

Draft Resolution on Syria – Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri,
Permanent Representative, on 04 October 2011

Thank you, Madame President,

I want to start by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We have no doubt that you will have an extremely successful Presidency. I would also like to take this opportunity to complement Lebanon, Ambassador Nawaf and his team, for their very wise and able stewardship of the Council during September, a difficult month at the best of times.

2. Madame President, Syria has both historically and in contemporary times been an important country in the Middle East. Its role in the Middle East peace process and in the stability of the wider region cannot be overemphasized. Prolonged instability and unrest in Syria, therefore, clearly have ramifications for the region and beyond.

3. India remains concerned at the unfolding events in Syria that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians and security force personnel. We deplore all violence irrespective of who its perpetrators are.

4. Madame President, we recognize the responsibility of all States to respect the fundamental rights of their people, address their legitimate aspirations and respond to their grievances through administrative, political, economic and other measures. At the same time, States also have the obligation to protect their citizens from armed groups and militants. While the right of people to protest peacefully is to be respected, States cannot but take appropriate action when militant groups, heavily armed, resort to violence against state authority and infrastructure.

5. Given the complexity of ground realities in Syria, we believe that engaging Syria in a collaborative and constructive dialogue and partnership is the only pragmatic and productive way forward. In our bilateral contacts with the Syrian Government as well as through the IBSA initiative, we have urged them to exercise restraint, abjure violence and pay heed to the aspirations of their people.

6. The international community should give time and space for the Syrian Government to implement the far-reaching reform measures announced by them. For this, it is also necessary that the opposition forces in Syria give up the path of armed insurrection and engage constructively with the authorities. We firmly believe that the actions of the international community should facilitate an engagement of the Syrian government and the opposition in a Syrian-led inclusive political process and not complicate the situation by threats of sanctions, regime change, etc.

7. The resolution under the Council's consideration does not accommodate our concern about threat of sanctions. It does not condemn the violence perpetrated by the

Syrian opposition. Nor does it place any responsibility on the opposition to abjure violence and engage with the Syrian authorities for redressal of their grievances through a peaceful political process. We have, therefore, abstained on the resolution.

Thank you.

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