

3 August 2012

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

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting at a time of unprecedented violence in Syria.

Recently, the Syrian Government forces have intensified their military operations against areas presumed to be strong-holds of anti-Government armed groups, in particular the cities of Damascus and lately Aleppo.

Gross violations of human rights are occurring daily, in the context of increasingly militarized fighting.

The League of Arab States, the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights have indicated repeatedly that these acts may amount to crimes against humanity and other international crimes.

I am deeply concerned about this horrifying escalation.

I condemn the continued widespread atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law by the Syrian authorities. There are horrifying reports about mass killings, rape, extrajudicial executions, torture and deliberate targeting of civilians.

All parties to the conflict have responsibilities under international law to adhere to.

Those responsible must be held accountable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time to act.

Words are not enough. The international community is responsible to act without further delay. I deeply regret that the Security Council has again been unable to unite and take collective action to put an immediate end to the appalling crisis in Syria.

The deadlock in the Security Council sends the wrong signals to all parties in the Syrian conflict. The General Assembly in times of deadlock has a role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the UN Charter.

Today, once again the General Assembly proves its power and authority.

We have to provide the necessary assistance to the people of Syria and find an all-inclusive and peaceful solution to the crisis.

This General Assembly resolution on 16 February paved the way for the appointment of Kofi Annan as the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and for the adoption later on of his six-point plan. This has not been an easy task. That's why I have immediately expressed my regrets as soon as I learned yesterday of Mr. Annan's intention not to renew his mandate when it expires at the end of this month.

This announcement, which I understand, obliges us more than ever before to move forward with persistence and to take additional measures so as to protect the Syrian people from the continued atrocities they are subjected to.

Today, we build furthermore on the resolution of the General Assembly 66/253.

The six-point plan is not being implemented, the violence is increasing.

We are gathered today to face our responsibilities.

We have no choice, but to take the necessary credible action.

The credibility of the United Nations is at stake; regional stability in the Middle East is at stake.

The lives of thousands of innocent people depend on our response.

I urge all of you to support the draft resolution before us today to fulfil this task.

Thank you.