



Téléfax: (41-22) 917 9017
Téléphone: (41-22) 917 9102
Internet: www.ohchr.org
E-Mail: jnataf@ohchr.org

Address:
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 GENEVE 10

REFERENCE: IMN/CG/Syria/CAT/48session/Special report

Geneva, 23 November 2011

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you, pursuant to a decision of the Committee against Torture, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Committee.

The Committee is deeply concerned at numerous, consistent and substantiated reports and information, from various reliable sources, about the widespread violations of the provisions of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereafter the Convention) by the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic since the adoption of the Committee's Concluding Observation on the State party's initial report to the Committee (CAT/C/SYR/CO/1), in May 2010.

These sources include, amongst others, the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic; urgent appeals from various special procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; allegation letters sent by several special rapporteurs, including the special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; statements of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights; statements delivered on behalf of all Special Procedures mandate-holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council; and concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.¹

These authoritative sources mention gross and widespread human rights violations in the territory of the State party such as: torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including children who have suffered torture and mutilation while detained; widespread or systematic attacks against civilian population, including killing of peaceful demonstrators and excessive use of force against them; extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; arbitrary detention by police forces and the military; enforced and involuntary disappearances; persecutions of human rights defenders and activists.

.../...

His Excellency
Mr. Faysal KHABBAZ HAMOUI
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rue de Lausanne 72
1202 Genève
Fax: 022 738 42 75

The Committee notes that these reports of massive human rights violations take place in a context of total and absolute impunity, as prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations have not been undertaken in such cases. Further, these generalised abuses are allegedly conducted under direct orders from public authorities, at their instigation or with their consent or acquiescence.

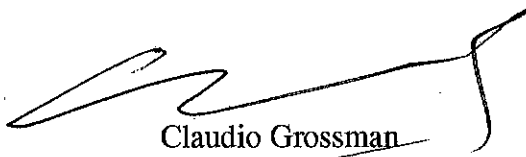
The Committee received from the State party its comments and follow-up responses to the Concluding Observations of the Committee (CAT/C/SYR/CO/1/Add.1) on 24 August 2011. These comments and responses did not provide information that would be sufficient to dismiss the concerns of the Committee about the widespread violations of the provisions of the Convention, nor did they provide information on the implementation of its recommendations in the State party.

In light of the above, and pursuant to article 19, paragraph 1, *in fine*, of the Convention against Torture, the Committee requests the State party to provide it with a special report that: indicates the measures the State party is taking to insure that all its obligations under the Convention are effectively implemented; the measures that have been taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee's concluding observations adopted in May 2010; as well as information on the current events occurring in the territory of the State party referred to in the reports and statements mentioned above.

The Committee would also request the State party to indicate to the Committee any steps taken to withdraw its reservation to article 20 of the Convention.

The Committee would appreciate receiving the special report by 9 March 2012, with a view to reviewing this information during its next session.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Claudio Grossman
Chairperson
Committee against Torture

¹ The report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/18/53), dated 15 September 2011;

The statements of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (22 August 2011) and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights (19 September 2011);

The urgent appeal from Special procedures of the Human Rights Council, namely the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and the Special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (UA G/SO 218, G/SO 217/1, G/SO 214 (76-17), G/SO 214 (107-9), 214 (53-24), dated 26 May 2011;

The Statement delivered on behalf of all Special Procedures mandate-holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council at the Seventeenth Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, dated 22 August 2011;

The allegation letter sent by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the Special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (G/SO 214 (33-27), G/SO 214 (53-24), SYR 5/2010) dated 14 September 2010, 214 (53-24), dated 26 May 2011; and

The Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SYR/CO/3-4), dated 6 October 2011.