



**Rush Transcript by UN Watch**

**Selected Excerpts from  
Review of Syrian Arab Republic  
by the UN Human Rights Council  
Universal Period Review, 12<sup>th</sup> Session  
October 7, 2011**

**Syrian Vice Foreign Minister, H.E. Dr. Faysal Mekdad:**

Madame Chair, I wish you success in guiding the deliberations of this current session of the HRC and UPR. Syria appreciates the UPR because it is universal and non-selective. We hope this UPR exercise will not become a tool to politicize human rights. This will bring us back to the Commission we all sought to change.

My country Syria, during the past 7 months, has experienced many threats of war. The media war, the misinformation. Threats and embezzlement. We are facing the hegemony by the West and the United States and Israel. We are the target of terrorist threats. Our security and peace keeping organs are facing many problems. We will submit to the HCHR the list of the names of martyrs from police and security officials. Over 1,100 have been killed by terrorists by our surrounding countries who are supporting them. Those member states are holding conferences for them, speaking about democracy and human rights, even though they are murdering.

Many crimes have taken place. Billions of dollars are distributed without limit to extremists, to those who engage in weapons and drugs. Footage available to those who pay to the highest price, it is possible to give this Council evidence of how the televisions are lying.

The story said the Syrians have decapitated a girl. All those that were targeting Syria condemned this barbarian act. The hatred and the lies still don't have much room to move. The girl came back to life to come back to tell her true story, that she ran away from her home and went to her relatives. I have asked of the Secretariat of OHCHR to give us the testimony of her in the video in which she says that after hearing what was broadcast on television, she appeared on TV to say exactly what happened. Her head had not been severed from her body.

How funny is all that (articles condemning Syria)?

It is not the right of Western, colonial, and American hegemony. They don't have the right to give us this advice, in particular if its in the field of human rights. How can we give advice to them when they killed 50,000 Libyans? They have killed a million Iraqis. Thousands in the Cote d'Ivoire. American detention centers in Abu Graib and

Guantanamo. Western countries do not care at all about human rights. They only care about shipments of oil and minerals. From this forum we are calling on all to deal humanely with our countries and peoples and to stop support for the Israeli occupation of our land. They must recognize the Palestinians with their independent state, to stop using the veto, so we could be more amenable. They should stop accusing others of war crimes and crimes against human rights when they are committing.

President Bashar al-Assad adopted a number of reform measures. Wide-based pluralism and democracy, through the holding of elections and freedom of media.

Western and Israeli hegemony aspirations in our region. There is nothing that we seek to hide. We are of course very willing to take counsel from our sincere friends to make ourselves an oasis of progress that secures human rights. Assad has adopted a legislative decree for establishment of parties. 15 parties are being set up now for municipal elections.

The right to peaceful protest has been recognized as a human right. An impartial investigation will investigate all events in Syria. It will be mandated to investigate all deaths of Syrian civilians and military personnel. The dialogue was possible at all levels, and all political currents have been invited so as to find solutions to our problems.

There have been lies in the media. Not possible for them to lie anymore.

Regardless of our difficult circumstances, we have prepared a national report that has declared the real difficulties we are facing and our future aspirations for strengthening of human rights. The Constitution contains those elements that have to be developed in field of HR.

The various Western countries are trying to make us believe that it is some project of theirs. The developed countries are not honorable in human rights. They have invaded the land of others.

Syrians want their culture to emanate to their own values that go back to B.C. Like freedom, prosperity. We commit ourselves to our pledges in the field of HR.

Syrian children have to grow in an atmosphere without hatred.

Syria is committed to continuing in this sense. I look forward to meaningful debate before this august body.

**Cuba:**

We wish to welcome the delegation of Syria. Despite the difficulties and the challenges the government faces. The Syrian government is working for the human rights of its people. We can also mention the withdrawal of the state of emergency,

putting in place national dialogue. We welcome the fact that a commission has been put in place. This denotes the Syrian government's priority to its population. We reject foreign intervention in its affairs. We believe it is up to the Syrian people and government to find how to bring about people's will. We continue to reject foreign intervention and we believe in self-determination. National measures and dialogue needs to be taken. We urge all countries not to use this forum for politically motivated statements, that nobody should break established order, and no attempt to intervene in affairs.

**Nicaragua:**

Warm welcome to delegation of Syria. Today, as we consider human rights of Syria, we cannot fail to take into account their difficult situation. Domestic forces and IC challenging them. This country has been abandoned by a great amount of governments that were deemed to be brotherly. Forces are using violence to ensure in Syria can extend imperialism. Nicaragua is extending brotherly hand. This should include not only Syrian government, but most countries of M.E. We ask Syrian government to multiply efforts, towards poverty and social equity. We wish you every success in this path towards peace.

**Russia:**

We welcome the delegation from Syria and we express our gratitude to them for their comprehensive report. We consider the steps taken by the government to reform country and increase rights of people to be positive ones. We welcome the fact that humanitarian assistance can now visit country. We welcome steps and hope this path will be continued for IC. Important laws adopted. The government of Syria is prepared for this and is deploying maximum of efforts to ensure domestic stability and national cohesion. The opposition prefers to use arms against the government. Must ensure transparent national investigation, freedom of expression and conformity, adopt additional measures.

**Bolivia:**

We'd like to thank the distinguished delegation for presenting report. We regret that OHCHR did not submit national report in due time. We urge OHCHR to take measures to ensure this doesn't happen again. Regarding recognition of Syria of important claims of peoples and changes made, we would venture to make the following recommendations: to implement promised changed, establish NHRI, relating observations, we would recommend that work of independent commission to establish whereabouts, ought to be strengthened. Strengthen food security.

**Ecuador:**

Welcomes national report, but would like to clarify surprise that it has not been translated into other UN languages. We are depriving Syrian Arab Republic of legitimate right to defense. Double standards, bias in this Council. These countries are criticizing veto of Syria, are using veto to deprive Palestinian people of their rights, a people that has always been persecuted. We are here to defend our Syrian brothers. We condemn the use of force and biased use of information that urged

armed information. We recommend to Syrian Arab Republic that they seek a formula. We'd like to recommend that they continue with their good policy to respect Palestinian refugees. Syria has opened up with solidarity to them.

**Venezuela:**

We wish to welcome distinguished delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. Despite serious difficulties and sufferings of Syria, the government sends a message of commitment to human rights. Continue efforts to create environment harmonizing peaceful protest. Continuing broadening opportunities for human rights training to maintain positive promotion in improve legislation and institutions. To continue improving public education system. President to conclude, Venezuela's support of Syria and Assad with onset of greedy imperialism.

**Japan:...**

**Uruguay: ...**

**Algeria:**

Algeria welcomes the presence of the Syrian delegation here and would like to thank Syria for its report. We appreciate the interactive way with which Syria has cooperate with UPR. Algeria has been through intensive times of reforms so we support efforts. We wish to stress efforts deployed by Syrian authorities to promote and protect human rights. We would like emphasis to be placed on rural populations. Refugees are some 12%, so we recommend Syria to pursue its efforts to attenuate suffering of this population.

**Czech Republic: ...**

**UK: ...**

**USA: ...**

**Cuba Interrupts, Syria Interrupts with Loud Point of Order:**

**Cuba:**

I am asking for the floor to raise a point of order. The Amb. Of the USA has requested that the Syrian authorities leave power immediately. This is not the forum, nor any other UN forum, which is appropriate for the request. It is up to Syrian people and authorities. This is a matter we cannot raise here.

**President:**

Points of order are for raising procedural matters.

**Bangladesh:**

Welcomes delegation of Syria to UPR. We wish UPR was taking place when objective review could take place. We have noted progress in protection of ... rights in

country. Advances made in key health indicators. We commend the country for holding large number of refugees despite constraints it puts on country. What is most urgent in Syria now is a return to normalcy. We urge upon all concerned to give up violence. My delegation recommends that government of Syria strengthens efforts to promote power of women...

**France: ...**

**DPRK (North Korea):**

Delegation warmly welcomes Syrian delegation and report. The preparation of national report... testifies to sincere and constructive approach of Syria to UPR process. We commend Syria on efforts to maintain security and stability in past 6 months. New legislation establishing political parties. It is important to ensure full respect of sovereignty and independence. Any process in Syria should only be outcome of Syrian policies without foreign intervention. In this respect we recommend following: continue with policies for basic social services, continue efforts to stop brain drain.

**Iran:**

We would like to welcome Syrian delegation. We appreciate the efforts and commitment of government to promote and protect human rights... Again contribute to promotion and protection of human rights at national level. Welcome reforms. As has been stated by report, the occupation of Syrian Golan is a major obstacle of enjoyment of rights. What practical steps have been taken to end human rights violations in occupied territory? Continue to submit UPR reports. More employment opportunities for young people.

**Lebanon:**

Would like to welcome delegation of Syria. We thank him for the report. Proving opportunities of employment for youth. My delegation recommends to continue policies and programs to raise policies of social assistance. Madame, the relationship, the old and strong relationship with Syria finds its roots with geography, culture. We two countries are brethren. We are one of the keenest countries to see Syria stable. We aspire at seeing it strengthen its efforts in field of HR, especially in trying times that Syria is experiencing.

**Slovakia: ...**

**Brazil: ...**

Brazil is seriously concerned over human rights situation in Syria. As we have expressed in several occasions, Brazil unequivocally condemns all acts of violence by all sides. Government response to peaceful protest is unacceptable. We urge all parties to refrain from acts that may lead to violations of human rights and IHL. We note announced lifting of emergency measures. This must be translated into action. The participation of Syria in this UPR is an important sign of cooperation. We encourage them to replicate efforts. Syria hosts one of largest urban refugees in

world. Fully express freedom of expression and association. Rome Statue, CAT, standing invitation to cooperate with SP. Would like to recommend to cooperate with COI established by this Council.

**Turkey:**

We would like to thank the Syrian delegation for its presentation. We carefully studied compilation of UN information on Syria. We took note on positive comments, but observed the critical aspects were much stronger. Statements of HC for amendment of laws merits urgent attention. We would like to repeat CAT. We observe with regret alleged incidents of killings, arbitrary arrest, and torture. The UN compilation also stresses joint statement denouncing brutal crackdown on protestors, human rights defenders. We are also concerned...Urge Syria to promptly investigate. Turkey urges Syria to cooperate follow with HRC and other organizations with the present ordeal.

**Syria's Faysal Mekdad Takes Floor to Respond:**

I would like to express my satisfaction, given all of the different aspects of this ID that we have seen some comments by US that have touched on domestic affairs. No country should judge a sovereign's states measures. If you look at US own democracy, I see that what has been said by delegation of US, the dictatorship of US in international relations. There are contradictions. There are double standards. Concerns have been expressed at use of weapons against citizens, I think the global media campaign gives false impression of what's happening in this country. More than 2,500 security force members have died. Methods used by police force—sent unarmed police officers to maintain peace. The security forces for 50 days stayed outside town for peaceful settlement of problems. Did not enter into the town. They were capable of doing it, but we did not want there to be casualties in the town.

Distorted reports which do not reflect reality. Peaceful demonstrations in Homs. Security forces were understanding. Protest took place without any casualties. When other participants came to barricade, the 14 police officers were targeted by fire arms.

No shells have been fired from tanks.

We saw how US responded to peaceful protests in New York. Our response to protests is ten times more peaceful than protests in United States of America.

Other delegation leader of Syria:

Peaceful protests made without telling authorities. Trafficking in persons. Comprehensive amnesty decrees.

There have been steps taken in this direction.

I now wish to give opportunity to discuss our progress in MP.

Other delegation leader of Syria:  
We have picked up many MDGs.

Most important figures:

Let me also remind you that behind improvement in indicators there have been great efforts made in attaining MDGs. Trying to reduce hunger. There have been improvements in indicators associated with education. 6,000,000 children took to schools everywhere in Syria and they go to school for basic education. Those numbers have been increasing—we are trying to attain all objectives and indicators.

**China:**

The Chinese delegation thanks the Deputy FM for his statement. We thank.... For commitment with UPR. We are opposed to any politicization of human rights issues or naming or shaming. Syria is a major country in the Middle East. Maintaining peace there is important. We believe situation in Syria must be guided by principles. Must move situation in Syria towards relaxation. Inclusive process should be launched in Syria. Syrian government should implement reform commitment. So that situation in country should return to normal soon. China takes note of serious challenge Syria has taken in protection of human rights.

**Malaysia:**

My delegation welcomes the participation of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic. We thank the delegation for their presentation and dedication to UPR, shows dedication UN human rights systems. Malaysia continues to closely follow developments in Syria. We note with concern deteriorating human rights situation. We reiterate call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint. At the same time, my delegation reissues concern that economic sanctions could lead to deprivation of services which in turn could have human rights violations. 1) Deepen and widen Syrian cooperation with UN. 2) Accelerate and follow up on implementation of reforms. 3) Expedite access. 4) Put into place domestic measures and mechanisms aimed at strengthening accountability.

**Slovenia: ...**

**Vietnam:**

We welcome Syria's delegation and commend report. Vietnam takes note of serious efforts in field of HR, in spite of challenges a developing country like Syria faces. We would like to express our concern facing rights in Syria that leads to serious issues. We call on all parties in Syria to reach constructive dialogue and national reconciliation. Enhance policy and measures and vulnerable groups.

**Germany: ...**

**Zimbabwe:**

My delegation also warmly welcomes the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic. We welcome national report of Syria which we are well aware were prepared under challenging circumstances. Presence speaks volumes of commitment of government of Syria to promote and protect human rights and abide by international obligations despite foreign interference. We note Syria's achievements, best practices, and constraints. We are encouraged by efforts of Syria to promote dialogue. We are convince it is the Syrian people and none other than can solve their problems. Sanctions in name of regime change violates fundamental human rights of Syrian people. Zimbabwe strongly calls for end to foreign interference in Syria and calls for end to economic sanctions.

**Myanmar:**

Warm welcome to delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. Myanmar welcomes positive measures taken by government of Syria. We note that the government has pledged to continue to cooperate with HRC. Myanmar recommends that Syria continues to carry out food programs, vulnerable groups such as children, women, and minorities. We believe Syria will further promote human rights and wish government of Syria to be successful in all future endeavors.

**South Africa:**

The South African delegation extends warm welcome to delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. Syrian government explains in detail its developments. Discusses role of women and unequal status to men. South African government recommends all-inclusive process. South Africa will support all efforts in this regard. South African delegation recommends delegation of Syria should consider all efforts in promoting gender equity and participation of women.

**Belarus:**

We welcome presence of delegation of Syria. Accedes to almost all key human rights treaties. Syria has been faced with unilateral imposition of sanctions. It cannot but have a negative impact on Syrian citizens enjoyment of rights. We would note that the Syrian authorities have announced reform plans which can be seen as demonstration of serious intentions. Alongside this, the treaty bodies have noted several problematic issues. These should be examined as priority by government of Syria. Capacity building in human rights sphere could be facilitated by technical assistance, in agreement with the government of course. Measures can be taken to enhance national capacity in human rights sphere, and prevent trafficking of humans.

**Switzerland: ...**

**Thailand:**

We welcome H.E. the Vice MFA and his delegation to UPR and appreciate their presentation. We take note of a number of efforts taken by Syria in human rights efforts. We share concerns with IC regarding ongoing political conflicts and violence, which has disrupted safety of Syrian people and foreign nationals. Fundamental

human rights and norms and institutions must be upheld. Must provide unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

**Canada: ...**

**Sudan:**

Delegation of Sudan would like to welcome at outset Deputy MFA. We thank delegation for preparing national report which gives us clarifications. Fully sympathy with Syrian people. Have no doubt our brothers will be able to come out of this crisis more united and come out with path of development. My country has following intently the situation in Syria and regret loss of lives. We take note of Syrian efforts. We salute efforts of government of Syria, especially women under foreign occupation. We commend Syria on disseminating education for all, including inhabitants in desert. Ask question about attempts with regard to literacy.

**Norway:**

Norway welcomes delegation of Syria. human rights situation continues to deteriorate in spite of international protests against Assad and his government.

**Indonesia:**

Would like to thank delegation of Syrian Arab Republic headed by Vice MFA. Appreciates continued engagement in UPR process. Remains deeply concerned with current political situation in country. Notes lifting of emergency measures in 2011. Indonesia would like to recommend Syria 1) Establish NHRI, 2) Adopted national human rights plan of action 3) continue to harmonize domestic laws with international human rights conventions 4) continue efforts to find peaceful solutions pertaining cooperation in country.

**Chile:**

We welcome the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic. Chile and Syria have close links. Deep concern in Chilean society.

**Australia: ...**

**Syrian Point of Order; Australia Resumes.**

**Syria:**

We have of course been listening to a lot of positive views. And on behalf of government, we respect the views and advice of our friends. But we do not respect the views and accusations which are addressed without any proof to the government of the Syrian Arab Republic. I will respond to accusations later on.

One of the slogans of this Fridays was "not to dialogue."

Punishing who the West wishes to punish, such as Canada. Also call on US to join Rome Statutes. We give full access to all humanitarian operations in Syria. We are

proud of what we offer to refugees. Iraqis refugees, Palestinian refugees, Syrian IDPs from Syrian Golan.

Drama is only in their minds.

I would like to say to Canada: Why such hostility towards Syria? Look in the mirror. You reject all human rights of Palestinians. Why so many lies about Syria? Why are you undermining the reputation of Syria? You have an extreme right-wing government against developing countries. Please do not intervene in our internal affairs. It is a crime against international law.

Who respects rights of minorities in the world more than in Syria? We are protecting peaceful demonstrations in Syria, contrary to what is happening in other countries. The pictures of these protestors are there on youtube. We do not need to take pictures of protestors, they are taking pictures themselves. There is no harassment against protestors.

Other delegation member:

Through my work in justice and as lawyer....Syria guarantees rights, freedoms. It is very rare to see allegations about violations about freedom of opinion and expression, because that is only when there is a problem of interfering with rights of others. Lawyers in Syria's main objective is to protect human rights in Syria. It is a question of guarantees. Guarantees in fact are there through the work of lawyers who deal with any problem a person can face in practicing human rights. As for guaranteeing rights of minorities, I would like to say that in Syria we reject this term. Because notion of minorities does not exist in Syria. Every national has equal rights. We legally reject this term. We do not discriminate against male or female student, all have equal opportunity.

*Other Syrian delegate speaks on role of women:*

Allow me to say how surprised I was to hear things about participation of women in political life. Some delegations say there is insufficient representation of women. I would like to give you some examples of political representation of Syria. Women have been part of judiciary since 1974. Equal rights to women.

*Other Syrian delegate:*

Sudan mentioned literacy.

*Other Syrian delegate:*

There is no such impunity. There is shared responsibility. There is no impunity for anyone in this regard. The law applies equally to all.

**President:**

This is the UPR of Syria, so I urge everyone to focus on that country.

**Netherlands: ...**

**Belgium: ...**

**Ireland: ...**

Ireland thanks the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic. On life, liberty, and security of the person, Ireland recalls HRC's unequivocal condemnation. Ireland urges authorities to immediately desist—shocking repression.

**Maldives:**

Would like to welcome delegation. We are very happy they are here. The reports show that Syria has secured important achievements in human rights. Recent events show lack of political representation in country. While we welcome lifting of state of emergency, we note a lack of progress in implementation and acts of violence. We call for end to violence. We recommend Syria allow for COI to enter country and work with government and other stakeholders to ensure accountability. Roadmap. Bring national laws in line with Syria's international obligations. Sign and ratify OPCAT. Establish inclusive national dialogue.

**India:**

India extends a very warm welcome to delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. Thanks them for the presentation of their national report which demonstrates commitment to UPR even when country is going through momentous changes. We welcome series of reform measures, including adoption of political parties act, setting up reform committees, and judicial reforms. We note government's recognition of important reforms. We recall Syria's commitment to right to health. Syria has been generous in welcoming refugees. We appreciate Syria's extending of citizenship to Kurds. In conclusion, we encourage Syria for establishment of national human rights institution.

**Republic of Korea:**

Would like to welcome Syrian delegation and appreciates engagement. However, it is deeply regrettable that my delegation is obliged to restate grave concern over human rights in Syria where widespread violations have been committed by Syrian authorities.

**Spain:**

Current situation of systematic violations of human rights and repression.

**Poland: ...**

**Costa Rica:**

Costa Rica is here to have a constructive dialogue. We all have the responsibility to make sure UPR abides by spirit we wanted it to have. Non-confrontational, non-politicized dialogue. Costa Rica wishes to express its utmost concern for events in Syria. Number of people who lost their lives vastly exceeds number in countries

wish similar situations. We would respectfully make following recommendations...thank you...

**Guatemala:**

We welcome delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. We welcome efforts of government to guarantee food security, but must fight against discrimination, violence against women and children, and combat trafficking. We remain very much concerned about events in Syria. We condemn and deeply lament ongoing loss of human rights. We call on authorities to abstain from using force against civilians. We note reforms, but we are still concerned. Can only undermine ability for progress.

**Peru:**

The delegation of Peru would like to welcome delegation of Syrian Arab Republic. An unequivocal expression of political will is a key element. We celebrated the commitment expressed in March 2011 to maintain highest level of HR, but we note sadly these commitments have not materialized. HRC deciding to send urgently to investigate. We lament to date Syria has not granted access. My delegation notes with concern that Syria continues to refuse to receive complaints. They continue to refuse access to special procedures. Peru would like to make recommendations: extend cooperation, lift reservations with international human rights instruments, ratify optional protocol to CAT, accede to 1951 convention on refugees, ensure legal definitions.

**Mexico:**

We wish to thank delegation. Mexico would first of all wish to urge government to immediately put an end to the escalating violence against demonstrators, respecting right to freedom of expression. Must open door to inclusive dialogue.

**Kyrgyzstan:**

Syria is striving to reach stability. Only way to address is through wide and inclusive dialogue and reforms. Unlikely public tranquility unless action made. Condemn action against protestors. Hopes Syria will continue to implement announced reforms. Question about prisoners of conscience.

**Sweden: ...**

**Syria, Concluding Statement by Faysal Mekdad, Dep. MFA:**

I would like to thank the Netherlands for its observations. Indeed we do have reform. I did not hear at all of any person who did not get access to health care or hospitals. What I regret is that in all mentions of protests there were no mentions of armed gangs. Are security forces not human beings? Why the denial? Does this serve the cause of human rights in Syria? I hope that this question can be answered in future occasions. We are for receiving human rights mechanisms. Last year we received the visits of two rapporteurs and we hope we will receive rapporteurs after things get back to normal. We welcome all visits. I think this information is taken from NGOs that are deemed not to be very credible. human rights defenders are

nurtured on hostility by Western governments. As for friends from Mexico, dialogue is open to all. We cannot force people to come to dialogue because then we will be accused of violating their rights. As for Kurds, they are an integral part of Syria. All Syrians are equal in citizenship and in all rights.

*Other Syrian member of delegation, Ministry of Interior:*

Unfortunately, we hear people saying there is a constant battle. This is totally unfounded. Arrests in Syria are detained according to the law. As for enforced disappearances, this does not exist. ICRC visited and did not find any such case. Last year, the WG on enforced disappearances considered Syria absolutely innocent. Accusations were unfounded. We can give HRC dozens of names, lists of officers, elements of security apparatus who did not commit violations and were overturned to justice.

*Other Syrian delegate:*

We appreciate all the proposals and the fruitful ID. In some statements, some tried to move away from the objective of the dialogue, which is to help promote and protect human rights by deliberate violation. I would like to say that the positive and constructive contributions made today will be an incentive. This will be built on. Reform can not be done when Syrian people are being killed by extremist groups every day. We will make every use of advice and assistance of friendly states. As for questions we were not able to respond to, we will take them into consideration. I thank you (President) for your wise contribution. I would like to thank troika for efforts made. Our permanent mission in Geneva will be more than available to cooperate with them. I thank the interpreters for their excellent performance and work. Syria is already beyond this crisis. Many aspects of this crisis are already behind it. Those who think they will be able to change Syria for the worse, I will leave them to there (thoughts?). Syria will be a model country in multi-party system respected. Give us time to do that and we will be very grateful to you. We hope we will come back next time with a new image of Syria that believes in democracy and HR.

**President:**

Thank you. We hope dialogue will be useful for country and people. The UPR report will be prepared by members of troika. It will be scheduled to be adopted on Tuesday 11 October.