

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Al Jazeera

## Arab League to consider Syria 'suspension'

**Officials say foreign ministers will have emergency meeting in response to continued violence against protesters.**

10/16/2011

Arab foreign ministers are expected to discuss the situation in Syria at an Arab League meeting in Cairo that could see the regional organisation increase pressure on Damascus to end its deadly crackdown on anti-government protests.

Officials said several Gulf countries requested Sunday's emergency meeting in Cairo, at which the organisation may consider suspending Syria, according to The Associated Press news agency.

The meeting comes about six months after initially peaceful protests calling for reform and the end of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's rule first began to sweep the country.

Many Gulf states have pulled their ambassadors out of Syria to protest the regime's crackdown, which the United Nations says has killed more than 3,000 people.

One official said the Arab League would consider other measures if suspending Syria fails to prompt the regime to stop the bloodshed. He declined to elaborate.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media.

The United Nations Security Council has not condemned the violence, thanks to vetoes from Russian and China.

India, Brazil and South Africa, which hold non-permanent Security Council seats and are considered a bloc of influential developing countries, abstained from the vote, prompting criticism from Human Rights Watch.

The three countries are holding a forum in Pretoria on Monday, and the organisation urged them to use the opportunity to demand Assad's regime end attacks.

"[Their] leaders shouldn't sit by and watch as Syria implodes," said Nadim Houry, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch.

### **Weapons smuggling rising**

Syrian security forces shot dead three mourners and injured 20 on Saturday when they fired on a funeral procession for a 10 year old boy in central Damascus, while other regime troops fought army defectors west of the capital, witnesses told the Reuters news agency.

As the revolt in Syria has dragged on, experts say weapons smuggling into the country has flourished, especially from Lebanon, with automatic weapons, grenades and hunting rifles in high demand.

They say that those behind the trafficking are smugglers in search of quick profits rather than political parties backing protesters against the regime in Syria.

"Smuggling networks that for years have operated along Syria's borders seem to have turned to weapons trafficking in recent months," Peter Harling, a Damascus-based expert with the International Crisis Group, told the AFP news agency. "It appears that a market has quickly developed in a country which, contrary to Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen or Libya, had few weapons circulating beforehand."

Assad has alleged that foreign powers are behind the unrest in his country, which has divided opinion in the Middle East.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah's Hasan Nasrallah has offered tacit support for Assad and continued to meet with him, while Iran has also backed Assad's regime, which draws strong support from the country's Alawi denomination of Islam, to which the Assad family belongs.

The opposition to Assad is supported by the country's Muslim Brotherhood, which is Sunni and endured brutal repression under Assad's father, Hafez, a former president.

Sunni regimes in the Gulf have moved slower than Western nations in their condemnation of Assad's security crackdown but have recently taken a stronger line.

"I don't think that at this point we can say, as the Syrian regime claims, that foreign powers are

playing a significant role in this," Harling said.

"People on both sides in Syria are buying weapons to defend themselves ... Residents in Alawite villages are arming themselves for fear of reprisals and the opposition is increasingly doing the same given the regime's harsh crackdown against any form of protest."