



MAC DIVES.

Statement at the 17th Special Session of the Human Rights Council

“Human Rights Situation in Syria”

By H.E. Ms. Iruthisham Adam, Permanent Representative

Thank you Madam President,

Madam President, the Maldives is a close friend of Syria and its people and thus it is with great sadness that we find ourselves here for a further Special Session on the human rights situation in the country.

The Maldives did not cosponsor the earlier Special Session on Syria because we hoped, at the time, that wisdom and compassion would prevail and that the Syrian authorities would halt their campaign of violence and begin a process of reform. We did however vote in favour of resolution S-16/1 - because we considered it important to shine an international spotlight on the situation so as to establish the facts, to deter further violations, and to establish accountability.

Madam President,

It is extremely unfortunate that, since the adoption of resolution S-16/1, instead of responding to the legitimate demands of the protest movement with dialogue and change, the Syrian authorities have intensified their campaign of violence, intimidation and killing against unarmed civilians; while promises of political reform have not been matched with action.

As my Foreign Minister made clear in a statement last week, the indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslim children, women and men by the Syrian State security forces is completely unacceptable to the Maldives. The violence represents a serious violation of Islamic values, as well as of international human rights and humanitarian law. The fact that such violence has actually escalated during the Holy Month of Ramadan, a period of reflection, devotion and compassion, makes the actions of the Syrian authorities even more unacceptable.

It is also unfortunate that Syria has not taken any steps to comply with resolution S-16/1 and has not cooperated with the independent fact-finding mission. Cooperation with the mission would have sent a strong message that the Syrian authorities are serious in their stated wish to bring the current crisis, including associated human rights violations, to an end through dialogue.

Madam President,

Notwithstanding Syria's non-cooperation with the fact-finding mission, we note that the mission has been able to collate a wide-range of information from a variety of sources.

The Maldives is deeply disturbed by the scale of human rights violations contained in the mission's report, and by the conclusion that the widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity. We would like to take this occasion to express our admiration for the bravery of those who continue to demand their basic human rights in the face of such violence, as well as our sympathy for those families which have lost loved-ones.

Madam President,

The events unfolding today in Tripoli offer a powerful reminder to all those who choose to rule through fear and violence instead of through consent and dialogue, that the desire of people to live freely and to enjoy their basic human rights will always prevail in the end. With this in mind, the Maldives again calls on the Syrian authorities to immediately cease all violence against civilians, and to begin a serious process of democratic and human rights reform. If they do not then, in our opinion, it is time for President Bashar al-Asad and his government to step aside.

Thank you.