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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Thirty-seventh year

Letter dated 2 March 1982 from the Permanent Representative of  
the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to  
the Secretary-General

Further to my letter dated 18 February 1982 (A/37/92-S/14876), I have the honour to inform you of the following.

As Syrian nationals in the occupied Golan Heights enter the third week of their general strike, they are demonstrating to the world at large their determination to resist Israeli military occupation and their will to reject the imposition of Israeli laws, administration and jurisdiction. Despite the great hardships resulting from this patriotic act, the Syrians of the Golan Heights have unified their actions and joined their voices in a revolt against all attempts to "Zionize" their life, land and property. Aref Salem Safadi, a farmer from the village of Mas'adah, expresses this excruciating pain when he tells William Claiborne, Washington Post correspondent:

"In the beginning it was a question of occupation, and we understood that. It was a question of war or peace, but it was a temporary situation. Now by annexing the Golan Heights, the Israelis are forcing us to fight for our Arab identity. Who are they to decide our national identity? Who are they to decide whether we shall be Arabs or Israelis?"

This cry embodies the Syrians' agony at being forcibly wrenched from their homeland.

When our nationals decided on a general strike as a means of drawing world public opinion to their plight, they took a unanimous oath after having reviewed its grave consequences. As one construction worker from Majdal-Shams puts it: "We are ready for a one-year strike." (The Washington Post, 26 February 1982)

\* A/37/50.

May I draw Your Excellency's attention to the following serious developments arising from Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights in violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 <sup>1/</sup> as well as of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, in particular, Assembly resolutions 36/226 B of 17 December 1981 and ES-9/1 of 5 February 1982, and Council resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981:

1. The Israeli military authorities have been reinforcing their troops in the Golan Heights since its annexation on 14 December 1981; particularly in the villages of Majdal-Shams, Ein-Qenia and Bag'ata; concomitant with these reinforcements, the Israeli authorities have resorted to mass arrests of Syrian nationals, sealing off the region and closing all roads in order to prohibit anyone from entering or leaving;

2. Two more leaders, Mr. Sam'an Farah Eddin from Majdal-Shams and Mr. Jamil Mohsen from Mas'adah, have been arrested. Mr. Farah Eddin had earlier explained the reasons for the general strike at a press conference in the occupied city of Jerusalem, where a list of demands included, inter alia, Israel's obligation to rescind its annexation of the Golan Heights, and the release of citizens under arrest;

3. The Israeli Water Company has reduced water supplies to the villages of the Golan, particularly Majdal-Shams, as a means to force citizens to end their strike;

4. The Israeli Ministries of the Interior and Education are threatening Syrian teachers in the Golan Heights with additional suppressive measures were they to continue the strike;

5. A large demonstration was held in the occupied city of Nablus in support of the general strike and the Mayor of the town, Mr. Bassam El-Shak'ah, participated in this demonstration;

6. The President of Relief Organizations in the West Bank, Mr. Amin Al-Khatib, addressed through newspapers an appeal to Arabs in the occupied West Bank to extend assistance to the Syrian Arabs in danger of starvation. A large number of organizations and individuals promptly responded to this appeal. Immediately, the Israeli military authorities sealed off the Golan, thus isolating and besieging the entire region in order to prevent these contributions from reaching their destination. The Israeli authorities imposed house arrest on Mr. Faisal Al-Husseini, Director of the Arab Research Centre in the occupied territories, because of his role in collecting donations. Likewise, the Solidarity Committee of Bir-Zeit University issued a statement in which it reiterated its full support for the Syrian Arabs in the occupied Golan.

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<sup>1/</sup> United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

7. Israeli occupation authorities placed under house arrest four persons in the West Bank who organized a campaign to collect donations for the strikers in the Golan Heights, confiscating all the donations, including medical and food supplies and financial assistance;

8. On 27 February 1982, Israeli television reported that security forces arrested five persons for staging a protest demonstration in front of Begin's residence in support of the Syrian Arabs;

9. Foreign and even Israeli journalists have been barred from visiting the Golan Heights, and those who were forcibly driven back have filed a protest with the Government Press Office;

10. Finally, Israeli occupation authorities are imposing a new series of civil procedures in order to compel our nationals to accept Israeli citizenship. Seventy per cent of Arab births are being refused registration, marriage certificates are not being issued, and automobile registrations are being denied so long as Israeli identity cards are not held by the applicants.

I should like to conclude by drawing Your Excellency's attention to the fact that Israel has not only occupied, colonized and annexed the Golan, but that it has also prevented the implementation of Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967 and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly calling for the return of the displaced Syrians whose number today exceeds 200,000.

I kindly request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 34 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dia-Allah EL-FATTAL  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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