

Human Right Abuse in Syria: A Call for Concern

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The Arab uprising popularly known as the Arab Spring - which began in 2011 in Tunisia and eventually led to the departure of middle east dictators like Ben Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, Gaddafi of Libya and Ali Abdullah Salah of Yemen - has now entered a dramatic stage in Syria with the death of more than three thousand people including innocent children and women who became victim as the fight between the government and opposition groups continues.

While the international community is debating on how to end the conflict with contradicting approaches from the West, Russia and China, gross human right violations like murder, rape, restriction of free movement (especially those of innocent civilians, mostly women fleeing battle zones) and sectarian violence likely to degenerate to genocide are being committed by both the government and armed opposition groups. The right of life, security of persons, freedom of speech, movement, peaceful assembly and demonstration are universal human rights that should be practiced according to the law but unfortunately, such democratic practices are rare commodities in the lives of Syrians under the present and past governments.

The safeguard of human right is a vital function of every state. Despite the uprising against the Syrian government, it is its duty to protect all its citizens without exception. The role of a government is not only the protection of its supporters but the opponents as well. This is unfortunately not the case in Syria. The Bashar's government considers its opponents as terrorists and slaughters them with impunity. Opponents of the Bashar al-Assad's regime are imprisoned without trial, tortured, executed, forced to make confessions on television, bombarded with heavy arms, held in seclusion and prevented from receiving genuine medical care.

The press is under tight control and the economic policies benefit only a selected few. The human rights record of Syria is among the worst in the world. Such act of brutality of a government against its people should be condemned in the strongest terms by people of all nationalities because it goes against the basic norms of humanity. The action of Bashar Al-Assad's regime against Syrians is considered as state-sponsored terrorism by some critics. The Syrian government should know that they will be held responsible for all criminal acts against its citizens.

The EU, US and Arab league have imposed some sanctions on the Syrian government in an effort to force her to abandon the current brutality but these have little or no effect on the ground. It is important however to note that the various opposition groups have also been committing human right abuses. Some human rights groups have provided evidence of brutality, kidnap, torture and execution of government supporters which are carried out by the armed groups

fighting the government and supported by the West – that is, the free Syrian Army.

It is quite ironic that the opposition groups who are accusing the government of dictatorship, torture and corruption are committing the same crime as the government. It is also ironic that the Syrian armed forces and police that are supposed to safeguard national integrity and provide peace and security are instead used as agents of state terror against its citizens. What will happen if the armed opposition groups succeed in overthrowing Bashar al-Assad's regime? Will they be different? The point here is clear. Our position on Syria is unequivocal. IAHRAC vehemently condemns all forms of human right abuses, irrespective of where they come from.

Cases of assassinations, destruction of properties and torture have been reported on both sides. It's worth mentioning that the use of civilians as human shields by both the government and opposition forces are serious human rights violations that must be put to an end. The lives of all the 21 million Syrians must be preserved and protected. Our call is for the warring parties to respect and protect the fundamental rights of the Syrian people in all its ramifications, especially those of the religious and tribal minorities (Sunni Muslims, Christians, Alawites, Druze and Ismaelites).

We call on the supporters of both parties, both within and outside the country to discourage their "friends" against committing abuses. The perpetrators of these acts of brutality should be aware that they will be brought to justice under international law. They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of people, destruction of properties and have caused panic, unrest and a severe refugee crisis.

We also call on all parties in the Syrian crisis to act in consonance with the UN universal human rights declaration which stipulates that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."