



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Maldives
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

**Statement at Interactive Dialogue with the Independent International
Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**

**24th Session of Human Rights Council by
Ms. Iruthisham Adam, Permanent Representative**

Geneva, 16 September 2013

Check Against Delivery

Mr President,

The Maldives welcomes the Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and its most recent updates to the Council. We understand the limitations in which the Commission is operating under, and we fully appreciate its periodic report, which paints a grim, but detailed account of the nature of atrocities committed by both sides in the conflict.

On-going events have lately demonstrated that there is no clear military solution to the crisis, we welcome the recent initiative to place Syria's chemical weapons stockpile under international control and express our hope that the concerned parties and the international community would seize this opportunity to find a political settlement.

Mr President,

As the report of the Commission highlights, we remain deeply alarmed by the increase in unlawful killings, hostage-taking, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, summary executions and a whole host of other human rights violations committed by both sides. We strongly condemn such blatant violations and call on both sides to cease all violence and to ease the suffering of the Syrian people, especially women and children.

On the issue of accountability, we commend the Commission for keeping appropriate records of those it reasonably believes to be responsible for crimes and violations, especially crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights law. We would encourage you to continue such investigations to end impunity.

We also believe that the situation in Syria should be referred to the International Criminal Court immediately.

Mr President,

We note with alarm the deliberate targeting of hospitals and medical personnel by both sides, which amounts to war crimes. All parties must fully observe their obligations on protected objects and allow, without undue hindrance, access to medical personnel to treat the wounded and sick.

The Syrian uprising, which had subsequently evolved into a civil war, are now showing signs of an international armed conflict with foreign fighters and military advisors of foreign countries heavily engaged on the ground. The spill over has been felt the most in The Lebanon, which has recorded a disturbing increase in violence, clearly on sectarian lines and evidently linked to the crisis across the border.

The efforts of Syria's immediate neighbours, and the important work of the UNHCR and other agencies in receiving and providing aid to refugees must be acknowledged. The almost 2-million refugees fleeing the horrors of war would be a major humanitarian crisis for years to come, but worse, the affected population inside Syria remains inaccessible to aid workers and humanitarian relief.

Mr President,

We anxiously await the findings of the UN weapons inspections team on the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. If substantiated, this horrible act would constitute a major international breach governing the use of weapons of mass destruction, and warrants a firm and measured response. While we welcome on-going efforts to secure Syria's existing stockpiles, the use of chemical weapons on the ground must be nevertheless investigated.

The Maldives welcomes the Commission's inquiry into the events of Al-Qusayr as mandated by resolution 23/1, and acknowledges the comprehensive details it has provided to the Council. As we had discussed during the Urgent Debate in June, the Syrian Government retains the primary role of protecting the rights of its citizens. Aerial bombardments and shelling of civilian refugees with little or no regard to loss of civilian life and destruction of property, we regret, is a desecration of the most basic norms the international community have come to embrace.

In conclusion Mr President, let me welcome the recommendations of the Commission, and extend my delegation's appreciation to their work. We call upon the Syrian authorities to grant full access to members of the Commission, to carry out their mandate.

Thank you, Mr President.
