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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Thirty-fourth session

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE
SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

Reports submitted by States parties under article VII
of the Convention

Addendum

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

[9 January 1978]

1. The Syrian Arab Republic firmly believes in the universal validity and applicability of the principle that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". It has, therefore, always regarded racial discrimination, in general, and Apartheid, in particular, as outright negations of the very concept of human rights. It is with this understanding that the Syrian Arab Republic became a contracting party to two basic international conventions namely: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, it being obvious that the two conventions are complementary, for the first would remain a dead letter with respect to Apartheid were it not supported by the coercive provisions of the second.

2. The Syrian Arab Republic, which was among the first countries to become party to these two Conventions, is resolved to respect them and ensure their respect until such time when racial discrimination and Apartheid are entirely eradicated from the face of the universe.

3. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to draw attention to the four reports it submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination under article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as these reports contain information on the application of the Convention in the Syrian Arab Republic, and on Syria's efforts with regard to the eradication of Apartheid. (The fourth report is contained in document CERD/C/R.90 add. 23.)

Moreover, if the Group of Three wishes to be further acquainted with developments relating to political and civil rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, we draw its attention to the initial report submitted to the Human Rights Committee (document CCPR/C/1/add.1/rev.1 of 1 July 1977).

4. It is to be taken into consideration that ever since its independence, the Syrian Arab Republic has taken an unswerving position vis-à-vis Apartheid.

Internally, it has continuously imparted information on the dangers that the policies of Apartheid and racism would pose to the freedom, equality and dignity of man, as well as to world peace and security. Our school text books and our mass media have systematically explained the evils of Apartheid with all that they entail in terms of human suffering, and blatant economic exploitation. United Nations material and publications have been extensively used to impart information on the nefarious consequences of the policies of Apartheid in southern Africa.

Having suffered from the evils of colonialism and Zionist settler-colonialism in Palestine as well as in occupied Arab territories, the people of the Syrian Arab Republic have been able to draw parallels and find similarities between the racist policies of Israel and South Africa.

In addition, the Syrian legal system is entirely geared towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Our constitutional guarantees and legislation prohibit and punish activities which incite racial and religious prejudices, or lead to conflicts and hostility among the various components of our society.

5. The Syrian Arab Republic maintains no relations whatsoever with the racist regimes of southern Africa. As of 1963, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has suspended all economic and commercial relations with the South African regime. By a decree No. 1247 dated 15 October 1963, the Government prohibited all imports and exports to and from South Africa. Since its independence, the Syrian Arab Republic has refrained from establishing diplomatic and consular relations with the Pretoria regime.

Likewise, the Syrian Arab Republic has constantly supported national liberation movements in their struggle against Apartheid and racism whether in South Africa, Rhodesia or Namibia.

In its capacity as a member of the Special Committee on Apartheid the Syrian Arab Republic has contributed at a certain stage to the formulation of this convention. Yet, we have always been of the opinion that Apartheid cannot be totally eliminated without bloodshed unless two conditions were to be met: That the trading partners of South Africa particularly the major ones, should facilitate the task of the Security Council in imposing total and mandatory sanctions against South Africa; and, second, that those who are directly or indirectly responsible for the perpetuation of Apartheid must be made nationally and internationally accountable since Apartheid is a crime against humanity.

So far the Security Council has failed in imposing effective measures against South Africa, while the countries directly responsible for the perpetuation of Apartheid have refrained from acceding to the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of Apartheid, thus nullifying the results of any meaningful action against the perpetrators of this crime.

6. The Syrian Arab Republic is determined to fully implement the various provisions of the Convention, particularly those provisions relating to the punishment of persons and organizations that have committed acts defined by article II of the Convention. If this Convention has not yet been put to the test, it is because the Syrian Arab Republic maintains no relations of any kind with South Africa, nor does it host any South African interest.

7. It is to be noted that articles I and II of the Convention refer not only to Apartheid as a crime against humanity but also mentions "similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination". This, in our understanding permits the application of the Convention, and in particular its third article to cases relating to countries that practise racial discrimination as a matter of state policy. It is to be recalled that General Assembly Resolution No. 3379 (XXX) dated 10 November 1975 determined that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination". Consequently, the states parties to the Convention, are called upon to treat Zionism on an equal footing with Apartheid. The Syrian Arab Republic shall not fail to apply article III in all its parts to those who carry out policies of racism and racial discrimination to fulfil the colonial policies of Zionism.

8. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic will recommend to the contracting parties to study in depth ways and means for the effective implementation of the Convention, and this in light of the reports submitted in accordance with Article VII of the Convention.
