

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at
the United Nations Security Council open briefing on the situation in Syria on
April 27, 2011

Thank you, Mr. President,

We thank Under Secretary General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the situation in Syria.

Mr. President,

2.Syria has, 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 underemphasized. Thus, prolonged instability or unrest in Syria may have ramifications for the region and beyond.

3.Reports of violence during the recent demonstrations in parts of Syria resulting in the deaths of several demonstrators as well as security personnel are of concern. There have been reports of armed extremist elements mingling with the demonstrators and using the demonstrations to attack security personnel and damage government property and there is an apparent lack of information regarding those responsible for these violent attacks.

4.We have noted that the Government of Syria has appointed a Commission of Inquiry into the violence during the demonstrations and announced various measures to

address the grievances of its people, including lifting of emergency laws, abolition of State Security Courts, transfer of investigative powers to the police etc. The Government has also announced procedures for organizing peaceful demonstrations. We hope these measures initiated by the Syrian government, as part of an inclusive process of political dialogue and reform, will initiate the process of meeting the aspirations of all sections of Syrian society.

5. As we deplore any violence from any quarter, the Council needs to make clear that it is the responsibility of sovereign states to respond to the aspirations of its people through administrative, political, economic and other measures. At the same time, it is for states to decide on the best course of action to maintain internal law and order and to prevent violence. The primary responsibility of the Council in this particular instance is to urge all sides to abjure violence in any form and to seek a resolution of grievances through peaceful means.

6. We believe regional and sub regional organizations have an important role to play in resolving the crisis in the region, including in Syria. It is essential that all efforts should be made to de-escalate tensions, rather than to exacerbate them. My delegation would support all measures designed to end violence and restore peace.

Thank you.

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