

Al-Marsad Reprehends the Participation of the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Israel at the Opening of a Power Plant at the Settlement of Katzrin In the Occupied Syrian Golan

Some Israeli media sites published that the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Zhao Jun had participated at the opening of a power plant by the sun at Katzrin settlement which is located in the occupied Syrian Golan. According to what was published in Hebrew at the “**OMEDIA**” and “**LOCAL**” **Golan and Galilee**, Binyamin Ben Eliezer, minister of National Infrastructure opened, on 08-12-2008, the power plant with the presence of Sami Bar-Lev, the Mayor of Katzrin settlement, and the Chinese Ambassador to Israel Mr. Zhao Jun. “**OMEDIA**” electronic website had published an article in Hebrew titled “Minister Ben Eliezer opens a power plant by the sun in the Golan” and showed a picture of number of participants at the opening, headed by minister Ben Eliezer, Sami Bar- Lev and the Chinese Ambassador to Israel Mr. Zhao Jun.

It is noted that Katzrin settlement is the largest Israeli settlement built in occupied Syrian Golan, in the context of a wide and planned settlement project with the purpose of tearing down the residential and constructional situation which was in the Golan before the occupation. The area was inhabited by around 138 thousand Syrian citizens, who used to live in the occupied part of it, and they were distributed in around 300 residential centers, villages and towns, in addition to two cities: Al-Quneitra and Fik. The occupation forces forced around 131 thousand inhabitant to move inside Syria, and destroyed in a wide destruction operation all the villages and towns where they used to live. The occupation forces established on the ruins of these villages and towns Israeli settlements, while only 7 thousand Syrian citizens remained in five villages located in the far north of the Golan, at the Syrian-Lebanese borders.¹

The total of the Israeli settlements in occupied Golan is 33 settlement, distributed in all the Golan, and are established on the ruins of Syrian villages and towns, whose inhabitants were forcibly transferred, and their properties destroyed and removed. The number of Israeli settlers in Golan is around 19,000 persons, including those living in Katzrin, where 6,000 settler live and which is located in the middle of the Golan. This settlement was built in 1973 on the ruins of Syrian Kasreen village, and where around 474 Syrians used to live before the occupation, and they used to depend on agriculture and raising animals. When the Israeli occupation forces occupied the village, it expelled all its residents and destroyed the village in order to prevent their return to the village. All this was done in the fame of a wide campaign of forcible transfer of civilians, taking over their immovable and movable properties and destroying all villages, towns and farms where they used to live.

¹ The Golan surface is 1,860 km², which 1% of the total surface of Syria. 1,250 km² fall under the Israeli occupation during the June 1967 aggression. About 131 thousand Syrians were uprooted from their land by the occupation forces in 1967 and are now about 500 thousands displaced inside Syria, while the remaining Arab Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan total today 19,000 persons.

The occupied Syrian Golan is under continuous Israeli military occupation since 1967, and the international community represented by the United Nations constantly confirms the necessity for Israel to end its occupation of the Golan, and the illegality of imposing Israeli laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan. As well, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force under international law and the UN Charter, and the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the occupied Syrian Golan. And it requested from Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements. It confirmed as well, that all these measures are null and void since they are illegal and violate the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and they do not have any legal effect. As well, it requested from members of the United Nations not to recognize any of the up mentioned legislative or administrative measures.²

In spite of the international position from the continuous Israeli military occupation of the Syrian Golan since 1967: and the demand to end it, and the consideration of all measures taken by Israel, the Occupying Power, vis-a vis this Syrian territory null and void, including the establishment of settlements and the transfer of the settlers to live in it, and at the time when the efforts of the civil society and human rights organizations on the international level call for the end of Israeli occupation for the Arab territories, and to stop of the support for the settlements and to boycott its products, and to withdraw the investments in the settlements, we denounce the visit of the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Israel, Mr. Zhao Jun, to Katzrin settlement and his participation at the opening of the power plant.

In light of the applicability of the rules and provisions of Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, on the occupied Syrian Golan, and which confirms the principle of having the High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances, and prohibits the establishment of the settlements in the occupied territories as stipulated in article 49 of the same convention, and which states "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive". The same Convention prohibits the destruction and the violation of properties in a manner which is not justified by a military necessity and on a wild scale in an illegal and arbitrary manner. As well the Occupying Power may not transfer or move part of its civilian population to the territories it occupies.

Al-Marsad - the Arab Center for human rights in occupied Syrian Golan, denounces the visit of the Ambassador of the Popular Republic of China to Katzrin settlement and his

² See General Assembly Resolution number 52/68, issued on the 10th of December 1997, in the 52nd session of the General Assembly.

participation at the opening of the power plant at the Israeli settlement of Katzrin, calls upon the government of the People's Republic of China to abide by its obligations set in the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to condemn the continuous Israeli occupation forces' policy of building and expanding the settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Al- Marsad calls upon the government of People's Republic of China to stop any act or activity, whether material or moral, which ignores the illegal policy of settlements in occupied Syrian Golan, or contributes to the support and encouragement of such acts and calls upon it to apologies for the participation of its Ambassador to Israel in this action, since it represents an disregard of the Israeli occupation's illegal policies such as the forcible transfer of civilian population, the destruction of their houses and properties in a manner which is not justified by a military necessity, and establishment of settlements and the annexation of the occupied territory, which all violates relevant international law resolutions regarding the occupied Golan and violates the principles of contemporary international law concerning the prohibition of the use of force by the states or the threat of its use for the purpose of controlling others' land and annexing it. Besides the recognition of people's rights for self-determination, and the opposition of the hegemony and the maintenance of international peace, as well, this contradicts with the declared principles and bases of the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China, which is founded on the establishment and the development of friendly and cooperative relations in all countries based on mutual respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the restrain from assaulting the others, and intervene in the domestic jurisdiction of any state and equity.

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