*Unofficial Transcript by Human Rights Voices*

October 31, 2016

**Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/71/352, A/71/315, A/71/321, A/71/355, A/71/364 and A/71/392) [item 50]**

Syrian Arab Republic: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. At the outset, my delegation would like to express gratitude to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. We wish to thank the Chair of the Special Committee and the Special Committee's members for their efforts.

We are very pleased and satisfied with the role of this committee and we thank them for the report. We would have preferred for the report on the occupied Syrian Golan, A/71/355. We would've supported, or rather – correction by interpreter – A/71/392, the occupied Syrian Golan. We would've liked to have seen more details in this report and more details that had been provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and OIC. We endorse the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since the first day of the occupation of Syria – of Syrian Golan by Israel, the United Nations has expressed its rejection of this odious occupation and in numerous resolutions the United Nations has repeatedly called upon Israel, the occupying power, to completely withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan along the 4 June 1967 lines. And we call on Israel to abide by the provisions of Resolution 497 of 1981. The annexation of Syrian Golan by Israel, it was referred to in that resolution, and we call upon Israel to abide by the provisions of that resolution.

Israel responds to that request as follows. It continues to flagrantly violate the charter and also international agreements on this subject, particularly the 1949 Geneva Convention. The international community, meanwhile, does not obligate Israel, the occupying power, to put an end to its occupation of the Arab territories – of the occupied Arab territories. If Israel put an end – it has not put an end to its hostile practices, and that is because – this is the case because some influential countries in this international organization continue to support Israel and to support its pretext for this occupation.

Since the very first day of this odious occupation, Israel has attempted to change the legal and political status of the Syrian Golan. Israel systematically violates human rights. It attempts to impose Israeli nationality on the Syrian population, this resilient – this population that resides in the Syrian Golan. Israel has showed racial – it has displayed racial discrimination, discriminatory conduct. There are those who are imprisoned who are unable to have contact with their families. And this occupation has been – it is rejected under international law. There have been people who have been imprisoned for interminable periods of time without ever having been tried.

There is a militant, [Sikri al-Makkah], who was detained in 2015 by the Israeli authorities, and he was detained after having served 27 years in prison. And this is – he was released rather, after having served 27 years. He was released in 2015 because he cooperated with the Israeli authorities. We call upon the international community to make every effort to liberate this militant along with all other Syrian detainees who are currently being held in Israeli prisons.

The worst violations and attacks by Israel have been committed against those residing in the occupied Syrian Golan. These individuals have been deprived of their most basic human rights. They are unable to contact their families in Syria. They are often – fines are imposed upon them. In addition, there is a collective policy of isolation that has been imposed on this population. Arab villages in the Golan are isolated. It is as if they are islands. They are separated from each other. There are also those who are sick. They are unable to pay their medical bills, and even if they were, they're unable to go to Damascus to receive medical treatment. The inhabitants of the Syrian Golan are prevented from being able to build homes in their territory. And if they can build homes, these homes are sometimes demolished.

Israel has also – has taken actions that have adversely affected the present and the future living conditions of the population in the Syrian Golan. Many antiquities have been stolen. The rights of students in the Golan have been directly violated. Curriculums have been replaced. Syria has instead imposed its own curriculum. There are Israeli professors – have been also – the curriculums that they are teaching have been altered by the Syrian authorities, or rather by the Israeli authorities.

The impact has also been economic in nature. It has adversely affected the lives of the inhabitants of the Syrian Golan and their livelihoods.

More than three-quarters of the territory of the occupied Syrian Golan's agricultural land has been usurped. There are more than 21,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan. The electricity grid and wind energy facilities have also been set up by Israel, and Israel is also utilizing, developing the natural resources in the Syrian Golan and is doing so in violation of international conventions and agreements, for example, those specifically prohibiting such development of natural resources in the Syrian Golan.

The resources of some of the major rivers are also being improperly used by Israel. There are some 450 million square meters of water resources that are being used by Israel to the detriment of the inhabitants of the Syrian Golan. Agricultural products, the inhabitants are prevented from selling those products to the Syrian government. This is another example.

The living conditions have deteriorated to unprecedented levels and this situation has been further exacerbated by the security situation in the region and by the activities of Jabhat al-Nusra, which has infiltrated the separation zone, and now terrorists are operating in that zone. This is why this occupation must be put to an end. Israel must stop its occupation. Israel should withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and withdraw to the pre-1967 borders on the basis of the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 497 and others.

Thank you, sir.