



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Thirty-first session

Agenda items 2 and 7

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Human rights situation in Palestine and other  
occupied Arab territories**

## Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/24, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its thirty-first session on the implementation of that resolution.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/24, in which the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. The Council recalled in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which it decided, *inter alia*, that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel rescind forthwith its decision.
2. In resolution 28/24, the Human Rights Council also requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it as widely as possible and to report thereon to the Council at its thirty-first session.

## **II. Implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 28/24**

3. On 12 November 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on behalf of the Secretary-General, addressed a note verbale to the Government of Israel referring to Human Rights Council resolution 28/24 and requesting information on any steps taken or envisaged to be taken concerning the implementation of the said resolution. No reply was received.
4. On the same day, OHCHR, on behalf of the Secretary-General, addressed a note verbale to all permanent missions in Geneva to draw their attention to Human Rights Council resolution 28/24 and to request the Governments of Member States to provide information on any steps taken, or envisaged to be taken, concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution. The Permanent Missions of Bahrain, Denmark, Ireland and the Syrian Arab Republic responded by means of notes verbales to that request.
5. In addition, on behalf of the Secretary-General, OHCHR, pursuant to the request of the Human Rights Council, brought resolution 28/24 to the attention of the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations. No reply was received.
6. The Permanent Mission of Bahrain, in a note verbale dated 17 November 2015, emphasized its support for a two-State solution and the establishment of a Palestinian State along the lines existing on 4 June 1967, in compliance with the Arab Peace Initiative and with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also referred to the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan by Israel and its flagrant disregard and breach of international law, and noted that the international community was not exercising enough pressure on Israel to ensure compliance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.
7. In a note verbale dated 24 November 2015, the Permanent Mission of Ireland stated that it had not recognized any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to in resolution 28/24 which purported to apply to the occupied Syrian Golan.
8. The Permanent Mission of Denmark, in a note verbale dated 1 December 2015, stated that Denmark was pursuing a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Syrian conflict. It also noted that the conflict contributed to the destabilization of the overall security situation in the Middle East and thus had to be resolved.
9. On 8 December 2015, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed a note verbale to OHCHR condemning the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan by

Israel and referred to the practices of Israel in its “pursuit of perpetuating its occupation”, in contravention of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981). According to the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel continued to expand and build illegal settlements, explore and exploit natural resources, including water, gas and oil resources by Israeli and foreign-owned companies, such as Genie Energy and Afek, confiscate land owned by Syrians, and did not issue building permits to Syrians. Moreover, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic noted that Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan continued to be subjected to deprivation of their liberty, including “house arrests”, arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment, unlawful detention and denial of family visits in Israeli prisons, as well as restrictions on their enjoyment of economic, cultural and social rights, including the freedom of movement, the right to a family life, the right to education and the right to a livelihood.

10. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, the freedom of movement was restricted for Syrians residing in the occupied Syrian Golan because, if they visited the Syrian Arab Republic, they were prohibited from returning to the occupied Syrian Golan. This had an impact on their right to a family life as they were unable to travel and visit their families in the Syrian Arab Republic. Their right to education was also restricted. For example, students wishing to study in the Syrian Arab Republic were prevented from doing so, since they would then be prohibited from returning to the occupied Syrian Golan.

11. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasized the discriminatory practices of Israel against Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan. In this regard, it referred to the Israel Land Administration refusing to issue permits to Syrians in the villages of Majdal Chams and Mas’adah to build homes on their ancestral land. It further mentioned that the confiscation of land had continued during the reporting period, with Israel expanding and creating new settlements for Israelis. The Permanent Mission stated that 40 new housing units had been created in the settlement of Nimrod and 10 acres of land granted for tourism. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic also noted that Israel had approved the disbursement of NIS 375 million to create 750 new farms in the occupied Syrian Golan in the coming five years, adding that this would require the demining and irrigation of 30,000 acres.

12. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that the rights of Syrians to work and to a livelihood were restricted in the occupied Syrian Golan. In this respect, it mentioned that, on 27 May 2015, the Israel Land Administration had prohibited Syrian farmers in the occupied Syrian Golan from shepherding and restricted their access to land for farming. According to the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic, Syrian residents had access to only 45,000 acres in the occupied Syrian Golan while Israeli settlers had access to 350,000 acres for farming. It was also noted that the closing of the Quneitra crossing had had an adverse effect on the price of apples owing to the increase in transport and other costs imposed by the Israeli authorities on Syrian farmers; apples being the main produce of these occupied villages. According to the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic, access by Syrians to employment was reduced as they were mainly performing low-paid jobs, such as manual labour, cleaning, factory work, work on military fortifications and construction work in Israeli settlements.

13. In its note verbale, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic claimed that Israeli forces were supporting terrorist groups (including the Nusra Front<sup>1</sup>) in the area of separation, providing them with logistical support, including weapons and ammunition, and facilitating their movement between the area of separation and the Syrian Arab Republic.

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<sup>1</sup> On 30 May 2013, the Nusra Front was designated as a terrorist group by the Security Council in accordance with resolution 1267 (1999). The Nusra Front operates in the Syrian Arab Republic.

14. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic, in its note verbale, highlighted that Israel had recently expanded its occupation by establishing a trench in the area of Shahar, near Jabata al Khashab, of approximately four kilometres by 300 metres in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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