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HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General*

1. At its seventh session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 7/30 on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, in which it requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it as widely as possible and to report on the matter to the Council at its tenth session. Pursuant to that request, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 17 December 2008, brought Council resolution 7/30 to the attention of all Governments, including those that are members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The resolution was also transmitted to all the specialized agencies, competent regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations.

2. Replies were received from Egypt and South Africa.

* Late submission.

3. In a note verbale dated 13 January 2009 addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations Office at Geneva stressed that Egypt regarded the Syrian Golan as an occupied territory, in violation of international law. It did not recognize the annexation of the Golan by Israel or any other Israeli administrative decision to impose Israeli identity on the residents of the Golan. Egypt also denounced the policy of confiscating the land of Syrian citizens and the construction of Israeli settlements, which it stressed were illegal. Egypt reaffirmed the right of Syrian citizens to freedom of movement, as well as their right to receive medical treatment and to education. Lastly, it demanded that the occupying Power release all Syrian detainees and captives held in Israeli jails.

4. In a note verbale dated 27 January 2009, the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations Office at Geneva informed OHCHR that South Africa believed that the occupation by Israel of the Golan Heights was inconsistent with, and in contravention of, the basic principles of international law. The Government of South Africa stressed that the occupation of the Golan Heights was illegal in terms of international law and could not be justified. Lastly, it indicated that it would continue to support the resolutions of the General Assembly and Council calling on Israel to end its illegal occupation of the Syrian Golan.
