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## **Syria protests getting bigger**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

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16th April, 2011

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters demonstrated in the Syrian capital, Damascus, and other cities on Friday. There were many clashes with security forces, who used tear gas and batons to disperse the crowds. The demonstrators called for reforms and greater freedom, including the end of the five-decade-old emergency law, which bans public gatherings of more than five people. Some demanded the overthrow of President Bashar Al-Assad. Friday's unrest is the biggest since people first took to the streets in the southern city of Deraa on the 15th of March. Unlike in earlier protests, Syria's security forces did not use lethal force. They fired their guns into the air instead of on crowds.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on President Assad to stop using excessive force against protesters, saying: "We call on the Syrian authorities once again to refrain from any further violence against their people....The Syrian government has not addressed the legitimate demands of the Syrian people. It is time for the Syrian government to stop repressing their citizens and start responding to their aspirations."

Mr Assad has promised some concessions and formed a new government on Thursday. He also announced an amnesty for many protestors detained in the past month. The Syrian leader blames the recent violence on armed gangs and has vowed to clamp down on any further unrest.

# WARM-UPS

**1. THE PROTESTS IN SYRIA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the protests in Syria. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*democracy / protestors / clashes / security forces / emergency law / unrest / force / authorities / violence / legitimate demands / aspirations / concessions / clamp down*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. FREEDOMS:** Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Freedom	What is it?	Your country	Do you need more?
Political freedom			
Religious freedom			
Economic freedom			
Freedom to travel			
Freedom of the press			
Freedom to assemble			

**4. DEMOCRACY:** Students A **strongly** believe it will come to Syria in the next few years; Students B **strongly** believe it won't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. ASPIRATIONS:** What are yours? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the biggest aspirations at the top. Change partners and share again.

- a long life
- to speak English fluently
- world peace
- lots of money
- good health
- many good friends
- successful career
- a loving partner

**6. PROTEST:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'protest'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Hundreds of thousands of protestors gathered in Damascus on Friday.     | T / F |
| b. Security forces did not use tear gas or batons on the crowds.           | T / F |
| c. This is the largest protest in Syria since unrest began in mid-March.   | T / F |
| d. The police used their guns but did not shoot into the crowds.           | T / F |
| e. America's Secretary of State asked Syria's leader to stop the violence. | T / F |
| f. The Secretary did say Syria had addressed Syrians' needs.               | T / F |
| g. Syria's leader has promised his people some reforms.                    | T / F |
| h. Every arrested protestor is still in prison.                            | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. protestors   | a. fights        |
| 2. clashes      | b. imprisoned    |
| 3. disperse     | c. deadly        |
| 4. ban          | d. demonstrators |
| 5. lethal       | e. asked         |
| 6. called on    | f. dealt with    |
| 7. refrain from | g. break up      |
| 8. addressed    | h. hopes         |
| 9. aspirations  | i. prohibit      |
| 10. detained    | j. stop          |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Tens of thousands of pro-           | a. further unrest       |
| 2. There were many clashes             | b. emergency law        |
| 3. the end of the five-decade-old      | c. aspirations          |
| 4. Some demanded the overthrow         | d. to the streets       |
| 5. the biggest since people first took | e. democracy protesters |
| 6. stop using excessive force          | f. of President Bashar  |
| 7. refrain from                        | g. an amnesty           |
| 8. responding to their                 | h. against protesters   |
| 9. He also announced                   | i. with security forces |
| 10. vowed to clamp down on any         | j. any further violence |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters demonstrated in the Syrian (1) \_\_\_\_\_, Damascus, and other cities on Friday. There were many (2) \_\_\_\_\_ with security forces, who used tear gas and batons to (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the crowds. The demonstrators called for reforms and (4) \_\_\_\_\_ freedom, including the end of the five-decade-old emergency law, which bans public gatherings of more than five people. Some demanded the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of President Bashar Al-Assad. Friday's unrest is the biggest since people first took to the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ in the southern city of Deraa on the 15th of March. Unlike in (7) \_\_\_\_\_ protests, Syria's security forces did not use lethal force. They fired their guns into the air (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of on crowds.

*streets*  
*greater*  
*overthrow*  
*earlier*  
*clashes*  
*instead*  
*capital*  
*disperse*

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (9) \_\_\_\_\_ on President Assad to stop using excessive force against protesters, saying: "We call on the Syrian authorities once again to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ from any further violence against their people....The Syrian government has not addressed the legitimate (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of the Syrian people. It is time for the Syrian government to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ repressing their citizens and start responding to their aspirations." Mr Assad has (13) \_\_\_\_\_ some concessions and formed a new government on Thursday. He also announced an (14) \_\_\_\_\_ for many protestors detained in the past month. The Syrian leader (15) \_\_\_\_\_ the recent violence on armed gangs and has vowed to (16) \_\_\_\_\_ down on any further unrest.

*amnesty*  
*refrain*  
*clamp*  
*promised*  
*blames*  
*called*  
*demands*  
*stop*

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## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

\_\_\_\_\_ -democracy protesters demonstrated in the Syrian capital, Damascus, and other cities on Friday. There were many \_\_\_\_\_, who used tear gas and batons to disperse the crowds. The demonstrators \_\_\_\_\_ greater freedom, including the end of \_\_\_\_\_ emergency law, which bans public gatherings of more than five people. Some demanded the overthrow of President Bashar Al-Assad. Friday's \_\_\_\_\_ since people first took to the streets in the southern city of Deraa on the 15th of March. Unlike in earlier protests, Syria's security forces did not use lethal force. They fired their guns \_\_\_\_\_ on crowds.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on President Assad to \_\_\_\_\_ force against protesters, saying: "We call on the Syrian authorities once again \_\_\_\_\_ further violence against their people....The Syrian government has not addressed the \_\_\_\_\_ the Syrian people. It is time for the Syrian government to stop repressing their citizens \_\_\_\_\_ to their aspirations." Mr Assad has promised some concessions and formed a new government on Thursday. He also \_\_\_\_\_ for many protestors detained in the past month. The Syrian leader blames the recent violence on armed gangs and has \_\_\_\_\_ on any further unrest.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'security' and 'force'.

security	force

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• thousands</li><li>• tear</li><li>• end</li><li>• demanded</li><li>• took</li><li>• air</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• called on</li><li>• refrain</li><li>• legitimate</li><li>• citizens</li><li>• formed</li><li>• vowed</li></ul>
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# STUDENT THE PROTESTS IN SYRIA SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

Write five GOOD questions about the protests in Syria in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

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# THE PROTESTS IN SYRIA DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'protestor'?
- c) What do you know about the current protests in Syria?
- d) What do you think of the protestors?
- e) Would you take to the streets if you were in their shoes?
- f) Why do you think Syria has had emergency rule for nearly 50 years?
- g) Why doesn't Syria like five people (or more) gathering in the streets?
- h) What's in your mind when you look at the pictures of the protests?
- i) Do you think President Bashar is worried?
- j) Is Syria changing tactics by not firing on protestors?

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# THE PROTESTS IN SYRIA DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think President Bashar Al-Assad cares what Hillary Clinton says?
- c) Do you think the U.S. should speak up more about other countries experiencing unrest?
- d) What would make you demonstrate in your country?
- e) What is the recent history of protests in your country?
- f) How does a change of government ministers make people happy?
- g) Do you think armed gangs are responsible for the unrest in Syria?
- h) Isn't dialogue better than clamping down on street protests?
- i) What do you think will happen in Syria in the next few years?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria\\_protests.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110416-syria_protests.html)

Tens of thousands of (1) \_\_\_\_-democracy protesters demonstrated in the Syrian capital, Damascus, and other cities on Friday. There were many clashes with security forces, who used (2) \_\_\_\_ gas and batons to disperse the crowds. The demonstrators called for reforms and greater freedom, including the end of the five-(3) \_\_\_\_-old emergency law, which bans public (4) \_\_\_\_ of more than five people. Some demanded the overthrow of President Bashar Al-Assad. Friday's unrest is the biggest since people first (5) \_\_\_\_ to the streets in the southern city of Deraa on the 15th of March. Unlike in earlier protests, Syria's security forces did not use (6) \_\_\_\_ force. They fired their guns into the air instead of on crowds.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (7) \_\_\_\_ on President Assad to stop using excessive force against protesters, saying: "We call on the Syrian authorities once again to refrain (8) \_\_\_\_ any further violence against their people....The Syrian government has not (9) \_\_\_\_ the legitimate demands of the Syrian people. It is time for the Syrian government to stop repressing their citizens and start responding to (10) \_\_\_\_ aspirations." Mr Assad has promised some concessions and formed a new government on Thursday. He also announced an amnesty for many protestors (11) \_\_\_\_ in the past month. The Syrian leader blames the recent violence on armed gangs and has vowed to clamp (12) \_\_\_\_ on any further unrest.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |              |               |                |               |
|-----|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) pre      | (b) post      | (c) anti       | (d) pro       |
| 2.  | (a) crying   | (b) tear      | (c) tears      | (d) sobbing   |
| 3.  | (a) decade   | (b) decade's  | (c) decades    | (d) decades'  |
| 4.  | (a) gathers  | (b) gathered  | (c) gatherings | (d) gathering |
| 5.  | (a) did      | (b) gave      | (c) took       | (d) done      |
| 6.  | (a) dead     | (b) lethal    | (c) mortal     | (d) killing   |
| 7.  | (a) called   | (b) asked     | (c) requested  | (d) told      |
| 8.  | (a) for      | (b) by        | (c) to         | (d) from      |
| 9.  | (a) mailed   | (b) addressed | (c) posted     | (d) signed    |
| 10. | (a) them     | (b) this      | (c) they're    | (d) their     |
| 11. | (a) derailed | (b) detonated | (c) detained   | (d) deterred  |
| 12. | (a) down     | (b) in        | (c) up         | (d) around    |



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about the protests in Syria. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. THE PROTESTS IN SYRIA:** Make a poster about the protests in Syria. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. ON THE STREETS:** Write a magazine article about people who have taken to the streets in Syria. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against the protests.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to President Bashar Al-Assad. Ask him three questions about the protests in Syria. Give him three pieces of advice. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.      protestors   | a.      demonstrators |
| 2.      clashes      | b.      fights        |
| 3.      disperse     | c.      break up      |
| 4.      ban          | d.      prohibit      |
| 5.      lethal       | e.      deadly        |
| 6.      called on    | f.      asked         |
| 7.      refrain from | g.      stop          |
| 8.      addressed    | h.      dealt with    |
| 9.      aspirations  | i.      hopes         |
| 10.     detained     | j.      imprisoned    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1.      Tens of thousands of pro-           | a.      democracy protesters |
| 2.      There were many clashes             | b.      with security forces |
| 3.      the end of the five-decade-old      | c.      emergency law        |
| 4.      Some demanded the overthrow         | d.      of President Bashar  |
| 5.      the biggest since people first took | e.      to the streets       |
| 6.      stop using excessive force          | f.      against protesters   |
| 7.      refrain from                        | g.      any further violence |
| 8.      responding to their                 | h.      aspirations          |
| 9.      He also announced                   | i.      an amnesty           |
| 10.     vowed to clamp down on any          | j.      further unrest       |

## GAP FILL:

### Syria protests getting bigger

Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters demonstrated in the Syrian (1) **capital**, Damascus, and other cities on Friday. There were many (2) **clashes** with security forces, who used tear gas and batons to (3) **disperse** the crowds. The demonstrators called for reforms and (4) **greater** freedom, including the end of the five-decade-old emergency law, which bans public gatherings of more than five people. Some demanded the (5) **overthrow** of President Bashar Al-Assad. Friday's unrest is the biggest since people first took to the (6) **streets** in the southern city of Deraa on the 15th of March. Unlike in (7) **earlier** protests, Syria's security forces did not use lethal force. They fired their guns into the air (8) **instead** of on crowds.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (9) **called** on President Assad to stop using excessive force against protesters, saying: "We call on the Syrian authorities once again to (10) **refrain** from any further violence against their people....The Syrian government has not addressed the legitimate (11) **demands** of the Syrian people. It is time for the Syrian government to (12) **stop** repressing their citizens and start responding to their aspirations." Mr Assad has (13) **promised** some concessions and formed a new government on Thursday. He also announced an (14) **amnesty** for many protestors detained in the past month. The Syrian leader (15) **blames** the recent violence on armed gangs and has vowed to (16) **clamp** down on any further unrest.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d      2 - b      3 - a      4 - c      5 - c      6 - b      7 - a      8 - d      9 - b      10 - d      11 - c      12 - a