

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*):

We condemn Mr. Mladenov's continued failure to deal with the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan and with ongoing Israeli violations and practices there, which are part of this particular agenda item. They also form an integral part of Mr. Mladenov's mandate as Special Coordinator.

This debate coincides with the upcoming 50-year anniversary of Israel's occupation of Arab territories. That includes systematic and documented violations by Israel of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The international community has not taken real steps to end the occupation, which has encouraged Israel to escalate its aggression and its unprecedented settlement policy, the latest illustration of which is the bill seeking to legalize the outposts.

The Security Council should immediately implement resolution 2334 (2016). That resolution, which was adopted weeks ago, condemns settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory. The resolution should also apply to Israeli occupation policies in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Israeli Government decided to establish 19 new districts and 400 housing units in Katzrin settlement, built on the ruins of the Syrian village of Kasreen, and has increased the settlers' numbers in the occupied Syrian Golan by adding 750 farms. Those are matters not covered by Mr. Mladenov in his briefing.

Syria has a principled position in support of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to an independent State on all of its national territory,

with Jerusalem as its capital, and to the right of return in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948. The war from which we suffer in Syria is due in large part to our refusal to succumb to pressure to relinquish our support for the Palestinian people and their just cause.

Israel still refuses to return the occupied Syrian Golan to our homeland of Syria. Moreover, Israel has not implemented resolution 497 (1981). It continues systematically to violate international humanitarian law and human rights law with respect to our people in the occupied Syrian Golan, with a view to erasing the Syrian identity of the Golan and separating it from the Syrian motherland. Israel has confiscated land, expanded settlements and demolished homes. Recently, that Government demolished the home of citizen Bassam Ibrahim. Israel also arrested an elderly man, aged 70, named Asa'ad Al-Waly, who died days ago in an Israeli prison after being sentenced to eight months of imprisonment for building a home on his own land. That is a violation of international law, which prohibits any occupying forces from confiscating the property of the citizens of occupied territory, in this case the Golan. The Golan is Arab Syrian land that Syrians have inherited from their ancestors.

Israel continues looting the resources of the Golan, distorting its history and plundering its antiquities, and has planted more than 20 million land mines. It has deprived steadfast Syrians on their territory of the right to study using the Syrian national education curriculum in Arabic. It has deprived them of the right to carry Syrian identity cards and the to build national Syrian hospitals. Israel continues its arrest and coercion policy, victimizing scores of Syrians in the Golan. The Syrian Government calls for pressuring Israel for the immediate release from prison of Sidqui Al-Maqt — the Syrian Mandela — and his co-prisoners Iyad Al-Johari and Amal Abu Saleh, who are being held in inhumane conditions in Israeli detention centres, as well as rescinding the unjust sentences of Amal Abu Saleh and a female prisoner, Bashira Mahmoud.

Since the beginning of the events in Syria, Israel, the occupying Power, has added a new chapter to its annals of terrorist aggression, in direct violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and Security Council resolutions, in particular those resolutions concerning counter-terrorism. It has provided support of all kinds to armed terrorist groups in the area of separation in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, facilitating their crossing of the ceasefire line. It treats wounded terrorists in its hospitals with a view to allowing them to return to Syria and continue their terrorist activities. It has built a two-kilometre berm that crosses the ceasefire line, with illegal gates for use by armed terrorist groups, to the great concern of the Syrian Government and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. That is well known to the member States of the Council, but apparently not to Mr. Mladenov.

While continuing its terrorism, policies of aggression and defiance of international laws, norms and resolutions and its support to terrorist groups, Israel perpetrated a new, treacherous act of aggression against the territory of Syria after midnight on 13 January. The launch of a large number missiles by its warplanes north of Lake Tiberias, led to a fire on the periphery of Al-Mezzeh airport in Damascus. Apparently Mr. Mladenov and the United Nations do not know about that particular act of aggression. This illustrates that Israel and terrorism are two sides of the same coins.

We call upon the Security Council to take immediate action to punish Israel for its aggression and to prevent it from being repeated. The Security Council is also called upon to take immediate action against Israel and force it to end its aggression and violations and its occupation of the occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and to withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967 in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 497 (1981) and 2334 (2016). We reiterate that Syria has a sovereign right over the occupied Syrian Golan up to the line of 4 June 1967. It is not a right that is up for negotiation, nor can it be waived. We are not asking for concessions from Israel, which it

describes as painful. We are referring to lands and rights that have been usurped and should be restored to their rightful owners and holders. Israeli settlers will have to leave our land in Golan sooner or later.

In conclusion, we reject the attempts by some delegations to undermine the substance of the item on today's agenda, which is dedicated to discussing how to end the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, including the Syrian Golan, and not to attempts to mislead the Council through the discussion of the internal affairs of countries. Not wanting to be part of those reprehensible attempts,

I will not reply or respond to the false allegations made by certain countries, especially those that harbour, support and finance terrorists, or that promote sabotage and extremism in Syria and are working hard to derail any peaceful solution to this crisis by intervening in our internal affairs — in particular Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, the United States, France and others. They use the diaspora of global terrorism as a political tool to put pressure on my Government to change its choices and positions.