

Statement by the Press Secretary on Syrian Human Rights Abuses

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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Today, the President signed an Executive Order imposing sanctions against senior Syrian officials and other Syrian and Iranian government entities responsible for human rights abuses, including the use of violence against civilians and the commission of other abuses. These sanctions are in addition to those the United States maintains pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and Executive Orders 13338, 13399 and 13460, as a part of the national emergency with respect to Syria. Today the President continued that national emergency declaration for another year. Further, based on the current repression in Syria and charges of human rights abuses, the Commerce Department has also revoked certain commercial export licenses relating to VIP aircraft used to transport senior officials of the Syrian government.

In addition to actions that we are taking, the United States believes that Syria's deplorable actions toward its people warrant a strong international response. We welcome the decision today by the UN Human Rights Council to condemn the Government of Syria for its violent crackdown against peaceful demonstrators. The Syrian people's call for freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and the ability to freely choose their leaders must be heard.

We strongly support the resolution passed today in Geneva, including the mandate for an urgent mission by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law, with the goal of ensuring full accountability for the perpetrators of the violence.

We call on President Assad to change course now, and heed the calls of his own people.