



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטנים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

Human Rights Council 22nd Session, 11 March 2013

Item 4 – ID with CoI on the Syrian Arab Republic

NGO: IAJLJ - The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

Representative delivering the statement: Adv. Tom Gal

Thank you Mr. President,

The 2-years-long armed conflict buffeting Syria has cost thousands of lives and resulted in approximately 1 million refugees. Among these victims are children, women and elderly people who are not participants in the conflict. It is apparent from the report that the fighting has escalated dramatically in the last 6 months. The recent kidnapping of 21 UN personnel reflects this escalation and the lack of respect for international law. The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists abhors the illegal involvement of children in the hostilities, endangering their lives and violating Syria's obligations under the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its Protocols. Unfortunately, civilians and civilian objects are being abused routinely during the Syrian conflict, and both sides chose to shield and shelter military objects and operations in civilian areas, despite the consequent danger to the civilian population. The international community should also be concerned about the cultural and religious property being targeted and destroyed during the conflict. Recently, we witnessed the bombing and partial destruction of one of the oldest synagogues in the world, located in Damascus. Not only is such destruction a loss of Jewish and historical heritage, it is a violation of Syria's international obligations to protect cultural property.

As the report indicates, the list of international violations, which have been committed during the Syrian conflict, is both long and diverse; nonetheless, surprisingly, the Commission has refrained from recommending the adoption of a prominent accountability process, such as a referral to the International Criminal Court. On the contrary, the Commission still prefers to encourage a "political" resolution to the conflict. Syria's failure to protect its citizens has not been duly emphasized. Indeed, despite being aware of the reprehensible acts committed in Syria, some states have chosen to encourage the Syrian government. Recently, President Al-Assad visited Iran and was received with great hospitality and support, ignoring his responsibility for the Syrian people's suffering. Therefore, we urge the Council, its member states and the international community to act swiftly and immediately to bring an end to the international crimes committed in Syria, ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes do not go unpunished and condemn those states that support the Syrian government.