



# MEDIA RELEASE

## DR CRAIG EMERSON

Minister for Trade and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs

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19 August 2011

### **Government calls on Syria's President Assad to step down, imposes extra sanctions**

In the interests of the future of Syria and its people, the Government today called on Syrian President Assad to step down.

"The people of Syria must be allowed to engage in peaceful political activity and be given the chance to determine their own future," Dr Craig Emerson, Acting Foreign Minister, said.

Reports indicate that an estimated 2,000 people have been killed since civil unrest in Syria began in March.

The Government will impose additional sanctions against members of the Syrian regime involved in violence and repression. Once in place, Australia's autonomous sanctions regime will impose travel and financial restrictions against 34 individuals and 13 entities.

Australia continues to call for the United Nations Security Council to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for investigation of alleged atrocities against anti-government protestors. Australia first proposed such a referral in June.

Australia is supporting the people of Syria through humanitarian relief and medical assistance delivered by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"Australia has been deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Syria and the welfare of its people since the start of the violent repression of protestors in March," Dr Emerson said.

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