

*Bipartisan Resolution introduced calling for International Criminal Court to try Syrian president after reports of mass killings and widespread human rights violations*

Washington, D.C.— Today, Reps. Steve Israel (D-NY) and Tom Cole (R-OK) introduced a resolution calling for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to be tried before the International Criminal Court for committing crimes against humanity. This resolution was introduced in response to estimates by the United Nations that, since the uprisings in Syria began in January 2011, more than 10,000 people—mostly civilians—have been killed and tens of thousands have been displaced.

Rep. Israel said, "We cannot turn a blind eye to the innocent men, women and children who have been and are being brutally murdered. Rep. Cole and I are calling on the U.N. Security Council to take action by demanding that President Assad is tried before the International Criminal Court for his horrific crimes against humanity. It is time to take action so this tragedy does not continue on our watch."

Rep. Cole said. "It is long past time for the international community to take concrete steps to stop Syrian President Bashar al-Assad from butchering his own people. Some estimate that he has killed over 10,000 civilians since the beginning of this year. In addition, through his open support of Islamic terrorism, he has the blood of thousands of Americans on his hands as well. Trying him for crimes against humanity is the very least the world can do to stop this ongoing genocide against his own people."

House Resolution 687 condemns the ongoing violence and gross human rights violations carried out by Syrian forces under President Assad's watch and calls on the U.N. Security Council to refer the situation of Syria to the International Criminal Court to try President Assad

for committing crimes against humanity. The International Criminal Court is the first permanent, international court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes around the world.

Under the command of President Assad, Syrian government forces and shabiha have been accused of gross human rights violations including heavy shelling of civilian areas, widespread pillaging and the burning of homes, denial of basic human needs such as food, water, and medical care, unlawful detention, and brutal killings. The United Nations Human Rights Council has held Special Sessions, issued several reports and adopted five resolutions devoted to the situation in Syria. The United Nations General Assembly, Security Council, and Human Rights Council have all devoted attention to the situation in Syria, but more must be done.

In recent weeks, the head of the U.N. observers in Syria has reported increased bloodshed and intensifying violence.

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