



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

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Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project
Chemin Moïse Duboule, 59
1209 Geneva - Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 799 07 00
Fax: + 41 22 799 07 01
E-mail : idpsurvey@nrc.ch

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Summary

Despite the international focus on the Middle East, little attention has been given to the tens of thousands of people displaced from the Syrian territory of the Golan Heights 35 years ago. The displacement occurred during the Six Day War in 1967 when Israel seized the Golan Heights, a strategic narrow stretch of land overlooking the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee.

Causes of displacement and figures

Reports of the number of people displaced from the Golan Heights during the Six Day War vary depending on the source. Israel says that 70,000 were displaced from the Golan in 1967 (USCR, 2002; Dammers 1998, p189). The Syrian government maintains that 130,000 persons were displaced from the Golan at this time and that those displaced and their descendants now number nearly half a million (Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UN, 1997). The exact circumstances of the mass displacement from the Golan Heights are subject to controversy, and Syrian and Israeli accounts of displacement differ. According to the Syrian government, the inhabitants of the Golan were physically expelled by Israeli forces, while the Israeli government maintains that these people fled following reports of violence (UN Human Rights Committee, 25 August 2000; Arnold, 1 February 2000).

UN response to the conflict

Following the 1967 War, the UN Security Council (UN SC) passed Resolution 242 calling for the Israeli armed forces' withdrawal of occupied territories and for the respect and acknowledgement of the sovereignty of every state in the area (UN SC 22 November 1967). During the 1973 war, UN SC Resolution 338 urged Israel on the one side and Syria and Egypt on the other to agree to a cease-fire, to the implementation of UN Resolution 242 and to further political negotiations (UN SC 21 October 1973). An Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement was then signed, which allowed Syria to regain Kuneitra, a town in the Golan Heights emptied of its 50,000 inhabitants and left in ruin by the Israeli army. Kuneitra was never rebuilt by the Syrian government and remains empty to this day (Schneider, 8 May 2001). In 1974 the UN SC established a UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) to supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights and to monitor the cease-fire (UN SC 31 May 1974). In the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria, the mandate of UNDOF has since then been renewed every six months.

Since December 1981, the Golan Heights have been administered under Israeli law. Despite this fact, people displaced from the Golan are considered internally displaced persons since the de facto border between the Israel-occupied Golan and Syria is not an internationally recognized border. In 1981, the UN SC said that 'the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect' (UN SC, 17 December 1981). The UN has since reaffirmed this principle on numerous occasions and has regularly urged Israel to allow the internally displaced to return to their former homes and repossess their properties.

Living conditions of the internally displaced

There is little information available on the living conditions of the internally displaced in Syria. Many of them have apparently resettled into ten new villages close to the Golan and into housing projects in the suburbs of Damascus, Dara, and Homs (USCR, 2002). Over thirty years after the construction of villages and housing projects for the internally displaced, the Syrian government continues to define these settlements as 'temporary camps' (Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of Information, 2001). The displaced are

apparently well treated by the Syrian government. According to an American journalist who interviewed some of the displaced in 2000 in 'new Bteha' – a village mirroring the old Bteha in the Golan – the displaced are given priority for public service jobs and universities by the Syrian government (Fecci, June 2000).

Prospects of return

Resettlement of the displaced population to the Golan cannot be envisaged before a conclusion of negotiations between Israel and Syria on the future of the Golan Heights. Negotiations have been at a deadlock since January 2000. Syria will only discuss security arrangements after Israel agrees unconditionally to withdraw from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 line, which would give Syria access to the Sea of Galilee (MEMRI 23 Jan 2000). In turn, Israel wants its security concerns addressed before agreeing to withdraw and has taken as a basis for negotiation the 1923 border which would preclude Syrian access to the Sea of Galilee (Ben-Nahum Yonatan 19 Dec 1995; MEMRI 24 March 2000). The Syrian President, Mr. Bashar Al-Asad, stated in February 2001 that Syria's position on the Golan was the same as his father's, which made any prospect for peace very difficult (MEMRI 16 Feb 2001). Indeed, with the increasing violence in the Middle East in 2002, it would appear that any political settlement of the Golan Heights issue is unlikely in the foreseeable future.
(June 2002)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Israeli and Syrian views on events leading to internal displacement in Syria in 1967

- The Israeli point of view is that prior to 1967 Syria used fortifications on the Golan heights to shell civilians and to launch terrorist attacks
- The Syrian government sees these accusations as excuses for Israel to build up forces against its Arab neighbors
- The Jerusalem Post describes the new Syrian government in 1966 as adopting extreme anti-Israeli policies
- The Syrian government points out that Israel started the war just moments after designating a new Minister of Defense

"The Golan Heights became part of the French mandate of Syria following World War I (1914-1918), and the region was later passed to independent Syria. After the founding of Israel in 1948, Israelis started a number of *kibbutzim*, or farming cooperatives, in northern Israel near the Syrian border. Syrians fired on the settlements from fortified posts on the western ridge of the Golan. The dispute that ensued over the strategically important region was one of the factors that precipitated the Six-Day War of 1967." (Encarta 2000)

Points of view reflecting the Israeli position

National Council for the Golan (Israeli organization): "After the War of Independence (1948), the Syrians built extensive fortifications on the [Golan] Heights. They used these to systematically shell civilian targets in Israel and to launch terrorist attacks; 140 Israelis were killed and many more injured as a result of these actions between 1948 and 1967." (National Council for the Golan December 1997, "History")

The Jewish Student Online Research Center (American organization): "From 1948-67, when Syria controlled the Golan Heights, it used the area as a military stronghold from which its troops randomly sniped at Israeli civilians in the Huleh Valleh below, forcing children living in kibbutzim to sleep in bomb shelters. In addition, many roads in northern Israel could be crossed only after probing by mine-detection vehicles." (Bard 2001)

The Jerusalem Post: "Despite Syria standing aside initially in the Six Day War and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara's revisionism notwithstanding, many historians agree that Syria more than any other actor was responsible for the chain of events that dragged the region into the Six Day War. Indeed, shortly after the secular, ostensibly socialist Ba'ath party took power in March 1963, Damascus began urging the Arab world to make war over Israel's project to divert Jordan River water to the south of the country, correctly realizing that this project would have a major effect on the young Jewish state's viability.

A February 1966 coup engineered by Hafez Assad and others brought to power a new Ba'ath regime in Damascus which adopted 'the most extreme anti-Israel policy since the beginning of the Syrian-Israeli conflict,' writes Hebrew University expert Moshe Maoz, in his book *Syria and Israel: From War to Peacemaking*. 'This regime had the narrowest socio-political base and the most tenuous public legitimacy in modern Syrian history,' Maoz writes, and warmongering against Israel was one way to mask its domestic instability.

The new regime called for a 'people's war of liberation' to take the form of terror attacks against Israel; 'when in response to the people's war of liberation, Israel will be forced to begin a conventional war.' According to the Syrian leadership's strategy quoted by Maoz, the Arab armies would join the 'defensive' struggle for Israel's liquidation. As June 1967 approached, things seemed to be going according to plan. Between February 1966 and May 1967, the Syrian regime initiated 177 border skirmishes and 75 Palestinian terror attacks within Israel, actions painstakingly detailed in recently declassified documents of the British and American governments. The main theater of impending war, however, had by April 1967 shifted to the Egyptian front. When Israel downed six Syrian MiGs, Egyptian president Gamel Abdel Nasser refused to abide by a 1966 mutual defense treaty to send military support to Damascus. His position changed a month later in response to baseless Syrian and Russian reports that Israel was massing troops on the Syrian border for an apparently offensive attack. His anti-Israel credentials under fire in the Arab world, on May 14, Nasser began moving troops into the Sinai desert. Days later he demanded the removal of United Nations peacekeeping troops and closed the Straits of Tiran to Israel-bound shipping, effectively blockading the port of Eilat. Jordan and Iraq joined the mutual defense pacts. An Arab-Israeli war had now become inevitable. " (Arnold 1 February 2000)

According to the Syrian National Information Center website dedicated to the Golan

"Up to 1967, the Israeli military forces have been steadily building up huge forces to aggressively strike against its Arab neighbours. For it aimed at weakening the military and economic structures of its Arab neighbours, and to eventually occupy the Arab territories. By this it will have achieved the Zionist 'greedily' aims. It found different excuses for achieving these aims including; the increasing 'Fidauyee' [Fedayeen] operations against Israel on the borders, and the exploiting of the head waters of the Jordan river. [...]

Israel escalated its provocative actions against Syria by shelling the means and equipment working in the Arab project of transferring the Jordan River tributaries. Attacking the Syrian farmers and increasing the impact of challenges against the Syrian Forces led to more vehement clashes that reached their peak by the air battle of April 7, 1967. News were spreading of Israeli military arrangements; particularly its deploying a force of 11-13 brigades along the Syrian Borders. Motivated by such news, Egypt met its obligations under the Syrian-Egyptian Common Defense Accord signed on November 4, 1966, and delegated its Chief-of-Staff, Lt. General Mohammed Fozi, to Damascus to study the matter on the ground and coordinate the cooperation. When he returned to Cairo, Egypt declared utmost mobilization, and the Egyptian Forces were paraded on May 15, 1967 in a military march through Cairo streets heading for Sinai. On May 16, 1967 the Egyptian Command-in -Chief requested the UNDOF [sic] [in fact, UNEF, United Nations Disengagement Observer Force] Commander-in-Chief in Sinai to withdraw his forces. After hasty consultations, the UN Secretary General, U. Thant, decided to meet Egypt's request and ordered such forces withdrawal on May 19, 1967. President Nasser announced on May 23, 1967 the blocking of the Straits of Tiras [Straits of Tiran] in the face of Israeli navigation, removing thereby the last trace of the 1956-Triple Aggression against Egypt. The blocking of the Traits [sic] was considered by Israel as a declaration of war. It expedited the arrangements to launch the aggression taking for granted the USA support to its plan. The UN Secretary General exerted efforts in Cairo and Tel Aviv to limit the deterioration. It was clear that the ghost of war was dominant. Syrian and Egyptian Forces began heading for the battle fronts. On the other side Israel was taking many measures that revealed the intentions of the Zionist leaders to wage aggression. The Cabinet was re-shuffled and General Moshe Dayan was brought in to as War Minister. It was only a few hours later that the Israeli forces initiated the war." (Syrian National Information Center 2001)

Displacement of majority of inhabitants of Golan Heights by the end of Six-Day war in June 1967

- Armed conflict between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria ended with Israel's conquest of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights
- According to the Jerusalem Post, Israel did not plan the conquest of the Golan Heights, but acted mostly in reaction to Syrian attacks against upper Galilee residents

- Most of the population of the Golan was displaced by the end of the war and the town of Kuneitra became a ghost town

"In 1967 Israel occupied much of the Jawlan district of the country, commonly if somewhat misleadingly referred to as the 'Golan heights', displacing almost all the population, including the inhabitants of the large town of Quneitra." (Dammers 1998, p.189)

"Except for some Druze villagers who stayed behind, most of the Syrian population of the Golan Heights fled in 1967." (USCR 2000, p.204)

"1967 May: Mobilizing of forces on both Arab and Israeli sides of the borders.

June 5: Israel attacks Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Great victories for Israel are achieved immediately. Egyptian aircrafts are wiped out after effective bombing of air strips.

June 7: The strategically important Egyptian Sharm el Sheikh is captured.

— Jordan surrenders to Israel, after having lost East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

June 8: The entire Sinai comes under Israeli control. Later that evening, Israeli fighting on the Egyptian front ceased.

June 10: Syria surrenders, after seeing Golan Heights come under Israeli control." (Encyclopaedia of the Orient 2001)

According to the Jerusalem Post:

"Anyone familiar with Syria's shelling of Israeli civilians below the Golan Heights in the years before the Six Day War might assume that conquering the commanding plateau was a prime Israeli objective when war broke out in June 1967.

In fact, but for a startling change of heart toward the end of the war by defense minister Moshe Dayan - who feared Soviet involvement if he attacked but may have feared even more the judgment of history if he didn't - Israel would have ended the war with Syria still in control of the strategic plateau, leaving the Golan over Israelis' heads as a 'curse for generations to come.'

One of the factors influencing the Israel government decision to take the heights was an unprecedented appeal by a delegation of Upper Galilee residents directly to prime minister Levi Eshkol's war cabinet. [...] Eshkol responded that the delegation's appeal would weigh heavily in the government's decision to take on the Syrians.

[...]

When war began on June 5, the heavy initial fighting was in the Sinai and, when Jordan ignored Israeli pleas to stay out of the conflict, on the eastern front. The Syrian front was relatively quiet. Syrian planes attempted to bomb the Haifa Oil Refineries and targets in Galilee; massive Israeli retaliation destroyed the bulk of the Syrian air force on the ground. Damascus Radio, nonetheless, announced stunning military successes, such as the downing of 54 Israeli planes and the conquest of several Israeli settlements. Meanwhile, by the end of the first day of fighting, Ba'ath leaders were receiving reports of the devastating blows being suffered by Egyptian and Jordanian forces. The Syrians began the morning of June 6 with an intense barrage on Israeli settlements at the foot of the Golan, and before 8 a.m. had invaded and attacked both She'ar Yashuv and Tel Dan. In both cases they were repulsed by local paramilitary forces, but Elazar believed that the Syrians, aware of Israel's purely defensive posture in the north, were sending out probes before a much larger attack. Instead, Syrian gunners kept up a heavy artillery barrage on the settlements that continued almost unabated through June 8. With the IDF pursuing the war with great efficiency on its other fronts, pressure began building on the Israeli leadership to storm the Golan Heights. [...] Dayan's order concerning the Syrian front was quite explicit: do not get involved in a war with the Syrian Army. [...] While the rest of the country could begin celebrating after the first day or two of the war, residents of the northern settlements remained in their bunkers under the constant artillery barrage. A lobbying campaign by settlement residents, humorously dubbed the 'Galilee Rebellion,' now began in an attempt to

sway Dayan, Eshkol and chief of General Staff Yitzhak Rabin to counterattack. [...] Much of the cabinet supported an attack to drive the Syrians back from the Golan, [...]. Pockets of resistance remained, including National Religious Party ministers who feared world reaction. [...] A cabinet meeting of June 7 ended with orders for no attack on the Golan, but gave Dayan and Eshkol the power to change course if circumstances warranted. By the morning of June 8 it was clear that the Jordanian and Egyptian armies had been routed. Israeli tanks began to rumble north from Samaria toward the Golan. [...]

No one knows precisely what happened between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. the following day to make Dayan change his mind and order Northern Command to take the Golan Heights. Dayan himself gives several factors. At about 3 a.m., Nasser suddenly expressed his willingness to accept a cease-fire, and urged the Syrians to do the same. Shortly after that, military intelligence reported that Kuneitra, the major Syrian city on the Golan, had been abandoned. At 4:45 a.m., the commander of the southern front cabled Dayan with the information that IDF forces were deployed on the Suez Canal and Red Sea. Not only was there no need for the IDF to fight simultaneously on northern and southern fronts, Dayan realized, but the window of opportunity to confront Syria was closing fast. [...] By 11:30 a.m., after Israeli planes had softened up Syrian defenses and Israeli engineers had cleared a path through the mine fields, IDF tanks were making their way up the steep escarpment. The battle then became a race against time, as the Syrian defenses folded quickly and the UN Security Council sought to impose a cease-fire deadline.

The Israelis - whose lack of forethought about conquering the heights is illustrated by the fact that much of their battle plan was improvised on the fly - meanwhile sought a line on top of the heights that would be defensible. With the Soviet Union issuing grave threats through the Americans, Dayan ordered land operations to cease by 8 a.m. on June 10. That morning, however, Radio Damascus issued the false report that Kuneitra had fallen to Israeli forces, perhaps a desperate bid to force an intervention by the Soviets, who might have feared for the safety of Damascus. In any case, the report prompted Syrian forces to flee in panic back toward Damascus, leaving Kuneitra indeed open for the Israelis. Dayan ordered the army to push on and take Kuneitra, with the final cease-fire taking effect at 6:30 p.m." (Arnold 1 February 2000)

According to the Syrian National Information Center website dedicated to the Golan

"Between 5-8 June, the Israeli forces started attacking. The main attack was launched against the Egyptian Front, and the secondary attack against the Jordanian Front. It then turned its attention to depending itself on the Syrian Front, and was at the same time launching artillery plane attack against the Syrian army posted in the Golan, all the time.

And in the early hours of 8 June, the Israeli leadership rearranged its forces, and intensified its effort against the Syrian front. It mobilized a fighting group consisting of three backing legions. Yet the Israeli forces were really backed by its air forces who fully controlled the sky.

At 12.00 on 9 June, the Enemy forces turned to attack on the Syrian front. Starting off with intensive air fighting, it focused its attack on the Northern Sector of the Syrian front, especially towards : Kafar Salet, and Tal Al- Kilau, and launching backing attacks towards the mid and Southern Sectors of the Front. The Enemy moved quite slowly, and by 9 June had not achieved much. It had penetrated 4-5 km deep and around 2km toward Al-Darbashia, Hadar . This was due to the strong resistance sought out by the Syrian Arab Army who bravely fought despite the difficult circumstances they were going through; especially the full sky control that the enemy had. Very often, the Enemy's Force would withdraw from in front of the Syrian resisting defense, and would turn toward destroying the defending post of the planes and then would move forward once more. [...]

More than once, the Enemy would order its army to cease air sheltering against our courageous detachment. Eventually, the enemy occupied this momentum post and was therefore able to expand the Sector penetrating 10-12 km long, and 5 km deep.

Israel continued attacking on 10 June, despite the UN's ceasefire resolution. New reserved troops moved in from the Jordanian Front, to enter a new round of battle. [...]

The Enemy kept using all kinds of fighting groups and in all directions, and was able on 10 June to reach Al-Talal, North and south of Al-Qunitra city, and Al-Rafied." (Syrian National Information Center 2001)

Syria regained some of the lost territory in 1974

- In November 1970 Hafez al-Assad, leader of the military wing of the Ba'ath Party, overthrew the President
- Syria and Egypt went to war with Israel on 6 October 1973 to regain the Sinai and the Golan Heights
- Syria and Israel signed a disengagement agreement in May 1974, which enabled Syria to regain the city of Kuneitra in the Golan

"The defeat of the Syrians and Egyptians in the June 1967 war with Israel weakened the radical socialist regime established by the 1966 coup. Conflict developed between a moderate military wing and a more extremist civilian wing of the Ba'ath Party. The 1970 retreat of Syrian forces sent to aid the PLO during the "Black September" hostilities with Jordan reflected this political disagreement within the ruling Ba'ath leadership. On November 13, 1970, Minister of Defense Hafiz al-Asad effected a bloodless military coup, ousting the civilian party leadership and assuming the role of prime minister. (U.S. DOS April 1999, "History")

"1971 March - Assad is elected president for a seven-year term in a plebiscite." (BBC News 19 March 2002)

"The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. [...].

The path leading up to the Yom Kippur war had two major factors. First, there was a failure to resolve territorial disputes arising from the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. These disputes involved the return of the Sinai to Egypt and the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. UN Resolution 242 and Egyptian President Sadat's peace initiative failed to bring peace. Sadat wanted to sign an agreement with Israel provided the Israelis returned all the occupied territories, but Israel refused to withdraw to the pre-1967 armistice lines. Since no progress was being made toward peace, Sadat was convinced that to change things and gain legitimacy at home, he must initiate a war with limited objectives.

The second factor leading up to the war was the assurance Israel's general staff felt that Israel was safe from Arab attack for the indefinite future. Therefore, Israel felt no reason to trade territory for peace. Israel felt this way because of the Israel Defense Force's strength, the disarray of the Arab world, and the large buffer zone around Israel formed by the Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Thus in spite of Sadat's threats of war throughout 1972 and much of 1973, Israel's commanders were unprepared for the October attack of Egypt and Syria. They misinterpreted the buildup of armed forces along the canal as military exercises instead of an attack.

The surprise attack on two fronts from Egypt and Syria began on October 6, 1973, which was Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year for the Jewish people. Egypt's forces swiftly crossed the Suez Canal and overran the Bar-Lev line. Syria moved into the Golan Heights and nearly reached the 1967 border with Israel (overlooking the Hula Basin). [...]

The tide of the war began to turn on October 10. The Syrians were pushed back and Israel advanced into Syria proper. The Soviet Union responded by sending airlifts to Damascus and Cairo, which were answered on October 12 and 13 by massive US airlifts to Israel. Israeli forces crossed the Suez Canal and surrounded the Egyptian Third Army on October 21.

The war started an international crisis when the Soviet Union responded to a plea from Egypt to save its Third Army by threatening to send troops to assist Egypt. Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, went to Moscow to negotiate a cease-fire. The result was UN Resolution 338, an immediate cease-fire that reinstated Resolution 242, which 'aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East'. This cease-fire was broken and again the Soviets threatened to intervene. However, the US pressured Israel into accepting a second cease-fire on October 25, 1973. The war was over, and both Israel and Egypt claimed victory." (North Park University 27 April 1999)

"As a result of the mediation efforts of then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Syria and Israel achieved a disengagement agreement in May 1974, enabling Syria to recover territory lost in the October war and part of the Golan Heights occupied by Israel since 1967, including Quneitra. The two sides have effectively implemented the agreement." (U.S. DOS April 1999, "Arab-Israeli Relations")

"1975 February - Assad says he's prepared to sign a formal peace treaty with Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab land." (BBC News 19 March 2002)

For more information on the different UN Resolutions following the 1967 and 1973 events, please check [\[Internal Link\]](#)

14 years after the Six-day War, extension of Israeli law to the Golan Heights (December 1981)

- The Israeli Parliament voted to extend Israeli law to the occupied Golan Heights in 1981
- Prime Minister Begin presented the law by citing Syria's hostility to Israel

"[T]he Israeli Knesset voted to extend Israeli law to the part of the Golan Heights over which Israel retained control. The United Nations Security Council subsequently passed a resolution calling on Israel to rescind this measure." (U.S. DOS April 1999 "Arab-Israeli Relations")

"In presenting the law [to the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset], Prime Minister Begin stated that the time had come to implement the government's policy regarding the Golan Heights citing Syria's implacable hostility to Israel, and the recent deployment of Syrian missiles on Lebanese soil – a provocation of crisis proportions. He reminded the ministers that the Syrian president had recently rejected any ties with Israel, even if the PLO would recognize Israel." (Ariga 2001, "Golan")

Text of the Golan Heights Law of December 14, 1981

"1. The Law, jurisdiction and administration of the state shall apply to the Golan Heights, as described in the Appendix.

2. This Law shall become valid on the day of its passage in the Knesset.

3. The Minister of the Interior shall be charged with the implementation of this Law, and he is entitled, in consultation with the Minister of Justice, to enact regulations for its implementation and to formulate in regulations transitional provisions concerning the continued application of regulations, orders, administrative orders, rights and duties which were in force on the Golan Heights prior to the application of this Law." (Ariga 2001, "Golan")

The population of the Golan now includes Druze, Israeli and Alawite inhabitants (2000)

- Some 18,000 Druze and Alawite people who did not flee in 1967 live in the Golan today
- About 17,000 Israelis have settled in the Golan since 1967

"Today the Golan has a population of about 30,500 (1994 estimate). This number includes about 15,000 Druze, 14,000 Israelis, and 1,500 Alawites. The Druze live in a number of towns and villages, particularly in Majdal Shams, the largest non-Jewish town in the Golan Heights. Much of the Druze and Alawite population is engaged in orchard agriculture, cattle grazing, and wage labor in Israeli communities. The Israelis live in approximately 32 agricultural communities in the southern Golan Heights. Many Israeli army officers stationed at military bases in the Golan Heights have settled their families in the government-planned town of Katzrin." (Encarta 2000)

"This mountainous stretch of land [...] has become home to some 17,000 Israeli settlers and offers Israel a natural strategic buffer to Syria." (BBC 4 January 2000)

There were about 17,000 Druze inhabitants in the Golan Heights as of 1995. (Ben-Dor 1 June 1995)

For a history of the Druze people and beliefs, you can refer to ReligiousTolerance.org [External link]

No perspective of return for the displaced while Israeli-Syrian negotiations on the Golan are deadlocked (2000)

- Talks between Syria and Israel on the future of the Golan Heights started in December 1999 in the USA but were indefinitely postponed in January 2000
- Syria would only discuss security arrangements after Israel agreed unconditionally to withdraw from the Golan Heights and Israel wanted those arrangements addressed before agreeing to withdraw
- After deadlock in peace talks with Syria, Israel lifted restriction on building in the occupied Golan (2000)

"On December 8, 1999, President Clinton announced that Prime Minister Barak and President al-Asad had agreed to resume Israel-Syria negotiations from the point that they were suspended in January 1996. The talks commenced at a meeting on December 15, 1999, between President Clinton, Prime Minister Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara, followed by talks in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, on January 3-11, 2000.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on January 17 [2000]: 'At the end of the last round, it was agreed that the Israeli-Syrian talks would resume on January 19. Both sides have since been reviewing the status of the talks and the draft working document. Presently, their approaches to the next round differ, and as a result, there is going to be a delay. In the meantime, each side has agreed to send experts to Washington to meet us and provide their comments on the draft.'

There were no breakthroughs at the March 26 meeting between Clinton and Asad in Geneva and it appeared that from the American side at least none were expected." (HRW December 2000, "International Community")

"[N]egotiations remained deadlocked at year's end: Syria maintained that it would only discuss security arrangements and other issues after Israel agreed unconditionally to withdraw from the Golan Heights: Israel said it would agree to relinquish the Golan only if it could first be satisfied that a peace deal would adequately provide for security and address other issues, such as access to water." (USCR 2000, p.203)

"Three different lines marked the boundary between Syria and Israel before the Six Day War: the international border from the Mandate period, the armistice line, and the deployment of forces line on 4 June 1967, from which the Six Day War opened. The Israeli politicians who talk about a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights such as ministers Shimon Peres, Yossi Sarid, and Shulamit Aloni are proposing a withdrawal to the international border, the easternmost of the three lines, and the best for Israel. The armistice line is the westernmost, and the most comfortable for the Syrians; the June 4 line passes between them, and leaves in Syrian hands areas they seized control of by force during the 1950's." (Ben-Nahum 19 Dec 1995)

Syrian government's reasons for breaking third round of negotiations

"Interviews with the Syrian Foreign Minister, Faruq Al-Shara, in the Lebanese daily Al-Safir on January 19 [...] gave detailed accounts of the Syrian reasons for breaking the third round of negotiations in the U.S. and presented Syrian complaints against Israel and the U.S.: [...]

'We were waiting for the Americans to inform us that the Israeli side was ready to enter into negotiations on... [Israeli] acceptance of the principle of withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 line,' Foreign Minister Al-Shara stated. 'Without this commitment, our return to the talks would be in vain. We are not fans of negotiating for the sake of negotiating. We bore Barak's procrastination and were patient with his unending attempts to delay convening the Borders Committee and the discussion of the withdrawal for a long time. The American host hinted to us that we must give him more time and that we must understand his sensitive domestic situation.'

'[However], the Israeli side did not show up for the first meeting of the Borders Committee. When they [finally] showed up, on the last day of the talks, it became totally clear to us that they came to polemicize and evade the heart of the matter. We informed the Americans very clearly... that we might not return [to the US to resume the negotiations] if we did not sense a serious Israeli intention to enter into the central issue: The withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 line. There will be no resumption of the negotiations without an Israeli confirmation of the principle of withdrawal. We assumed that the Americans had received such a commitment...' (MEMRI 23 January 2000)

Note: "[U]nlike the 1923 Anglo-French international border, which is 10 meters back from the northeast shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, the 1967 line touches the water." (Gold 7 January 2000)

Amoz Oz, Prominent Peace Camp Israeli Intellectual's position (reported by Israeli paper Ha'Aretz, March 2000)

"Israel must insist on two conditions. First, the basis for the agreement will be the international [1923] border. My rejection of the June 4 [1967] line is based on international law which deems illegal the acquisition of territory by force. For us to agree to the June 4 line would mean to accept that Syria will take lands it acquired by force [in 1948] in contravention of international law. It is an absurdity that cries to the heavens that the Syrians demand that international law must apply against Israel but not to Syria. I object to the Syrians annexing a single meter of non-Syrian territory...'

'[The second demand is that] Israel's withdrawal to the international border will only occur if there is a genuine expression of change in Syria's attitude toward Israel. To this end I demand from Syria not just demilitarization arrangements, security and diplomatic relations but also to call a meeting of the Arab League and pass a resolution declaring that with the signing of a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement, the armed conflict between the Arabs and Israel is over...that remaining disagreements, for example over Jerusalem, the Palestine issue and the refugees, will be settled by peaceful means." (MEMRI 24 March 2000)

No improvement of relations between Syria and Israel as of mid-2002

- Early 2001 new Syrian President affirmed that the Syrian position on the Golan Heights was the same as his father's
- In May 2001, Pope John Paul II visited the remains of the town of Kuneitra
- In 2002, reports say that Syria is maintaining pressure on Israel through the Lebanese guerrilla movement Hezbollah

"**2000** June - Assad dies and is succeeded by his son, Bashar, soon afterwards." (BBC News 19 March 2002)

In an interview given by Syrian President Bashar Assad, to the London daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, President "Bashar clear stated that the Syrian position on the Golan Heights is the same as his father's: 'I have not taken anything out nor have I not added anything. President Hafez Assad did not give in, and neither shall we; neither today nor in the future.' President Bashar made the same demands his father made: Israeli withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 line, including the Eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, as a prerequisite for discussions on any other issue - such as water. Peace with Israel, Bashar stressed, must be 'comprehensive,' thereby ruling out any possibility for peaceful relations between Syria and Israel before the Palestinian problem is solved." (MEMRI 16 February 2001)

2001 May- "Pope John Paul II, visiting the war-ravaged remains of this Golan Heights ghost town [ie Kuneitra], called today for a 'conversion of heart' among all parties in the Middle East conflict to bring peace to a region so frequently beset by war." (Schneider 8 May 2001)

2002- "Fears are growing of a new military front opening in the Middle East, across Israel's northern border with Lebanon.

Such a development would turn the conflict into a more dangerous regional war, probably drawing in both Lebanon and Syria, and perhaps other nations.

In recent days, guerrillas of the Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah movement have increased their sporadic attacks on Israeli positions across a disputed area of the border.[...]

Most Lebanese, including their own government, desperately want to avoid their country being sucked into the conflict.

However, Lebanon is effectively controlled by its larger neighbour Syria, which along with Iran sponsors Hezbollah.

Damascus is frustrated with Israel's actions in the West Bank and Gaza, and also yearns for Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights - a vast Syrian mountain plateau occupied since 1967.

Syria has long allowed Hezbollah to launch small cross-border attacks to maintain "military pressure".

However, analysts believe the ferocity of the Israeli offensive against the Palestinians in recent weeks has prompted Syria to let Hezbollah off the leash.[...]

Syria is under international pressure to rein in Hezbollah.

Since January, Syria has held a two-year seat on the 15-member UN Security Council, and this is being used as a channel to apply diplomatic pressure.

Moderate Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan will also use their influence to try and curb Hezbollah's attacks." (BBC News 3 April 2002)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

Estimates of IDPs in 1967 varied between 75,000 to 155,000 (1997-2002)

- Non official Israeli sources estimate that 70,000 to 75,000 people were displaced in 1967 from the Golan
- Government Syrian sources numbers vary between 130,000 and 155,000
- Today, Syria claims that those displaced and their descendants number nearly half a million

"In 1967 Israel occupied much of the Jawlan district of the country, commonly if somewhat misleadingly referred to as the 'Golan heights', displacing almost all the population, including the inhabitants of the large town of Quneitra. The number of those displaced have always been disputed, varying from Israeli estimates of 75,000 to Syrian figures of 155,000. Syria claims that those displaced and their descendants now number nearly half a million. A more realistic figure may be 200,000. About 150,000 Syrians, mainly Druze villagers, have remained under Israeli occupation; most have resisted the offer of Israeli citizenship." (Dammers 1998, p.189)

"Except for some Druze villagers who stayed behind, most of the Syrian population of the Golan Heights fled in 1967. Estimates of their original numbers vary. While Israel says that about 70,000 left, Syria puts the original number at 153,000 and asserts that the number has grown to almost 500,000, 34 years later." (USCR 2002)

According to the Syrian government:

"Through its settlement occupation, Israel razed to earth more than 244 villages and private property of the Golan. Only five Syrian villages have been left. The Syrian population also dwindled to almost twenty thousands out of about 150 thousands before occupation in June 1967 [...]." (Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UN 1997)

"According to the 1995 statistics, the population of the Qunaytra district was 450,000 people representing 3.2% of the total population of Syria. Density was 240 persons per square kilometer. However, after the Zionist aggression of 1967, the greater part of the Golan population which was 152,000, were kicked out of their homes [...]." (Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of Information 2001 "The Golan")

"[A]ccording to Madhat Saleh Al-Saleh, member of [the Syrian] parliament, there were 249 Arab villages there [in the Golan]. After the Israelis occupied the area, 244 of those villages were destroyed and the 147,000 inhabitants forced to leave." (Fecci June 2000)

No clear estimate of number of inhabitants of the Golan Heights before 1967 (1989-2001)

- Inhabitants of the Golan prior to 1967 were Sunni and Christians, Beduins, Cherkeshians, Turks, Druze and Alawites and numbered about 75,000 according to a 1958 survey
- Encarta Encyclopedia reports approximately 100,000 Syrians in the Golan before 1967
- The Syrian government reports that there were 152,000 people in the Golan prior to 1967

According to a 1958 Syrian survey quoted by an Israeli author, Mike Livne:

"Southern Golan – 17,000 mainly Sunni and some Christians

Bteha (Sea of Galilee) – 8000 Beduins

Northern Golan; 13,356 Cherkeshians

12650 Old Turks

1040 New Turks

7000 Druz

4400 Alawite

Other Beduins"

(Livne 1989)

According to Encarta Encyclopedia, "Prior to 1967 the Golan Heights was home to approximately 100,000 Syrians, many of whom were of Druze or Circassian ethnicity. The principal religions of the Golan were the Druze religion and the Sunni and Alawite sects of Islam. Much of the population was involved in supporting Syrian-army bases located in the region. When Israel drove the Syrian army from the Golan in the Six-Day War, most of the local population fled into Syria. Several thousand members of the Druze community remained, however, as well as a small number of Alawites." (Encarta 2000)

According to the Syrian government, "after the Zionist aggression of 1967, the greater part of the Golan population which was 152000, were kicked out of their homes. [...] Qunaytra was the main Population center in the Golan Before 1967. Its inhabitants were 53'000 [...]." (Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of Information 2001)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Different accounts on whether Golan inhabitants were forcefully expelled or whether they fled (1997-2002)

- According to the Syrian government, many inhabitants of the Golan were expelled by Israeli forces
- According to the Israelis, the inhabitants of Kuneitra fled before the Israeli army arrived to that city
- USCR reports that the inhabitants fled but also that the Israelis leveled the city of Kuneitra with bulldozers and dynamite before giving it back to Syria in 1974

"Only five Syrian villages still remain in the part of Golan that Israel occupies. These villages, in the mountainous north of Golan, were spared because U.N. forces arrived before they could be destroyed." (Fecci June 2000)

According to the Syrian Government

"Through its settlement occupation, Israel razed to earth more than 244 villages and private property of the Golan. Only five Syrian villages have been left." (Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations 11 March 1997)

"Since 1948, the Syrian Arab Republic [...] has been subjected, like other neighbouring Arab States, to a real threat of war by Israel and, on many occasions, this threat of war has culminated in actual aggression against the territory [...], particularly in 1967 when Israel seized part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, which it is still occupying, and expelled a large proportion of its population." (UN Human Rights Committee 25 August 2000, para.49)

According to the Israeli National Council for the Golan

In the 1967 Six Day War, in response to Syrian attacks, the IDF captured the Golan Heights in just over 24 hours of hard fighting on June 9-10. Nearly all of the Golan's Arab inhabitants fled as a result of the war; four Druze villages remain, three on the slopes of Mt. Hermon and one in the northern Golan. There is also a small Sunni Muslim village at Wassif." (National Council for the Golan December 1997, "History")

According to the Jerusalem Post

"That morning [10 June 1967], however, Radio Damascus issued the false report that Kuneitra had fallen to Israeli forces, perhaps a desperate bid to force an intervention by the Soviets, who might have feared for the safety of Damascus. In any case, the report prompted Syrian forces to flee in panic back toward Damascus, leaving Kuneitra indeed open for the Israelis. Dayan ordered the army to push on and take Kuneitra, with the final cease-fire taking effect at 6:30 p.m." (Arnold 1 February 2000)

According to USCR

"Except for some Druze villagers who stayed behind, most of the Syrian population of the Golan Heights fled in 1967. [...] After the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Israel agreed to return a slice of territory along the eastern edge of the Golan Heights, extending to Kuneitra, the one-time capital of Golan Province, in return for a repatriation of Israeli POWs [Prisoners of War]. Before leaving, however, the Israelis leveled the city

with bulldozers and dynamite. Although its 53,000 displaced residents had been expected to return, President Assad said that the city was uninhabitable, and it remained empty." (USCR 2002)

Syrian survey reports that half of the displaced from Kuneitra now live in Damascus area (2002)

"Qunitra accounts for almost three percent of those living in Damascus Mohafaza [governorates or provinces], and Homs one percent - and these are the largest contributors to the current make up of this Mohafaza.[...]

The outflow rates from the Qunitra and the Capital are particularly large. In the case of Qunitra, war-related displacement is evident, and less than 40 percent of those originating from Qunitra are living there. The rest are scattered among many Mohafazas, but the largest concentration is in the Damascus Mohafaza, amounting to about 38 percent. In fact, about half of those originating from Qunitra live in the Damascus City and its Mohafaza.[...]

In the 1960s, "Qunitra accounted for a fifth of all out-migrants, owing to the special circumstances of the war." (Khawaja 2002,pp28,31,46)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

State of emergency maintained since 1963 due to state of war with Israel and past internal threats (2002)

"The powerful role of the security services in government, which extends beyond strictly security matters, stems in part from the state of emergency that has been in place almost continuously since 1963. The Government justifies martial law because of the state of war with Israel and past threats from terrorist groups. Syrian Military Intelligence and Air Force Intelligence are military agencies, while General Security, State Security, and Political Security come under the purview of the Ministry of Interior. The branches of the security services operate independently of each other and outside the legal system. Their members commit serious human rights abuses.[...]

"The [Syrian] Government limits freedom of movement. The Government restricts travel near the Golan Heights. Travel to Israel is illegal." (US DOS 4 March 2002)

For more information on the human rights situation in Syria, please see HRW 2002, World Report 2001, Syria [see reference below]

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

Shelter

Internally displaced persons camps set up around Syria (2000-2002)

- The displaced were resettled into 10 new villages close to the Golan and into housing projects in the suburbs of Damascus, Dara, and Homs
- The Syrian government defines the dwelling of the displaced as temporary camps
- In the town of "new Bteha", the displaced were reported to be given priority for public service jobs and places in university

"The Syrian government did rebuild 10 villages in the territory adjacent to the Golan returned to Syria in 1973, where it resettled about 60,000 displaced Golan residents. The remaining Syrian displaced and their progeny, as many as 400,000 people in 2001, lived in government housing projects in the suburbs of Damascus, Dara, and Homs." (USCR 2002)

[The displaced persons] "are now living in temporal [sic] camps around Damascus and other Syrian cities." (Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of Information 2001, "The Golan")

"The displaced Golanis and their families now number about 500,000, most still living together in the places where their Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps were set up around Syria." (Fecci June 2000)

Remembering the Golan, life in the camp of 'Bteha':

"Three men excitedly hunch over a map of the Golan in Sati al-Ahmad's office. They are marking the place where their village used to be – just near the eastern bank of Lake Tiberius [or sea of Galilee].

For over 30 years these men have been temporary residents of what started out as an IDP camp near Damascus. They gave their camp the name of Bteha, which was the name of their village. The streets, too, are named after those of Bteha. The village itself was destroyed in 1967. [...]

The government has tried to ameliorate the conditions of the Golan refugees. They were given priority for public service jobs and places in university. While their children were able to adapt, the older generation has remained set in the traditional ways of the fellah [farmer].

When they were first displaced, the 'new' Bteha was a refugee camp. Over the years the government built permanent dwellings for the residents. However, according to Antoine Chamoun, 'the people refused to live in apartments. They wanted to reconstruct and live as they had been, in small villages of 10 families. But building a village costs more than building an apartment block.

The original simple single-family houses the government eventually built have been expanded by residents as their family size grew. Now there are 22,000 people living in 'new' Bteha. (Fecci June 2000)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Little hope for the displaced to recover property in the Golan Heights (2000-2002)

- The UN Commission on Human Rights urges Israel to let the displaced recover their property in the Golan
- The fact that about 17,000 Israelis have resettled in the Golan since 1967 and that most of the villages of the displaced have been destroyed may complicate property issues
- Israeli efforts to develop infrastructure in the Golan continue, as negotiations between Israel and Syria are deadlocked

The Commission on Human Rights:

"Also calls upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and emphasizes that the displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and to recover their properties" (CHR 28 March 2002)

"This mountainous stretch of land [...] has become home to some 17,000 Israeli settlers [...]." (BBC 4 January 2000)

The Israelis live in approximately 32 agricultural communities in the southern Golan Heights. Many Israeli army officers stationed at military bases in the Golan Heights have settled their families in the government-planned town of Katzrin." (Encarta 2000)

"Through its settlement occupation, Israel razed to earth more than 244 villages and private property of the Golan. Only five Syrian villages have been left." (Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations 11 March 1997)

Following breakdown of negotiations, lifting of restriction to built on the Golan

"The Israeli government has lifted all restrictions on developments on the occupied Golan Heights following the deadlock in peace talks on returning the strategic area to Syria.

A senior adviser to Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Yossi Kucik, told a settlers' council that all building programmes which had been suspended due to the peace talks could now proceed. These include the construction of roads, sewage systems and the expansion of facilities at two resorts." (BBC News 13 April 2000)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National political response

Syria presented its concerns on the Golan to the UN Commission on Human Rights (1997)

- According to the Syrian government, Israel confiscated the land, farms, livestock and property of its Syrian inhabitants, expelled them from their land and replaced them by Jewish settlers

"The Special Committee's reports, the most recent of which you have before you, confirm that the Israeli colonial occupation authorities are progressively tightening their grip on the territory and the population of the Golan through a series of enactments and measures designed to Judaize and annex the Golan. These measures include confiscation of the land, farms, livestock and property of its Syrian inhabitants, expulsion of the latter from their homes and their land, their replacement by Jewish settlers, the construction of settlements to accommodate those settlers, their subsequent expansion to receive more settlers and the establishment of military settlements to consolidate the occupation and colonization. This has entailed the destruction of all but five of the villages in the Golan, of which there used to be more than 240, and the expulsion of their Syrian inhabitants, numbering more than 160,000, with the exception of about 20,000 living in the five remaining villages." (Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UN 11 March 1997)

UN Response

The UN continue to demand that Israel gives the Golan back to Syria (2002)

- Each year the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR) asks Israel not to change the Golan's physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status
- CHR resolutions also emphasized the need to allow the displaced to return to their homes and recover their property
- CHR determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel to alter the character and legal status of the Golan were null and void

The Commission on Human Rights:

"1. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, particularly resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council, *inter alia*, decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision;

2. *Also calls upon* Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and emphasizes that the displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and to recover their properties;

3. *Further calls upon* Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and to desist from its repressive measures against them, and from all other practices mentioned in 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;

4. *Determines* that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and have no legal effect;

5. *Calls once again upon* Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to above; " (CHR 28 March 2002)

To view past UN resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of the Golan and the need for Israel to allow displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan to return to their homes and to recover their property: "Documents on mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General on Human Rights in the Occupied Syrian Golan" [External Link]

UN Response to the wars of 1967 and of 1973 and to the Israeli annexing of the Golan in 1981

- UN SC Resolution 242 (1967) called for the Israeli armed forces' withdrawal of occupied territories and for the respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty of every State in the area
- UN SC Resolution 338 (1973) called for a cease-fire, the implementation of UN Resolution 242 and negotiations
- UN SC Resolution 350 (1974) set up the UN Disengagement Observer Force between Syria and Israel
- UN SC Resolution 497 (1981) decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect

UN Response to 1967 War

"Following the June '67, Six-Day War, the situation in the Middle East was discussed by the UN General Assembly, which referred the issue to the Security Council. After lengthy discussion, a final draft for a Security Council resolution was presented by the British Ambassador, Lord Caradon, on November 22, 1967. It was adopted on the same day.

This resolution, numbered 242, established provisions and principles which, it was hoped, would lead to a solution of the conflict. Resolution 242 was to become the cornerstone of Middle East diplomatic efforts in the coming decades.

Excerpt of the 242 resolution

" The Security Council, [...]

1. Affirms that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
2. Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
3. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live

in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force. [...]" (Ariga 2001, "242")

UN Response to 1973 War

"On 6 October 1973 war erupted in the Middle East between Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Suez Canal area and the Sinai, and between Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights." (UN 2001, "UNDOF")

"In the later stages of the Yom Kippur War – after Israel repulsed the Syrian attack on the Golan Heights and established a bridgehead on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal – international efforts to stop the fighting were intensified. US Secretary of State Kissinger flew to Moscow on October 20 [1973], and, together with the Soviet Government, the US proposed a cease-fire resolution in the UN Security Council. The Council met on 21 October at the urgent request of both the US and the USSR, and by 14 votes to none, adopted [Resolution 338]." (Ariga 2001, "338")

Text of UN SC resolution 338 (1973)

"The Security Council,

1. Calls upon all parties to present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, no later than 12 hours after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions they now occupy;
2. Calls upon all parties concerned to start immediately after the cease-fire the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts;
3. Decides that, immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East." (United Nations 22 October 1973)

The creation of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in 1974

"In the Israel-Syria sector tension remained high, and from March 1974 the situation became increasingly unstable. Against this background, the United States undertook a diplomatic initiative, which resulted in the conclusion of an Agreement on Disengagement (S/11302/Add.1, annexes I and II) between Israeli and Syrian forces. The Agreement provided for an area of separation and for two equal zones of limited forces and armaments on both sides of the area, and called for the establishment of a United Nations observer force to supervise its implementation. The Agreement was signed on 31 May 1974 and, on the same day, the Security Council adopted resolution 350 (1974) by which it set up the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The Force has since performed its functions effectively, with the cooperation of the parties. The situation in the Israel-Syria sector has remained quiet. Both parties cooperate fully with the mission and for a number of years there have been no serious incidents. [...]"

Under the prevailing circumstances, [the UN Secretary-General] says, the continued presence of UNDOF in the area is essential. He recommends that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 May 2001. At the same time, he draws attention to the shortfall in the funding of the Force. At present, unpaid assessments amount to some \$21.9 million. This sum represents money owed to the Member States that contribute the troops who make up the Force. The Secretary-General appeals to member States to pay their assessments promptly and in full and to clear all remaining arrears." (UN 2001, "UNDOF")

To view the full text of UN SC Resolution 350 (31 May 1974), which set up UNDOF: [External Link]
<http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1974/74r350e.pdf>

To view the UNDOF homepage [External Link]
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UN Response to 1981 Annexing by Israel of the Golan Heights: Excerpt of UN SC Resolution 497 (1981)

"The Security Council [...]

1. Decides that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect;
2. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, should rescind forthwith its decision. [...]" (UN SC 17 December 1981)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CHR	United Commission on Human Rights
IDF	Israel Defense Force
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
UN	United Nations
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UN GA	United Nations General Assembly
UN SC	United Nations Security Council

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