be a high priority.

I should also recall the resolution of the League of Arab States adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in Doha, on 2 June, which called on the Security Council to carry out its responsibility according to the Charter of the United Nations, and to take the necessary measures to guarantee the full and immediate implementation of the plan of the Joint special Envoy, Kofi Annan within a given timeframe, including implementing the six-point plan, including invoking chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and referral to the GA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must find a way to end the violence and the humanitarian crisis, and to facilitate a peaceful, inclusive and Syrian-led political solution.

I urge all Member States to unite in cooperating with the Joint Special Envoy and to impress upon the Syrian Government and all parties the need for a cessation of violence in all its forms, and for a rapid and peaceful solution to end this crisis.

To conclude:

We need to have a frank and results-oriented discussion on Syria. We must move promptly - Time is pressing. The lives of tens of thousands of Syrians, and the stability of the region, are at stake. The credibility of this organization is also at stake.

Considering the urgency of the situation, I have invited you all, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and of the League of Arab States, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss this urgent crisis.

Before I hand over to the Secretary-General ... I call on you to observe a minute of silence to mourn the lives of those who have been killed by this brutal action in Syria