

18 April 2019

Frederica Mogherini,
High Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy /
Vice President of the Commission

Johannes Hahn,
Commissioner, European
Neighborhood Policy &
Enlargement Negotiations

Re: Settlement Expansion in the Occupied Syrian Golan Heights

Dear High Representative Frederica Mogherini & Commissioner Johannes Hahn,

I am writing to you on behalf of Al-Marsad – Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights (“Al-Marsad”) to call your attention to the European Union’s (“EU”) unbalanced approach to highlighting and condemning illegal Israeli settlements in the territories it occupies. Al-Marsad asks that the EU, moving forward, note and condemn Israel’s illegal actions, especially with regards to settlement expansion, in the occupied Syrian Golan.

On April 11th, the EU published a statement addressing new Israeli settlement expansion plans in the occupied West Bank. The statement properly identifies that Israel’s settlements violate international law and erode prospects for lasting peace. However, the statement only addresses illegal Israeli settlement plans for the occupied West Bank, completely ignoring new Israeli plans to massively expand settlements in the occupied Golan.

On April 2nd, it was reported that the Israeli government confirmed an ambitious plan to greatly increase its settlement population in the occupied Golan. The plan calls for 250,000 settlers, a 1000 percent increase in the current settlement population, to be relocated to the occupied Golan. The plan also calls for 30,000 new settlement units to be built and the creation of 45,000 new jobs for Israelis in the occupied Golan.

The EU has clearly and unequivocally announced numerous times in the last few weeks that it views the Syrian Golan as Israeli occupied territory. As the EU acknowledged in its April 11th statement, Israel’s settlement policies are unambiguously unlawful. Thus, it is unclear to Al-Marsad why the EU would so quickly and vehemently reject the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank but ignore settlement expansion plans in the occupied Golan.

Al-Marsad respectfully requests that the EU immediately condemn illegal settlement expansion in the occupied Golan, similarly to how it has condemned settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank. Al-Marsad hopes that the EU, moving forward, refrains from continuing to apply a double standard to its stances on Israeli occupied territories.

Kind regards,



Dr. Nizar Ayoub
Director, Al-Marsad – Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights