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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories

Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 46/24, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan at its forty-ninth session.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 46/24, in paragraph 1 of which the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Security Council decided, *inter alia*, that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel rescind forthwith its decision.
2. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 46/24, the Human Rights Council requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it as widely as possible, and to report on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan to the Council at its forty-ninth session. In addition, in paragraph 12 of the same resolution, the Council decided to continue its consideration of the matter at its forty-ninth session.

II. Implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 46/24

3. In a note verbale dated 14 October 2021 from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) addressed to the Government of Israel, on behalf of the Secretary-General, with reference to Human Rights Council resolution 46/24, the Office requested information on steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of the resolution. At the time of reporting, no reply had been received.
4. In a note verbale dated 14 October 2021 from OHCHR addressed to all permanent missions in Geneva, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Office drew their attention to Human Rights Council resolution 46/24 and requested that they provide information on any steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution. The Permanent Missions of Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva responded to the request.
5. In a note verbale dated 14 October 2021 from OHCHR addressed to the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Office brought the resolution to the attention of those entities.
6. In a note verbale dated 31 August 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, with reference to Human Rights Council resolution 46/24, the Syrian Arab Republic highlighted the systematic policy of Israel, aimed at changing the demographic character of the occupied Syrian Golan, of banning Syrians who had left the occupied Syrian Golan for work or to study abroad from returning to their homes.
7. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted the case of an individual who had been turned away at the border by the Israeli authorities in May 2021. The authorities had reportedly alleged that the individual had been away for too long. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that and similar incidents denied the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan of their right to return to their homes and cut off their access to family life in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic transmitted, together with the note verbale, the names of individuals who had similarly been prevented by the Israeli authorities from returning to the occupied Syrian Golan.
8. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that, in its resolution 46/24, the Human Rights Council had deplored the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities affecting the human rights of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, and had called upon Israel to desist from its repressive measures against them and from all other practices that obstructed the enjoyment of their fundamental rights and their civil, political, economic, social and cultural

rights. The Syrian Arab Republic drew the attention of OHCHR to the incident and expressed its hope that the matter would be condemned and reported as a flagrant violation of the fundamental rights of the Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic called upon OHCHR, in accordance with its mandate and relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, to pressure Israel to grant the Syrian Arab residents entry to the occupied Syrian Golan and to stop illegal practices which violated the obligations of Israel, as the occupying Power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

9. In a note verbale dated 22 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, in reply to the note verbale from OHCHR of 14 October 2021, the Syrian Arab Republic stressed that, since 1967, Israel had systematically engaged in practices which violated the human rights of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan. It highlighted that those actions constituted continuous violations of resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council in relation to the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, including Security Council resolutions 237 (1967), 242 (1967), 497 (1981) and all relevant Human Rights Council resolutions adopted since 2006. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic noted that the actions of Israel constituted a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which affirmed the protection of civilians in times of war, as well as the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.

10. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that such violations continued against the backdrop of the declaration by the former President of the United States of America recognizing the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan by Israel, and it also noted that the current Administration of the United States had failed to reverse that declaration. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirmed that that declaration blatantly violated the principles and provisions of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the declaration was also in violation of Human Rights Council resolutions relevant to the occupied Syrian Golan.

11. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, in the final document issued at the Baku Summit held in October 2019, had renewed their principled position concerning the occupied Syrian Golan and the protection of the rights of its Syrian citizens. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the Non-Aligned Movement had also condemned the recognition by the previous Administration of the United States of the annexation by Israel of the occupied Syrian Golan and had called upon the international community and the Security Council to assume their responsibilities in that context.

12. The Syrian Arab Republic also recalled the statement of 26 March 2019 by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in which it had condemned the recognition by the former President of the United States of the “sovereignty of Israel” over the occupied Syrian Golan and had called upon the international community and the Security Council to assume their responsibilities in that regard. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that, in the statement, OIC had affirmed that the declaration by the United States did not change the legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, given that the territory was considered occupied. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that the General Secretariat of OIC had urged States across the world to respect internationally recognized resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan and not to recognize any measure inconsistent with those resolutions.

13. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that, in the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of

the Arab population in the Occupied Syrian Golan,¹ it was recalled that the Secretary-General had continued to reaffirm the validity of Security Council resolution 497 (1981). In the report, it was concluded that the protracted Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan continued to have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of the Palestinian and Syrian populations, as well as on the social and economic development in the occupied territories. It was also noted that the negative impact of the occupation and the Israeli policies and practices was multi-layered, and their cumulative repercussions affected the future of the populations living under occupation.

14. The Syrian Arab Republic took note of the description in the above-mentioned report of the persistence of discriminatory policies in several areas, including in access to land and water, and noted that such policies benefited Israeli settlers who already enjoyed incentives, such as tax subsidies. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted the description in the report of restrictive building and zoning policies, which created strain on existing infrastructure and resulted in overcrowding. The Syrian Arab Republic took note of the description in the report of discriminatory land registration practices, including a new requirement for specific documentation to prove land ownership. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that, in the report, it was indicated that serious concerns were arising over a new wind turbine project that would be implemented by an Israeli energy company on agricultural lands in three Syrian Arab villages (see paras. 16–23 below).

15. The Syrian Arab Republic asserted that, in order to legalize the occupation and impose its laws in the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel had aggressively sought to impose its illegal decision to hold local council elections in the occupied Syrian Golan on 30 October 2018. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan had categorically rejected those elections and had boycotted both the nomination process and the elections themselves, despite the detention of large numbers of the population and repression by the Israeli authorities.

16. The Syrian Arab Republic expressed its concern about the continued action by Israel to prevent Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan from communicating with their relatives in their motherland.

17. The Syrian Arab Republic described an incident in which Israeli forces had allegedly shot and killed Medhat al-Saleh in Ayn al-Tinah, a village in the Syrian Arab Republic near the town of Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan, on 16 October 2021. Mr. Al-Saleh was described as being active in defending the rights of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan. He was first arrested by Israel in 1983, and then again in 1985, after which he was detained for 12 years. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that he had established a committee to support prisoners and detainees in 1997, and then was elected a member of the Syrian People's Assembly in 1998, and later headed the Golan Affairs Office of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Mr. Al-Saleh had documented violations committed by Israel, as the occupying Power, in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic asserted that the incident demonstrated that Israel continued to disregard relevant Security Council resolutions and norms of international law.

18. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted a number of policies adopted by Israel, aimed at consecrating the occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan, including through the construction and expansion of settlements and the confiscation of agricultural lands.

19. The Syrian Arab Republic described its concerns associated with the granting by Israel of a licence to a private sector company to establish 45 to 52 wind turbines to generate power in the occupied Syrian Golan in the context of policies aimed at land appropriation and the creation of a situation which would prolong its occupation. Given the gravity of the project, the Syrian Arab Republic recalled several facts surrounding it, as described in the following paragraphs.

20. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the turbines would be built on an area of 6,000 dunams of agricultural lands belonging to the Syrian Arab population, which represented over one fifth of the remaining agricultural lands accessible to the Syrian Arab population in

¹ [A/76/94-E/2021/73](#).

the occupied territory, despite their protests to the project. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that the project would limit the expansion of the Syrian Arab villages, where residents already lived in dense and congested conditions and would inflict severe damage on the health of the population, as well as to the environment, in the area. The Syrian Arab Republic expressed particular concern about the damage to the livelihoods of the Syrian Arab population and noted that the main livelihood for Syrian Arab residents of the area was agriculture.

21. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the damage caused by the project extended beyond the area where the turbines would be built, given that additional land was needed to construct infrastructure associated with the project. For example, according to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Israeli Electricity Company had constructed a high-tension electric line and would construct a power station, on additional land, to produce electric energy from the wind turbine project and to connect the new power station of the Israeli settlement of Katzrin.

22. The Syrian Arab Republic described an incident in which representatives of the company implementing the wind turbine project had entered the agricultural lands of Syrian Arab residents with large numbers of Israeli security forces. The Israeli security forces reportedly immediately closed down the roads leading to the land of nearly one thousand Syrian farmers in order to allow the company to pursue its preparations for implementing the project. Hundreds of Syrian Arab residents reportedly gathered to protest the project.

23. The Syrian Arab Republic described how, in response to the decision to move ahead with the wind turbine project, the Syrian Arab residents had declared a general strike, in which they went to the land on which the turbines were to be built and confronted the Israeli authorities in an effort to prevent the latter from implementing the project at the expense of their private properties. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the Israeli security forces had responded to the protestors with repression and intimidation, with 25 protestors, whose names were shared with OHCHR, being injured and detained.

24. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that, in its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Israel,² the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had expressed its concern about reports that Israel had given licences to Israeli and multinational companies for oil and gas extraction and renewable energy projects in the occupied Syrian Golan without having consulted the affected communities, while prohibiting Syrians from gaining access to, having control of, or developing their natural resources. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories had expressed its serious concerns over the effects of that project on the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan.³

25. The Syrian Arab Republic described how Israel had sought, through the imposition of building restrictions, land confiscation and intimidation, to reinforce its illegal annexation and change the character of the occupied land, including by pushing the Syrian Arab population to abandon their land, thereby inflicting irreparable damage. The Syrian Arab Republic described practices, such as building restrictions, land confiscation and intimidation, as violating the principles and provisions of international law related to the duties of the occupying Power not to exploit territories under occupation for their own benefit in a manner that harmed the interests of the occupied population, especially if the damage was sustained and irreparable. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that those actions constituted violations of hundreds of United Nations resolutions issued by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council, in which those bodies had affirmed the illegality of the occupation and had demanded an end to it and the immediate cessation of settlement policies and practices in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan.

26. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that agriculture was the pillar of the Israeli settlement project in the occupied Syrian Golan and also noted that Israel had continued to implement the multi-year plan that it had approved to develop and support agriculture in the current

² E/C.12/ISR/CO/4.

³ A/75/199, para. 72.

Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, encouraging young Israeli settlers to enter into the agricultural sector. That had been done through the provision of subsidies and assistance to the settlers in the fields of agriculture and poultry farming, through what is described by the Syrian Arab Republic as racist and discriminatory policies aimed at establishing an agricultural reality that supported Israeli settlers at the expense of the Syrian Arab residents whose main livelihood was agriculture.

27. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that, in April 2019, Israel had announced plans to expand settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, including by building 30,000 housing units, constructing new cities and moving 250,000 Israeli settlers to the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic described that that action was aimed at changing the demographic composition of the region. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that, in June 2019, Israel had launched a new settlement project named after the forty-fifth President of the United States. The Syrian Arab Republic also noted that Israel had begun preparing to receive Israeli settlers in that new settlement, which had been built on the land of the Syrian village of Al-Qanba'a. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Planning Committee of the Government of Israel reportedly announced the arrival of temporary homes to accommodate 20 settler families whose applications had been accepted, of the 3,000 families who had reportedly requested to move into the settlement in the coming years. The settlers, the Syrian Arab Republic noted, would be given land to build permanent homes in the settlement. The Syrian Arab Republic also noted that the necessary approvals had been granted by the Planning Committee in 2021 for the construction of a 200-room hotel and three tourist housing compounds next to two of the largest nature reserves in the occupied Syrian Golan. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, a resort covering an area of about 200 dunams in the settlement of Katzrin had also been approved.

28. The Syrian Arab Republic asserted that those expansion plans were closely aligned with the policies of Israel, including inhibiting access to livelihoods for the Syrian Arab population, the confiscation of land, the prohibition of construction and development in Syrian Arab villages, the prevention of natural growth and the uprooting of the Syrian Arab population from their villages. The Syrian Arab Republic took note of additional policies detrimental to the Syrian Arab population, including the plundering of natural resources, the destruction of the environment and limitations placed on movement for the Syrian Arab population aimed at restricting their access to their lands, which would subsequently be confiscated to create geographical and demographic conditions which served the settlement policies of Israel.

29. The Syrian Arab Republic reported that Israeli authorities continued to pressure Syrian Arab landowners to accept property documents issued by the so-called "Israeli Survey Bureau" instead of the ownership documents registered in the Syrian Arab Republic. It asserted that Israel had demanded that the Syrian Arab inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan, especially in the village of Ayn Quniyah and the industrial zone belonging to the land of Majdal Shams village, hand over the ownership documents for the land that they had inherited from their parents and grandparents. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Israeli authorities had threatened to confiscate the land and grant it to Israeli settlers if the Syrian Arab landowners did not accept Israeli property documents.

30. The Syrian Arab Republic raised concerns about restrictions on construction, especially in the occupied village of Majdal Shams, further emphasizing that the urban crisis had worsened, especially after Israel had confiscated more than 80,000 dunams of land, extending from the north of Majdal Shams to the village of Ayn Quniyah, as part of the Hermon Reserve project. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Israel continued to refuse to expand the structural map of the village of Majdal Shams, an action which would alleviate the urban crisis due to strained infrastructure and overcrowding in the village.

31. The Syrian Arab Republic noted its further concerns about the expansion of settlement projects announced by the regional council of Israeli settlements, in its weekly bulletin, noting an increase in the number of settlers and an increase in the pace at which they were accommodated. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic flagged to OHCHR that construction work continued for service facilities in other settlements. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the number of settlers in the Katzrin settlement had increased by 2,000 new settlers since 2019, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel.

32. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that, on 11 October 2021, Israel had held the Israeli Strategic Regional Development Conference in the occupied Syrian Golan, on the theme “Challenges of Zionism during the second millennium in the Golan”. The Syrian Arab Republic also noted that a number of companies and institutions working on settlement projects in the occupied Syrian Golan had participated in the conference. Among the objectives reportedly discussed was the urban and demographic expansion of settlement projects in the occupied Syrian Golan, with the aim of reaching half a million settlers by 2048.

33. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that, in its resolution 2021/4, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed that the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan were illegal and constituted a major obstacle to achieving economic and social development. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the continued establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan amounted to a transfer by Israel of its civilian population to the territory that it had occupied, which was prohibited under international law.

34. The Syrian Arab Republic described the seizure of natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan by Israel and noted the continued exploitation of those resources for the benefit of Israel and Israeli settlements and the major role played by Israeli companies and multinational corporations in that regard. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, the exploitation by Israel of the occupied territory, in particular of agricultural lands, coincided with the theft and exploitation of water. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that Israel had employed numerous methods to confiscate natural resources, in violation of the rights of the Syrian Arab population, including the following:

- (a) Expropriation of land owned by Syrian Arab residents who had been displaced, which was subsequently declared State land under the pretext of the owners’ absence, and the confiscation of communal lands, for example in the village of Masada;
- (b) Expropriation of land in close proximity to the ceasefire line for the laying of landmines;
- (c) Confiscation of land for military purposes, including for the establishment of military camps and installations, in addition to paving roads for those purposes, including in areas far from the ceasefire line;
- (d) Expropriation of land for the building of settlements and agricultural and industrial facilities;
- (e) Fencing off of areas, reportedly approximately 100,000 dunams, under the pretext of placing them at the disposal of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority;
- (f) Expropriation of land indirectly through the *meshkenta* process, which involved giving an agricultural loan against a mortgage to an Israeli bank and confiscating the property if the loan was not paid in full within a specified time period.

35. The Syrian Arab Republic noted the recent expropriation of tens of thousands of dunams of land in the Syrian village of Jubata al-Khashabin, which lay within the demilitarized zone established by the United Nations in 1974, with the aim of building trenches close to Syrian territory. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, tens of thousands of dunams of land belonging to the village were consequently made inaccessible.

36. The Syrian Arab Republic noted what it described as the theft and sale of potable water, noting that Syrian Arab residents were often given access to non-potable water sources only, prevented from digging wells and storing irrigation water and given access to lower quantities of water than were given to settlers and at higher prices. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Israel had established many water reservoirs in the occupied Syrian Golan with the aim of collecting water to which the Syrian Arab residents were denied access. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, land owned by the Syrian Arab population was subject to rationed portions of water in small and insufficient quantities, at the rate of 200 cups per acre, at a price of \$0.90 per cup, whereas more than 33 million cubic metres of water were stored

in the reservoirs and watersheds in the occupied Golan for free drinking and irrigation by settlers.

37. The Syrian Arab Republic described how Syrian Arab workers in the occupied Syrian Golan suffered from arbitrary and discriminatory practices, which had significant negative effects on their working conditions, especially in the agricultural sector in terms of water ownership, the marketing of crops and their ability to compete in the market, due to the preferential treatment and advantages granted to settlers in those areas. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Syrian Arab residents were often exploited in hard labour and low-wage sectors and had an unemployment rate of between 60 and 80 per cent.

38. The Syrian Arab Republic raised its concern about the imposition of fees and taxes by Israel, in particular on Syrian Arab workers and especially on workers in the agricultural field, including the following: various taxes on the output of daily or regular work, ranging from 15 to 35 per cent; income taxes at 25 per cent, bringing the general tax to up to 60 per cent of wages; and taxes on apple storage refrigerators at a rate of 30 per cent, subject to increase. In addition, the occupation authorities refused to pay for the hospitalization of Syrian Arab workers with permanent or partial injuries sustained during work, given that they were not covered by the compensation law, and undertook measures to force them to join Israeli syndicates.

39. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that, in the report of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, issued in May 2021, it was noted that those discriminatory practices, including those related to access to water and land, continued to be an issue. It emphasized that Syrian workers were vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace.

40. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that the Syrian Arab population continued to suffer from a shortage of doctors, specialized medical clinics, health centres, hospitals and first aid centres and that they incurred high costs for treatment in cities such as Nazareth, Safad and Jerusalem in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Israel had imposed obstacles to the opening of new specialized laboratories and clinics, compelling the Syrian Arab population to seek treatment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory with the aim of subjugating them. The Syrian Arab Republic also noted that Israel continued to impose taxes on the Syrian Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the health fund tax and taxes for hospitals and medical centres and services that were not available in the villages of the occupied Syrian Golan. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel used the refusal of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan to obtain Israeli citizenship as an excuse not to grant it access to health services.

41. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the World Health Assembly annually adopted a decision calling upon the World Health Organization (WHO) to provide support to the Syrian Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan through technical assistance related to health. The Syrian Arab Republic indicated that policies implemented by Israel prevented WHO teams from reaching the occupied Syrian Golan to conduct field assessments of the situation of health and therefore from fulfilling that part of the mandate.

42. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted that Israel, in what was described as an attempt at obliterating Arab culture, imposed the Israeli curriculum in schools in the occupied Syrian Golan and that classes were conducted in Hebrew instead of Arabic. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that those policies undermined the rights of the Syrian Arab students and were aimed at severing any links that the students might have with their Arab culture and their religion and, ultimately, undermining their identity. The Syrian Arab Republic described how Israel deliberately appointed unqualified teachers, while noting that Syrian Arab students were also prevented from completing their university education, including in Syrian universities, due to strict restrictions on freedom of movement, including those preventing them from traveling. For those students who studied abroad, for example in Europe, the Syrian Arab Republic noted that Israel pressured them to accept Israeli citizenship when they returned for holidays, saying that they might otherwise not be able to return to Europe to continue their studies.

43. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirmed that what was described as the colonial policies and practices of Israel constituted clear violations of the civil, political, social, economic and

cultural rights of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan. Specific rights violated included the right to work, the right to education, the right to adequate housing, the right to own property, the right to freedom of movement, the right to preserve cultural and historical heritage, the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health and the right to food. The Syrian Arab Republic stressed that what was described as the racist and discriminatory practices of Israel and the restrictions placed on the Syrian Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan posed a serious threat to their future existence, growth and development.

44. The Syrian Arab Republic called upon the international community to break the silence about the practices and systematic violations by Israel, which were aimed at perpetuating the occupation of the Syrian Golan, including by changing the demographic, geographical, cultural, security and political character of the occupied Syrian Golan.

45. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirmed its unwavering position against the attempts of Israel and its supporters to legitimize the occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic also reaffirmed its unwavering position against the persistent violations of international law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention, and Security Council resolutions by Israel, the occupying Power, without any deterrence.

46. The Syrian Arab Republic renewed its call upon the United Nations and States who sought to promote international law to pressure Israel to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and not to recognize any legal status resulting from actions by Israel. The Syrian Arab Republic stressed in particular the need to refrain from assisting Israel in any activities, especially in relation to business and tourism, which would perpetuate the occupation of the Syrian Golan and the human rights violations against its Syrian Arab inhabitants, with particular reference to support for the continued construction and expansion of new and existing settlements. The Syrian Arab Republic called upon the international community and international organizations to monitor flagrant violations of international law by Israel and to oblige Israel to stop illegal settlement practices and repressive measures against the Syrian Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

47. The Syrian Arab Republic called upon the Secretary-General and OHCHR to establish a database of all businesses and commercial enterprises involved in activities which might have directly or indirectly facilitated, contributed to or benefited from the construction and growth of settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 497 (1981), and to present a report in that regard. The Syrian Arab Republic drew attention to the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, in which it called upon the international community to urge OHCHR to take the steps necessary to update annually the database of business enterprises involved in settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan and make it available to the public, as mandated by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/36.⁴

48. The Syrian Arab Republic demanded that Syrian Arab residents of the Golan be permitted to visit the motherland through the opening of the Qunaytirah crossing point.

49. In a note verbale dated 23 October 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, Cuba noted that the international community had reiterated its concern about the suffering of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan due to the systematic and continuous violations of human rights by Israel since 1967, while also demanding an end to the occupation of the territory.

50. Cuba emphasized that it was unacceptable that the military occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan had continued since 14 December 1981, despite the international community's sustained demand that the de facto Israeli imposition of laws, jurisdiction and administration

⁴ [A/76/360](#), para. 68 (g).

on the Golan should cease, noting that the acquisition of territory by force was inadmissible under international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

51. Cuba indicated that it considered all actions, measures or legislative or administrative provisions adopted by Israel, or which it might take, which purported to alter the legal status, physical character and demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan, and its institutional structure, as well as measures to apply the jurisdiction and administration of Israel in the illegally occupied territory, should be recognized as null and void and without legal effect.

52. Cuba noted its rejection of practices and conduct aimed at controlling and seizing the natural resources of the occupied Syrian Golan by Israel, in flagrant violation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the permanent sovereignty of the Syrian Arab population over its natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan.

53. Cuba emphasized that Israel must cease practices which contravened the full enjoyment of human rights by the Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan, including by refraining from the use of repressive measures. Cuba noted that foreign occupation, policies of expansion and aggression, racial discrimination, the creation of settlements, the imposition of *faits accomplis* and the annexation of territory by force, as had occurred in the occupied Syrian Golan, were practices that violated international instruments and norms and had a negative impact on the human rights of the Syrian Arab population of the Golan.

54. Cuba indicated that Israel must withdraw immediately from all territory of the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967, in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and must renounce its intention to annex the Golan, which was territory under the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic. Cuba emphasized that the continued illegal occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan and its *de facto* annexation constituted an obstacle to the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

55. Cuba condemned violations of international humanitarian law by Israel with regard to Syrian detainees in the occupied Syrian Golan and reiterated its concern that those practices persisted. It also reiterated its concern about the prevalence of inhumane conditions in Israeli prisons, noting that it had led to deteriorating health and in some cases had endangered the lives of the detainees.

56. Cuba expressed its strongest condemnation of the declaration by the Government of the United States recognizing the occupied Syrian Golan as the territory of Israel. It considered it as constituting a serious and flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 497 (1981). It noted that that recognition was in violation of the legitimate interests of the Syrian people and the Arab and Islamic nations, with serious consequences for stability and security in the Middle East and the growing escalation of tension in that region. Cuba urged the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility under the Charter, on the maintenance of international peace and security, and to take the necessary decisions.

57. In a note verbale dated 26 October 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, Iraq affirmed its position rejecting the principle of the forcible expropriation of territories and also affirmed all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions concerning the identity of the occupied Syrian Golan and condemning the illegal occupation of that territory by Israel. Iraq stressed the need to respect the aims and purposes of the United Nations, which affirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and to implement international resolutions relevant to the occupied Syrian Golan.

58. Iraq affirmed its rejection of Israeli settlement campaigns and investment projects in the occupied Syrian Golan and of policies aimed at tightening economic conditions for the local population. Iraq also affirmed the right of internally displaced persons to return to their homes and property and noted the illegality of any measures taken by Israel with the aim of imposing its laws and regulations on the territories which it had occupied, including the

Syrian Golan. Iraq categorically rejected the holding of local elections by the Israeli authorities in the occupied Syrian Golan and emphasized the need to adhere to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

59. Iraq expressed concern over findings in United Nations reports which indicated the extent of the suffering to which the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan had been subjected and called upon the United Nations to exercise its role in putting an end to such suffering and to the illegal occupation.

60. In a note verbale dated on 15 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, Kuwait noted that it wished to reiterate several fundamental points, including that there was a need for an end of the occupation of the Syrian Golan and not to recognize any situation resulting from the violations committed by Israel of the principles and peremptory norms of international law. Kuwait called upon the Secretary-General and OHCHR to prepare a database that included all business enterprises and commercial companies involved in activities that had a direct or indirect impact on the construction or growth of settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. It called for allowing visits by Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan to their relatives in the Syrian motherland through the Qunaytirah crossing point. Kuwait called upon the international community and international organizations to continue to monitor the flagrant violations of international law by Israel, as the occupying Power, and to report on those violations, and to oblige the occupying Power to put an end to its illegal settlement policies and repressive and discriminatory measures imposed upon the Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan.

61. In a note verbale dated 17 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that the occupied Syrian Golan was an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, noting that the continuation of the occupation had resulted in flagrant violations of the human rights of the Syrian Arab residents living in the occupied territory. The Islamic Republic of Iran noted that Israel, despite frequent condemnation by the Human Rights Council, continued to suppress and restrict the Syrian Arab residents of the territory through the construction of illegal settlements, the imposition of its own laws and regulations on the local population and the exploitation of the natural resources of the occupied land, which jeopardized the livelihoods of those living in the territory.

62. The Islamic Republic of Iran explained that it had taken the following measures, in implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 46/24:

- (a) Condemnation of the measures of Israel extending its jurisdiction and laws to the occupied Syrian Golan;
- (b) Condemnation of the Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan and measures which forced the local population to leave their homelands as part of a policy aimed at changing the demographic nature of the territory;
- (c) Supporting the right to return of all refugees of the occupied Syrian Golan to their homeland;
- (d) Condemnation of Israel for the imposition of its citizenship on Syrian nationals residing in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- (e) Objection to any position held by States or organizations which recognized "Israeli sovereignty" over the occupied Syrian Golan;
- (f) Condemnation of the decision by the former President of the United States to recognize the occupied Syrian Golan as the territory of Israel;
- (g) Emphasized the necessity of preserving the civil nature of the occupied Syrian Golan and banning any military activity by Israel;
- (h) Highlighted the need for defining a time frame for, and practical steps towards, the end of the occupation by Israel;

(i) Called for a special representative to address the human rights situation, including the health, education and welfare of the Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan;

(j) Called for the prevention of the establishment of any facility that would explore the availability of oil and gas by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(k) Called for the prevention of any air, sea or ground-based military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic from the territory of the occupied Syrian Golan.

63. The Islamic Republic of Iran noted its firm position in favour of the return of the Golan Heights to the Syrian Arab Republic and invited all States and international organizations to deplore any policy which allowed the continuation of the occupation and led to continued violations of human rights by Israel, including the rights to self-determination, health, sanitation and safe drinking water, housing, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

64. In a note verbale dated 18 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expressed its deep concern about the systematic and continuous violations of the human rights of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan, noting that they constituted crimes against humanity, infringing upon the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It stressed that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, such as the illegal decision of 14 December 1981, that purported to alter the legal, physical and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan and its institutional structure, as well as measures by Israel to apply its jurisdiction and administration to the territory, were null and void and had no legal effect.

65. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea affirmed its unwavering support and solidarity with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its just demand and right to restore its full sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea reiterated that the colonial policies and practices of Israel with regard to the occupation constituted clear violations of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan.

66. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea called upon Israel to comply with all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), and to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea demanded that Israel cease changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and urged Israel to stop all illegal measures and actions, including the construction and expansion of settlements, in the Syrian Golan, occupied since 1967. It called upon Israel to allow Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan to visit relatives in the Syrian motherland.

67. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea called upon the Secretary-General and OHCHR to continue to monitor violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by Israel and to oblige Israel, as the occupying Power, to put an end to its illegal settlement policies and repressive and discriminatory measures against the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

68. In a note verbale dated 18 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, Egypt expressed its deep concern over continued violations of the human rights of Syrian Arab citizens by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan, in flagrant violation of international conventions, especially international law and international humanitarian law. Egypt reaffirmed the illegality and illegitimacy of all measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Syrian Golan since the beginning of the occupation on 5 June 1967. According to Egypt, that affirmation was in accordance with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and

without legal effect, and in accordance with resolutions of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including the Human Rights Council.

69. Egypt affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 to the occupied Syrian Golan. Egypt stressed that the Israeli settlements and their expansion in the occupied Syrian Golan constituted a blatant violation of international law and affirmed the need to pressure the occupying Power to stop its settlement activities and associated infrastructure plans in the occupied Syrian Golan. Egypt also stressed the responsibility of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and to stop the violations of the rights of the Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan committed by Israel.

70. In a note verbale dated 23 November 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to OHCHR, Kenya noted that it had not recognized any of the measures referenced in paragraph 8 of Human Rights Council resolution 46/24.
