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The situation in the Middle East

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains replies received in response to the note verbale by the Secretary-General dated 22 May 2020 concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution [74/14](#), entitled “The Syrian Golan”.

* [A/75/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/14. In that resolution, which deals with the Syrian Golan, the Assembly demanded once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. On 22 May 2020, in order to fulfil my reporting responsibility under resolution 74/14, I addressed notes verbales to the Permanent Representative of Israel, the Permanent Representatives of all other Member States and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, requesting them to inform me of any steps that their Governments had taken or envisaged taking concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 29 July 2020, replies had been received from Argentina, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Namibia, Nigeria, the Philippines and the Syrian Arab Republic. The replies are provided in section II of the present report.

II. Replies received

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Argentina considers that the essential nature of the situation in the Syrian Golan is linked to the illegality of the acquisition of territory by force. In that regard, it recalls that paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use or threat of use of force against the territory or territorial integrity of a State.

In Argentina's view, it is important to make progress on a solution to the Syrian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East with a view to ending the occupation of the Golan Heights.

The Government of Argentina therefore once again reaffirms the importance of resuming negotiations to find a definitive solution to the situation in the Syrian Golan in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

The Republic of Cuba has, on numerous occasions and in various contexts, expressed its strongest condemnation of the unilateral decision of the United States Government to recognize the sovereignty of Israel over the Syrian Golan in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

This aggressive, unilateral and unjustified action by the United States Government in the Middle East severely undermines the legitimate interests of the Syrian people and is leading to a dangerous escalation in the region.

The Republic of Cuba will continue to call for the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Syrian Golan and from all occupied Arab territories, while continuing to support the demand of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to recover the Golan Heights, which were seized by Israel in 1967.

The Security Council must fulfil its primary responsibility bestowed under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, demand that Israel withdraw immediately from the Golan Heights and adopt the necessary

decisions to reject the unilateral action of the United States Government in support of the intention of Israel to annex the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Republic of Cuba reiterates its commitment to the defence of multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the sovereign equality, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and refraining from the use or threat of use of force in international relations.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

[Original: English]

The occupied Syrian Golan is an inalienable sacred territory of Syria, and the relevant resolutions were also adopted at the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically opposes occupation and annexation of the Syrian Golan by Israel through use of force in contravention of resolutions adopted at the Security Council and General Assembly.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends full support and solidarity to the Government and people of Syria in their struggle to reclaim the occupied Syrian Golan, safeguard the country's sovereignty and achieve territorial integrity.

Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: English]

As part of its efforts to implement General Assembly resolution [74/14](#), entitled "The Syrian Golan", the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken the following steps:

According to international law, the territory of a State shall not be the object of acquisition by another State resulting from the threat or use of force, and no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal. This is a peremptory norm of international law applicable to all States under all circumstances.

The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the proclamation by the United States President on 21 March 2019 concerning the recognition of the sovereignty of the Israeli regime over the occupied Syrian Golan and considers it null and void and as having no legal weight and value. Such a shameful statement constitutes a material breach of a peremptory norm of international law, is a grave violation of the purpose and principles of the United Nations, blatantly violates the Charter of the United Nations, in particular its Article 2, is a gross violation of relevant resolutions of the Security Council and runs counter to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In fact, such a politically irresponsible and provocative statement and legally unlawful proclamation can in no way change the fact that the occupied Syrian Golan is and will remain an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In regional and international forums, the Islamic Republic of Iran has also continually expressed its principled position on the occupied Syrian Golan. In this connection, Iran strongly supported General Assembly resolution [74/14](#), entitled "The Syrian Golan", which "declares that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void" and "demands once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions".

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly supported General Assembly resolution [74/90](#), entitled "The occupied Syrian Golan", which "calls upon Israel to desist

from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements” and “calls upon Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, and from its repressive measures against the population of the occupied Syrian Golan”.

The Islamic Republic of Iran also supported the part of the Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on 20 and 21 July 2019, concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, which reaffirmed the Movement’s unwavering support and solidarity with the Syrian just demand and rights to restore the full Syrian sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan. The Islamic Republic of Iran also condemned the statement made by the President of the United States of America on 21 March 2019 regarding the occupied Syrian Golan as well as the subsequent unilateral and arbitrary proclamation on recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel.

Namibia

[Original: English]

The Republic of Namibia, as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Right of the Palestinian People, reaffirms its unshakeable solidarity with and strong support for the Palestinian people in their just cause for the restoration of their dignity and peace and the independence of their country. The immeasurable suffering and humiliation of the Palestinian people will only end when Israel withdraws its illegal occupation of all Palestinian territories.

We call on the Security Council, which has the full responsibility to maintain international peace and security to urgently exercise its mandate in this regard.

Nigeria

[Original: English]

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria wishes to convey Nigeria’s position for a two-State solution with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in line with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Philippines

[Original: English]

The Philippines has not recognized the legality of Israel’s occupation and de facto annexation of the Golan Heights.

The Philippines enjoys friendly relations with the Syrian Arab Republic, has always recognized the Syrian Golan as part of Syrian territory and continues to support Syria’s territorial integrity over the strategic plateau, in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]

From the time that Israel occupied the Syrian Golan in 1967, the international community has reiterated that it rejects that occupation and has demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of

4 June 1967. The General Assembly, in its resolution 74/14 of 3 December 2019, entitled “The Syrian Golan”, demands once more that Israel, the occupying Power, withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June for 1967, in implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. In that same resolution, the General Assembly also once again demands that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with United Nations resolutions concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981). In that resolution, the Security Council declares that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and completely illegal. The General Assembly also demands that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision.

The Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan has persisted for 53 years. During that time, the United Nations has repeatedly adopted resolutions calling upon Israel, the occupying Power, to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and cease its blatant violation of international instruments and norms. Nevertheless, to this day, Israel refuses to implement United Nations resolutions and continues to occupy the Syrian Golan, escaping accountability thanks to the protection offered by certain members of the Security Council.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again condemns in the strongest terms the illegitimate and immoral decision of the President of the United States of America regarding what he called “the sovereignty of Israel” over the occupied Syrian Arab Golan. That decision constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Organization, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which was adopted unanimously by the Council. In that resolution, the Council acknowledges that the Syrian Arab Golan is an occupied territory and that any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, are null and void and have no legal effect. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic considers the piece of paper signed by President Trump and offered as a gift to the Prime Minister of Israel, the occupying Power, as nothing more than a unilateral act by a party that does not possess the political, legal or moral authority to decide the destinies of the peoples of the world or dispose of territories that constitute an integral part of the Syrian Arab Republic. In that connection, we note that the occupying Israeli authorities announced the construction of a new settlement, named Trump Heights, in the occupied Syrian Golan as a reward from the Prime Minister of the occupying Israeli entity to the American President, Trump, for violating United Nations resolutions and international law by unilaterally recognizing the sovereignty of Israel over the occupied Syrian Golan.

Such United States practices are dangerous because they represent the current American Administration’s reckless and unprecedented tendency to undermine international law, humiliate the United Nations and ignore all terms of reference, legal precedent and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the absolute need for Israel to end its occupation of Arab lands and withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic denounces the settlement policies that are being implemented by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan without any regard for the relevant Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions. In their resolutions, those bodies reaffirm the illegality of Israeli settlement-building and other activities in the occupied Syrian Golan and renew their call on Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from establishing settlements.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns all Israeli practices and actions aimed at controlling the natural resources of the occupied Syrian Golan and the systematic looting of those resources by Israel, the occupying Power, in flagrant

violation of the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources, Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and General Assembly resolution 74/243 of 19 December 2020, entitled “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources”. Israel continues to deplete the natural resources of the occupied Syrian Golan and deprive the territory’s Syrian population of the ability to benefit from their natural resources, including water. The Israeli occupiers deliberately waste those resources or allow only Israeli settlers to utilize them. Israel has also cleared land adjacent to the ceasefire line in the occupied Syrian Golan and cut down trees, and occupying Israeli forces have diverted water from Mas’adah Lake in the occupied Syrian Golan to Israeli settlements. That Israeli action, which is contrary to international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, has created an economic and environmental catastrophe of enormous proportions for Syrian nationals in the occupied Syrian Golan that has caused them to incur significant material losses. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also warns of the threat posed by the occupying Israeli forces’ decision to authorize the United States company Genie Energy to drill for oil in the occupied Syrian Golan, in flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations resolutions.

In yet another violation of international resolutions and in continuation of the aggressive, racist and expansionist policies of Israel aimed at grabbing land and controlling and plundering the resources of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, the occupying Israeli authorities have concluded contracts and granted permits for a wind power generation project that will cover an area of approximately 6,000 dunums across several sites near the towns of Majdal Shams, Ayn Quniyah, Buq’ata and Mas’adah. In addition, they have started construction of a new cable car project in cooperation with the Italian company Leitner. The latter project constitutes support for occupation and a blatant violation of international law, which prevents companies from operating in an occupied territory. Meanwhile, the municipal authorities of the Katzrin settlement announced a rental apartment project as part of the Israeli plan to increase the number of Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also condemns the pressure being put by the Israeli occupying authorities on our people in the occupied Syrian Golan to force them to register their land, which was owned by their parents and grandparents, with the Israeli Land Registration Office. They are forcing them to submit title deeds registered in the homeland or other instruments establishing ownership of land to the Land Registration Office of the Israeli occupying authorities, so that they can be given Israeli-issued title deeds in their place. Their land is confiscated if they refuse to submit to this brutal measure.

The Syrian Government categorically rejects the decision of Israel, the occupying Power, to hold elections for so-called local councils in the occupied Syrian Golan. It strongly condemns that decision, which violates international law and is contrary to international instruments and norms. The Government reiterates that our people in the Golan reject that decision, which they consider to be a blatant affront to their national values and sense of belonging to their motherland, Syria, and an attempt to impose artificial Israeli administration.

The Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the European Union funded a survey on “alternative tourism” to promote tourism in Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. The funding was announced at a conference held at the so-called Marom Golan settlement, near the two destroyed Syrian villages of Bab al-Hawa and Muwaysah. More than 100 tourism experts and advisers took part in an exchange of ideas and views on how to promote tourism in the occupied Syrian Golan. These developments are a clear and flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council and General

Assembly resolutions. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls upon the States members of the European Union and the States Members of the United Nations to refuse, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to import natural or manufactured products from the occupied territories.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the Israeli occupation forces' policy of arbitrary detention and sham trials is part of a catalogue of Israeli crimes and human rights violations against Syrian civilian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan stretching back over the more than five decades that Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan. In that connection, Syria rejects the arbitrary and unjust ruling issued by the occupying Israeli forces on 10 June of three years' imprisonment for the patriotic activist Nihal Sulayman al-Maqt, who is from the town of Majdal Shams, in the occupied Syrian Golan, and sister of the released prisoner Sidqi al-Maqt. That ruling is unlawful and invalid because it was issued by an illegal occupying force, and it complements the oppressive and arbitrary practices against the people of the occupied Golan and punishes them for their national positions and their attachment to their lands, homeland and Syrian identity.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and all human rights organizations to pressure Israel, the occupying Power, to guarantee a healthy environment for Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, particularly in view of Israeli practices that destroy the environment. Israel has buried nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan, specifically at the foot of Jabal al-Shaykh, in containers with a 30-year life expectancy that are not secure and prone to cracking, and the radioactive contents of which can seep into soil and groundwater. That exposes Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan to the risk of cancer, and deaths from cancer now account for 30 per cent of all deaths.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the above-mentioned international bodies must pressure Israel to cease taking peremptory decisions prohibiting citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan from visiting their Syrian homeland via the Qunaytirah crossing. Those arbitrary Israeli measures contravene the Geneva Conventions and other international norms and instruments. They serve only to increase the material, mental and physical suffering of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan beyond all legal and moral bounds. Syria calls for the Israeli occupying authorities to be compelled to open the Qunaytirah crossing, in order to enable Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan to visit their country and relatives.

My Government reaffirms that the occupied Syrian Arab Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. Its recovery from the Israeli occupiers by all the means provided for under international law is an eternal right that cannot be bargained over or waived.

Lastly, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that, in order to ensure stability in the Middle East and preserve the credibility of the United Nations, measures must be taken to implement all international resolutions aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan, and compelling Israel to withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including, in particular, Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [497 \(1981\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#).