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UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-Third Session
27 May – 14 June 2013

Item 1
Urgent Debate on Human Rights
In the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. President,

Like the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International deplores ongoing human rights violations and abuses - perpetrated with impunity by all parties to the Syrian conflict - some of which amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Indiscriminate ground and air attacks by Syrian government forces, are responsible for the majority of civilian deaths. However, all sides have summarily killed captured fighters and others. Worryingly, reports of mass killings, including of women and children, continue to surface. Our research indicates government forces' responsibility for at least some such killings earlier this month in al-Bayda and Baniyas in Tartous province, but documentation efforts are hampered by the government's denial of access.

As fighting rages in al-Qusayr and elsewhere, all sides must spare civilians and treat captives humanely.

The human rights implications of the overspill of the conflict in Syria in the neighbouring countries are huge. Civilians once again appear to be bearing the brunt of these attacks, whether it be rockets from Syria landing in Lebanon, the recent rockets launched at a southern-Beirut suburb injuring four men said to be Syrian workers, or the Reyhanli car bombs that recently killed 46 people in Turkey. Amnesty International strongly condemns all indiscriminate attacks and attacks that target civilians.

The crimes committed in Syria require international justice. The Human Rights Council must strenuously urge the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and demand that all

parties to the conflict allow full and unfettered access to all parts of Syria to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and to humanitarian and human rights organisations.

Finally, as the next International Conference on the situation in Syria in Geneva approaches, we urge all possible action to ensure that Syrian women from all backgrounds are fully included in the Conference in line with the UN Security Council's decisions about Women, Peace and Security.

Thank you Mr. President.