

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the informal plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on the situation in Syria, on June 07, 2012

Thank you, Mr President.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr President, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank the Secretary General H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, Joint Special Envoy Mr Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States Dr Nabil El-Araby and the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their statements on the situation in Syria.

2. Mr President, India continues to remain deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in Syria. Attacks against civilians and security forces have intensified over the last few weeks and have taken a significant toll. Meanwhile, we have also witnessed a sharp increase in the number of terrorist attacks in different parts of the country. The year-long crisis has also created a difficult humanitarian situation, and as many as a million Syrians are said to be in need of humanitarian assistance.

3. We strongly condemn all violence, irrespective of who the perpetrators are. We also condemn all violations of human rights.

4. Mr President, India has, from the beginning of the crisis in Syria, called for a peaceful and inclusive political process to address the grievances of all sections of Syrian society. We have also been supportive of the efforts by the United Nations and the League of Arab States for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. In this context, we have been fully supportive of the efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan.

5. The growing militarization of the conflict in Syria will have serious consequences for peace, stability and security not only in Syria but also in the larger region. A military approach to the Syrian crisis will not only further exacerbate the situation and fuel a large-scale sectarian civil war but also cause havoc by aiding and abetting terrorism and proliferation of weapons that will have serious consequences for the entire region and beyond.

6. What is needed, therefore, is that all sides to the conflict recommit themselves to the six-point plan of Mr Annan and cooperate to create an environment conducive for launching an inclusive Syrian-led political process. This also calls for cessation of all outside support for armed groups and serious action against the terrorist groups operating in Syria. Expeditious action is required by all sides to cease violence. Progress should also be made on other aspects of the six-point plan, including provision of humanitarian assistance, access to and release of detainees, and full respect for political and civil rights of all Syrians. Only thus can the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people be met while ensuring respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

7. With this objective in view, we believe that the Joint Special Envoy should be given sufficient time, space and flexibility to pursue his mandate. There should be one mediation process led by Mr Annan and his efforts should be fully supported. No action should be taken by any side, inside or outside Syria, to derail the Annan Mission.

8. In this context, we commend UNSMIS and its observers for their work in a difficult situation. All parties should ensure safety and security of observers and provide them an environment in which they can implement their mandate independently, impartially and fairly. All parties should cooperate with the United Nations so that urgently needed humanitarian assistance can be provided to those in need. The concerned parties should also cooperate with the United Nations so that violations of human rights and other crimes, including the recent incident in El-Houleh, are fully investigated and their perpetrators brought to justice.

9. In conclusion, Mr President, I would reiterate India's full support to UNSMIS and Mr Annan's efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis through an inclusive Syrian-led political process without any further bloodshed.

I thank you.

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