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IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251 OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”

Note verbale dated 6 June 2007 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva and specialized institutions in Switzerland addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council*

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva and specialized institutions in Switzerland presents its compliments to the President of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressing the Syrian Government's concerns about the worrying and alarming deterioration in the state of health of Mr. Saytan Nimr al-Wali, a Syrian citizen of the occupied Syrian Golan who is being held at Nafhah prison in Israel, where he was sentenced to 27 years' imprisonment for refusing to take Israeli nationality.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic requests that the present note verbale be made available to all members of the Human Rights Council for their consideration and that it be circulated as an official document of the fifth session of the Council.

* The present note verbale is published in all the official languages. The annex is reproduced as received, in the original language and English only.

Annex

Sir,

I sent you a letter annexed to note No. 63, dated 6 December 2006, from the Mission, referring to the deterioration in the health of Mr. Saytan Nimr al-Wali, a Syrian prisoner who has been held in Israeli occupation prisons. I am writing you this urgent letter in order to draw attention to the deteriorating health of Mr. Al-Wali, who has been serving a 27-year sentence, in isolation cells in Israeli occupation prisons, and is presently being held at Nafhah prison in the Negev desert, for refusing to take Israeli nationality and holding on to his Syrian citizenship.

The information provided by the prisoners and detainees committee of the Syrian Golan and by Mr. Saytan Nimr al-Wali's family confirms that there has been a grave deterioration in the health of the prisoner at the Israeli occupation prison, especially since the visit which his family paid to him on 27 May 2007. His condition is extremely worrying; the prisoner is being subjected to a slow death and to deliberate negligence on the part of Israeli prison service staff. His state of health is very critical; his body shows strange signs of swelling. He can neither walk nor speak and he is being kept alive by an artificial respirator.

The prisoner's conditions of imprisonment are the result of a systematic policy by the Israeli occupation authorities aimed at the elimination of prisoners from the occupied Syrian Golan. This very difficult situation requires your immediate intervention in order to get the Israeli occupation authorities to allow a representative from the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit this prisoner, in the company of qualified doctors, to check his state of health and to secure his immediate release.

Here, I should like to mention that it was inhuman conditions of imprisonment like these that led to the death, in 2005, of Syrian prisoner Hayil Abu Zayd. A further 20 Syrian prisoners from the occupied Syrian Golan are living in the most appalling conditions of imprisonment; most have spent over 22 years in prison.

In concluding this letter, and given the prisoner's deteriorating state of health, I should like to reaffirm the need for you as President of the Human Rights Council to intervene immediately in order to save this man's life and the lives of the other prisoners. I am confident that you will use all your good offices to intervene promptly in order to save a human life. I am also confident that your efforts will produce concrete results, securing the release of this prisoner and of his fellow detainees, protecting them from inhuman conditions of imprisonment and putting an end to these violations at the earliest possible juncture. I also request that you have this letter circulated as a document of the Human Rights Council at its forthcoming session. We look forward to receiving information from you about the steps that you have taken to secure the release of Mr. Al-Wali and about the results of your efforts.

Accept, Sir, our thanks and the assurances of our highest consideration and may you long be a champion of all downtrodden, oppressed and long-suffering peoples throughout the world.

(Signed): Khalil Bitar
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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