



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 11 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to set out the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) over the period from 4 September to 19 November 2014 ([S/2014/859](#)).

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it is committed to its obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and has accordingly respected the mandate of UNDOF and facilitated its work in every way. For over four decades, for as long as Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan, the Government has cooperated and coordinated closely and fully with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF command. It therefore welcomes the fact that paragraph 32 of the report notes its assistance in facilitating the provision of essential supplies in support of the Force to ensure that it continues implementing its mandate safely and securely.
- The Government stresses that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF is therefore present on a temporary basis until such a time as Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan comes to an end in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 497 (1981), and Israel withdraws fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.
- Israel, however, has persisted in its repeated violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. On Sunday, 7 December 2014, Israel committed yet another criminal aggression against the territory and sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic. Israeli warplanes bombed two civilian areas of Rif Dimashq, namely, Dimas and Damascus airport. UNDOF personnel observed the aircraft at positions 45 and 80 crossing the ceasefire line northward towards Damascus in order to carry out the attack. UNDOF informed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York of the aggression, which is part of a systematic policy that is being pursued by Israel to cover up the various types of support it provides to armed terrorist groups in various locations. It is also meant to cover up internal Israeli divisions and draw attention away from the collapse of the Israeli coalition Government and



Israel's extreme policies, particularly its continued occupation of Arab territory and its ongoing violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. In an earlier attack, Israel shot down a Syrian warplane east of the ceasefire line. Paragraph 3 of the report states that, on 23 September, in the morning, Israel informed UNDOF that it had shot down a Syrian air force aircraft, alleging that it had crossed the ceasefire line. United Nations personnel did not observe the fighter aircraft over the area of separation or crossing the ceasefire line but saw a mid-air explosion followed by debris falling to the ground in an area east of Jaba in the area of limitation on the Bravo side.

- During the current crisis in Syria, Israel has added a new chapter to the annals of its aggressions and violations by supporting *takfirist* terrorists in the area of separation in the occupied Syrian Golan. The recent events, which led UNDOF to withdraw temporarily from certain positions, were no coincidence. Rather, they confirm Syria's persistent warnings that by providing logistical and intelligence support for armed terrorists from the Nusra Front and other terrorist groups, Israel, Qatar and Turkey have not only flagrantly violated the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, international law and United Nations resolutions; they have also jeopardized the lives of United Nations personnel and undermined the Force's mandate and its capacity to fulfil its functions as prescribed. The reports of the Secretariat, including the most recent report, state that Israel has directly supported armed terrorist groups. Paragraph 12 of the report states that the Israeli Army opened the technical fence gate and let two individuals pass from the Bravo to the Alpha side. It also states that UNDOF observed armed members of the opposition interacting with the Israeli Army across the ceasefire line in the vicinity of United Nations position 85. Israel's direct support for the armed terrorist groups, including the Nusra Front, has been one reason for their growing strength, which has enabled them on several occasions to shoot at and abduct peacekeepers, target their positions and compel them by force of arms to withdraw. The following are some examples of the crimes of the armed terrorist groups, as detailed in the report:
 - Paragraphs 4 and 6 of the report state that 45 UNDOF peacekeepers who had been detained by the terrorist Nusra Front since 28 August 2014 were released on 11 September. Paragraph 8 welcomes the support provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in ensuring the safe evacuation of peacekeepers.
 - Paragraph 4 states that on 4 September, "armed groups" launched coordinated heavy attacks in a number of towns in the area of limitation using tanks, artillery, mortar and rocket fire.
 - Paragraph 5 highlights the threat that the terrorist Nusra Front poses to the Force and its personnel. It refers to indications that the Nusra Front intends to detain additional UNDOF personnel and take from UNDOF more weapons and vehicles as opportunities arise.
 - Paragraph 6 states that on 12 September, armed groups, including members of the Nusra Front, using two tanks, artillery and heavy mortars, launched an attack against Syrian Arab armed forces positions along the main road connecting Camp Fawar and Camp Ziwni.

- Paragraph 7 states that armed groups seized a number of vehicles during the incidents involving the detention of the 45 peacekeepers from United Nations position 27 and the confinement of others at positions 68 and 69.
- Paragraph 11 states that on 4 September, “armed groups” launched seven mortar rounds that landed in and near United Nations observation post 56; the rounds were fired from areas known to be strongholds of the armed groups. It also states that on 6 September, two individuals approached observation post 54 and made gestures of cutting throats towards the United Nations personnel at the post, and that the same was reported by United Nations position 80 on 18 October.
- Paragraph 15 states that on various occasions, UNDOF observed up to four tanks in locations controlled by armed groups in the area of separation in addition to armoured personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles and heavy artillery pieces.
- Paragraph 17 states that UNDOF observed a camp containing various tents in the vicinity of Ishah village. It further states that on 23 September, position 80 observed individuals gathered in Ishah village unloading weapons from a truck. Some individuals were in civilian attire and others in camouflage uniforms. A vehicle with a mounted anti-aircraft gun was observed in proximity to the place of unloading. Those facts confirm the point made by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UNDOF Force Commander, namely that the tents had been erected near Ishah not for humanitarian reasons but as a base for terrorists to carry out their terrorist operations.
- Numerous paragraphs of the report recognize the serious crimes committed in the area of separation by armed terrorist groups, including the Nusrah Front. The report also recognizes the groups’ responsibility for the deteriorating situation in the area, including the looting and theft of UNDOF materiel; the threats to behead UNDOF personnel and to detain additional UNDOF personnel and take more weapons and vehicles as opportunities arise; and the attacks on Syrian law enforcement forces. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the fact that the report has documented those issues. At the same time, Syria is disappointed that the Secretariat has not sufficiently addressed the terrorist attacks of the Nusrah Front on United Nations positions, particularly positions 68 and 69. It is also disappointed that the Secretariat has persisted in describing the groups as “armed opposition” or “armed groups”, ignoring the groups’ terrorist nature. In so doing, the Secretariat has contradicted the statement issued on 28 August 2014 by the Security Council. It has also committed a grave violation of Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001) and 2170 (2014).
- Members of the Filipino contingent have been abducted on two occasions. The first incident occurred almost a year ago; the second was the recent incident involving troops from the Filipino and Fijian contingents. Both incidents took place in collusion with Qatar. The United Nations and the international community are aware that Qatar has ties to the terrorist Nusrah Front organization, which it funds and arms. The Syrian Government stresses that the abduction of UNDOF peacekeepers is an unforgivable crime. However, the Nusrah Front criminals would have not taken such action were it not for the

direct encouragement of Qatar and its readiness to pay millions of dollars under the pretext of obtaining the peacekeepers' release. That action constitutes financing of terrorism and a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 2170 (2014) on counter-terrorism and combating the financing of terrorism. It also contravenes Security Council resolution 2133 (2014), which prohibits the payment of ransom to terrorists.

- In view of those facts, it is unacceptable that the Secretariat limits itself to stating, in paragraph 31 of the report, that it is critical that countries with influence continue to strongly convey to the armed groups in the UNDOF area of operations the need to cease any actions that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibility to address this situation without delay in a genuine and focused manner, especially as the concerned officials at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have unjustifiably ignored the warnings and intelligence provided by the Syrian Government over the last few years. The Security Council must immediately counteract those well-known States that support the armed terrorist groups, including the Nusra Front, in order to drive the groups from the area of separation. What is now happening in the area of separation is the inevitable result of two factors. First, the United Nations has ignored the reliable intelligence provided regularly by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the risk posed by the widespread presence of armed terrorist groups in the area of separation. Second, the United Nations has turned a blind eye to the direct support that the groups receive from Israel and certain other States. We also wish to highlight the suffering of our people in the occupied Syrian Golan now that the terrorist Nusra Front has taken control of the Qunaytirah crossing with direct support from the Israeli occupation authorities. That situation has prevented 19 students in the occupied Syrian Golan from crossing to their motherland Syria to continue their university studies.
- Mindful of its obligations, Syria has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to the activities of armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operation. It understands the nature of the region and the obligations that are in force. It reiterates that the actions of Syrian law enforcement forces are a response to an emergency situation arising from exceptional circumstances, namely the terrorist activities of terrorist groups in the area of separation. In numerous places, including paragraphs 4 and 6, the report states that the armed terrorist groups have launched coordinated heavy attacks in a number of towns in the area of limitation using tanks, artillery, mortar and rocket fire. The actions of Syrian law enforcement forces in the area of separation are the very least that the Syrian Government can do in response to appeals from the local population. The latter has borne the brunt of the terrorists' operations, which have also been directed against UNDOF and its personnel. These operations have been conducted with the direct assistance of the Israeli occupation forces, as well as the intelligence services of Arab States and States of the region and beyond, the identities of which are well known to all and sundry.
- The Syrian Government stresses that UNDOF must continue to fulfil its mandate within the context of Security Council resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Syria undertakes to continue supporting UNDOF as it has done over the years, taking into account the points made

above, so that UNDOF personnel can return to their positions in the area of separation securely and in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government. That outcome would enable the Force to fulfil its mandate as prescribed.

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again emphasizes the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF, namely the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. It again calls on the Security Council to take immediate action in order to bring an end to Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan in accordance with Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 497 (1981), which requires Israel to withdraw fully from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Bashar Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations
