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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Eighth session

Agenda item 7

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

Note verbale dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the President of the Human Rights Council, and recalling the letter* annexed to the Mission's note No. 417/08, of 6 June 2008, relating to the state of health of the Syrian citizen Systan al-Wali, detained in Israeli prisons for more than 23 years, and with regard to the great urgency of this matter for the Syrian people, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic kindly requests that the above-mentioned letter be circulated as a document of the eighth session and be considered under agenda item 7.

* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission and in English only.

Annex

I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate the contents of our previous letters regarding the state of health of Syrian prisoner Bisher al-Meket. I would also like to inform you that the state of health of Syrian prisoners is deteriorating daily, due to the inhumane conditions of detention to which these persons are subjected in Israeli prisons.

In this context, I would like to point out that Syrian prisoner Saytan al-Wali, imprisoned for more than 23 years, was suffering from a tumour of an unknown nature in his right kidney. As laboratory tests were unable to determine the nature of the tumour, he had to be transferred from Nafha desert detention centre to hospital. On 12 May 2008, he underwent surgery for the removal of the kidney. This has been confirmed by doctors and the prisoner's family. His family has also confirmed that he has long been suffering from a number of diseases, but Israeli procrastination and delays led to this critical situation in which he now finds himself. It is worth recalling that Syrian prisoner Hayel Abu Zaid had similar symptoms, which resulted in his death from cancer in 2005.

We therefore hold the Israeli occupation authorities fully responsible for the deterioration in the health of all Syrian prisoners, in particular prisoner Saytan al-Wali, and for all the consequences which may follow. We call upon you to bring pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the applicable norms of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

We confirm that the state of health of prisoner Al-Wali requires extensive medical care. We again appeal to you to do your utmost to bring pressure to bear on Israel to allow delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross to intervene promptly and without delay, accompanied by specialist physicians, to assess the state of health of prisoner Al-Wali and save his life, which is in imminent danger.

I am confident that you will make every good endeavour and spare no effort to save the life of prisoner Saytan al-Wali. We appreciate the urgent efforts that you will make to defend human rights and international humanitarian law.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed): Walid al-Moallem
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Doru Romulus Costea
President of the Human Rights Council