

Al-Marsad's annual report of activities 2015

Issued 1 May 2016



**Children playing in their backyard only a few meters away from mined areas,
Majdal Shams – Occupied Syrian Golan**

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1. INTRODUCTION

As the only human rights organization in the occupied Syrian Golan, Al-Marsad aspires to influence policies at the national and international level by calling to uphold respect of international human rights and humanitarian law in the Occupied Golan.

2015 witnessed Al-Marsad becoming a more credible and efficient human rights organization. The local community's confidence in the organization increased as more people approached us to receive legal consultations and to file complaints against various authorities (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Local planning Committees and others) concerning practices that violate their rights. The organization strengthened its relationship with



Board meeting – Al-Marsad office 2015

human rights organizations in Palestine and Israel. Al-Marsad maintain solid relations with Al-haq (Ramallah), Al-Mezan (Gaza), Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinian's Rights in Jerusalem (Jerusalem), Adalah (Haifa), De-Colonizer (Tel Aviv). Al-Marsad

keeps constant contact with these organizations with respect to consultation and cooperation in

defending human rights in the occupied Golan.

This report summarizes Al-Marsad's work during 2015. During the report period, Al-Marsad achieved successes in numerous aspects, such as, legal research, raising awareness and legal aid. During 2015, we witnessed significant increase on the number of direct beneficiaries. Over 140 people received legal consultations, five cases were brought before the Israeli labor court, 8 workshops were conducted for beneficiaries and two test cases on collective rights were prepared for submission to the Israeli courts including the High Court of Justice (HCJ). Moreover, the international internship and field visits programs remained stable, new publications were issued and distributed to audiences by hand, post and posted on Al-Marsad's website.

2. Changes in the organization's activities

There were no radical changes in the daily living situation of the native Syrian community of the Occupied Golan under the prolonged Israeli occupation. However, the ongoing armed conflict in Syria led to the Syrians in the Golan's relationships with Syria proper being cut off. Meanwhile, Israel attempts to benefit from this situation to strengthen its control over the Golan, expand settlements and accelerate the Israelization policies.

As a human rights institution, Al-Marsad urges the Israeli authorities to abide by their obligations enshrined in international human rights and humanitarian law treaties in order to ensure the rights and freedoms of the native Syrian population in the Occupied

Golan as well as ending its discriminatory policies against them. In July 2015 we launched a new scheme consisting of the submission of petitions on collective rights to the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ), legal litigation and representing workers whose rights being violated in the labor courts.

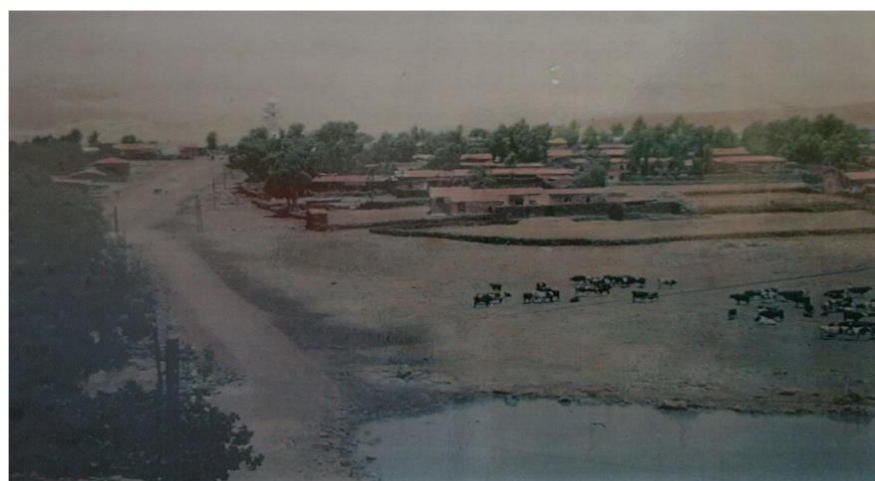
In 2015, Al-Marsad took the initiative to conduct broader legal research with regard to the ongoing armed conflict in Syria. Two studies were finalized during 2015, one on the referral of the Syrian case to the ICC (under editing), and one on the legal aspects of the protection of Syrian refugees (under publication).



Meeting with external evaluation team – Al-Marsad office 2015

The Israeli settlement expansion due to the ongoing civil war in Syria proper demonstrates the occupier's will to retain its occupation of the Golan. Therefore, Al-Marsad is putting more of an emphasis on settlement activities by conducting thorough legal reports; issuing statements, legal submissions to the UN human rights bodies and Op-Ed articles. In addition, Al-Marsad is moving towards establishing a new program of legal consultation and litigation in order to empower the human rights of the native Syrians, focusing on labor rights. 7 cases were brought before the Israeli labor court as a pilot project, and 3 legal petitions are being prepared for submission to the High Court of Justice during 2016.

The village of Al Khushniyeh before it was destroyed by the Israelis following 1967 occupation (archive photo), and the Mosque of Al Khushniyeh abandoned after 1967 war and destroyed by military





The ongoing armed conflict in Syria proper has direct impacts on the native Syrian community, and the future of the Occupied Golan has become more ambiguous as a result of the civil war. As a human rights institution that works under occupation, we feel responsible to tackle this situation and conduct legal research/advocacy work (legal reports, statements, press releases) while considering limited resources and geographical obstacles. Our limited work in this field aims to call upon warring parties to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law and refrain from targeting civilians, journalists, medical and religious services, prisoners of war, wounded and sick combatants.

3. Important changes within the partner organization

In July 2015, the organization decided to expand the legal aid activities and to bring cases before the Israeli courts (High Court of Justice and Labor Court) and to turn it into a permanent program. In addition, Dr. Nazih Brik was assigned as a part-time researcher to observe settlement activities and lay the foundation for conducting a new program focusing on observing settlements, planning discrimination and housing rights. Karama Abu Saleh replaced Abu Alkher Abu Jabal as a lawyer and he focusing on bringing impact litigations before Israeli authorities and courts arguing discriminatory policies and violations of the rights of the native Syrian community of the occupied Golan.

Furthermore, the efforts to expand the organization's general assembly resulted in four new younger members (3 women and one man) joining Al-Marsad, they became regular members in February 2015. So far, the general assembly held its annual meeting for 2015, and decided to organize another meeting in February 2016 to elect a new board with a gender balance in mind. The new members who have recently joined the organization expressed interest in the board membership.

The Board:

A. Committee

1. Atef Safadi, press photographer EPA.
2. Naif Fakhreldeen, M.A Veterinary.
3. Madad Kalani, M.A Communications.

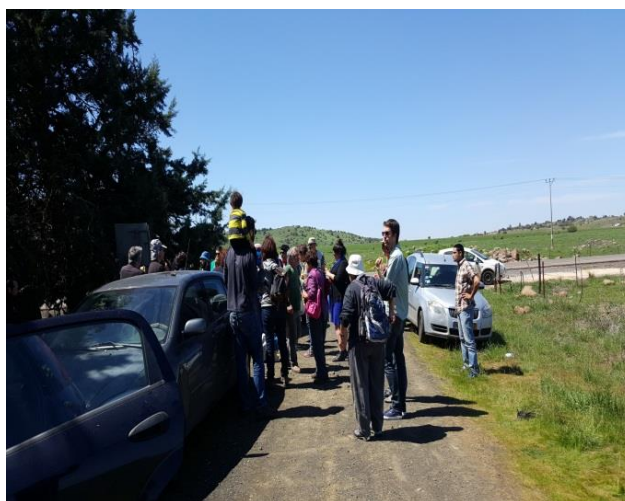
B. Audit Control Committee

4. Madad Ewidat, farmer.
5. Dr. Munir Fakher Eldin, Assistant Professor of Arab Studies at Birzeit University

4. Research reports

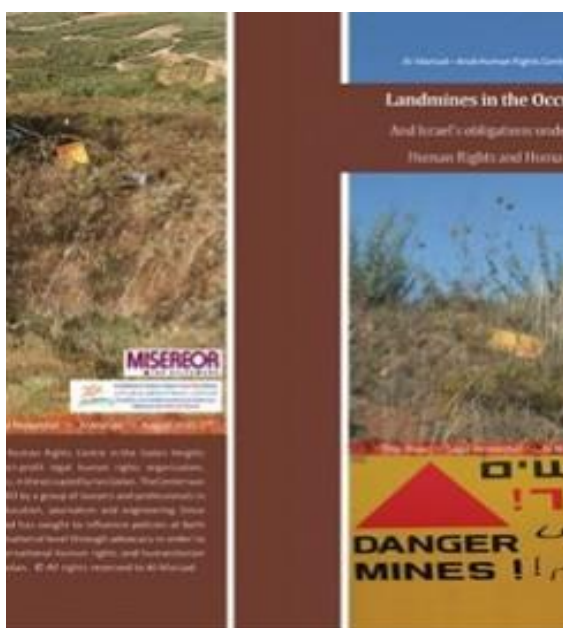
Al-Marsad endeavors to conduct legal research in 2016 focusing on the issues of discriminatory policies against native Syrian residents, settlement expansion, landmines and ID revocation. In addition to a limited legal research being conducted on the armed conflict in Syria proper, few topics were identified beyond the scope of the project such as planning, housing rights and labor rights.

- **Settlement activities:** Al-Marsad is monitoring Israeli settlement expansion and activities in the Occupied Golan. Initial data and interactive maps were achieved/finalized.
- **ID revocation:** Contacting the Israeli Ministry of Interior with regard to ID revocations.
- **Landmines:** Legal research and ongoing contact with Israeli civil and military authorities for the removal of military camps situated inside and around the occupied Syrian villages as well as the cleaning of land mines.



A Human rights field visit conducted by Almarsad

Planning and land rights: An urban planner who joined Al-Marsad (part-time position) in April 2015 is developing a program on discriminatory policies against the Syrian native population with regard to land and planning rights.



One of Al-Marsad last publications“
Landmines in the occupied Golan”



The urban planning of Majdal Shams – Occupied Syrian golan

- An initial data and interactive map on settlements finalized and posted in the website.
- A legal analysis (report) on Israeli practices affecting the legal status of the Occupied Golan in light of the ongoing Syrian conflict (to be published in October). The report's publication was postponed because there was a need to develop it further.
- A case of a children who were refused registry in the population registry Israel was won and all he were registered and got Permanent residency.
- A legal report titled "Landmines in the Occupied Golan" was published and posted in the website (<http://golan-marsad.org/en/landmines-in-the-occupied-golan/>)
- An initial report on the reality of planning and housing rights is being conducted in order to highlight the recent situation and identify the community needs.
- Legal report on the referral of the Syrian situation to the International Criminal court (ICC). We were aiming to publish it in October 2015, but it is still being edited.
- Legal report on the Syrian refugees in Europe: Protection in Principle, Chaos in Practice – forthcoming publication.
- Empowering Al-Marsad's Facebook page.
- Creating a Twitter account (not empowered yet).
- A brochure (know your rights) on workers' rights was published in May 2015 and the distribution of about 3000 copies for the local community is ongoing.
- A brochure (know your rights) on women's workers' rights was finalized in December 2015 and published in January 2016. The distribution of about 3000 copies for the local community is ongoing.
- Recent co-operation between Al-Marsad and the International Federation of human rights (FIDH). Accordingly, a joint position paper on discriminatory planning policies in violation of the rights of the native Syrian community of the Golan and the development of settlements is being conducted by Al-Marsad's team and will be published in Arabic and English. There's also a plan to invite Al-Marsad to introduce the paper in Belgium and other countries. This pilot activity with a prominent international human rights organization will contribute to Al-Marsad's capacity to conduct international advocacy.

- **The armed conflict in Syria proper:**

As a national human rights organization that functions under occupation, we strongly believe in the need to express our position regarding the ongoing military conflict in Syria proper and its devastating impacts on civilians and civilian objectives. Hence, we conduct legal research on issues related to humanitarian intervention and the duty to protect, transitional justice and accountability, refugees and others. During 2015, two legal reports were finalized under the supervision of the director.

- The report under the title: **SYRIAN REFUGEES IN EUROPE: Protection in Principle, Chaos in Practice.**

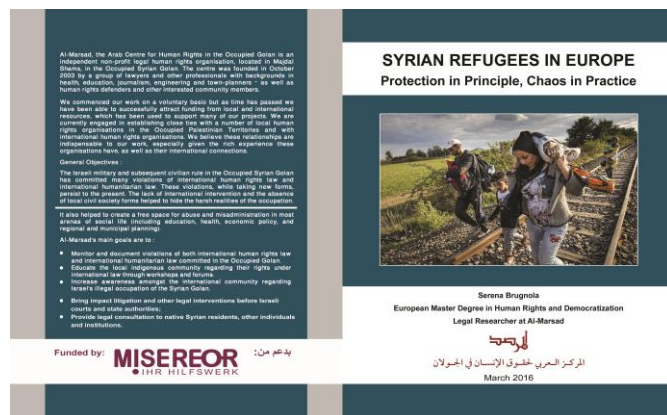
As outlined throughout this report, the present refugee crisis represents a major test for the European Union. Whether Europe will come out of it stronger or defeated depends on its ability to stick to its values of oneness and solidarity, and avoid falling into the easy trap of fear and ignorance, which

lead to racism and Islam phobia. In the meanwhile, Europe cannot allow these homeless refugees to be reduced to the subject of a legal and diplomatic battle, nor can it be allowed to forget that behind all those numbers, statistics, and legal cases, there are unimaginable stories of pain and suffering, there is trauma, there is loss, there are people. The EU needs to remember that improving reception conditions at the border, establishing legal entry possibilities and implementing a harmonized system with quotas for distribution and relocation are only the first (necessary, but insufficient) steps towards a solution. All of this, indeed, needs to be accompanied by a real political effort to ensure the integration of these new citizens in Europe, and to guarantee them a chance to rebuild their lives.

- The second report title: **The Syrian Situation: International Humanitarian Law Violations and the Call for Justice.**

The report is based on publicly available information from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and other local and international organizations of recognized independence. Al-Marsad seeks to raise its voice against the unacceptable impunity that perpetrators of unspeakable crimes have been enjoying in Syria, to date.

It is Al-Marsad's view that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria should be prosecuted under international and national jurisdictions, regardless of their political affiliations.



Alongside prosecutions, non-judicial mechanisms should also be established in order for reconciliation to be possible for the Syrian people, in the long term.

Finally, Al-Marsad has observed with deep regret states' failure to comply with international obligations on asylum and urges the international community to provide the required assistance to Syrian refugees.

5. Advocacy promoting human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

Al-Marsad is aware of the shortcoming of advocacy work on both local and international levels. During the reporting period, Al-Marsadstrived to identify more effective advocacy tools through disseminating our work more broadly for educating local and international audiences on the human rights situation in the Occupied Golan, considering the ongoing military conflict in Syria proper and Israelipolicies and practices to strengthen its control over the Golan and its native Syrian population. Al-Marsad became a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Paris.

In the scope of this project, it is Al-Marsad's duty to pursue the work of conducting legal research andadvocacy work on the basic issues listed below:

- The human rights situation in the Golan under prolonged Israeli occupation (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights);
- Settlement expansion;
- Labor rights;
- Systematic discrimination against the native Syrian residents of the Occupied Golan;
- The ongoing military conflict in Syria proper and the Israeli policies of strengthening its control over the Golan.

6. Field visits and reliable information to the media and NGO's

Al-Marsadpresentedat meetings and field visits to variousmedia agencies, journalists, groups, delegations, diplomats, UN bodies, international and local NGO's.During 2015, Al-Marsad conducted dozens of field visits for groups and individuals in addition to several interviews with local and international media. Below some of these

activities are listed as examples:



Meeting with journalists of intenational media – Majdal Shams

- February 1st 2015, a group of Brazilian volunteers in Palestine visited Al-Marsad, met with the staff and then went on a field tour we organized for them;
- March 9th, a group of retired persons from the USA (meeting in Al-Marsad and field visit);
- April 27, phone interview with Channel 2, Israel;
- May 3, interview with the Wall Street Journal, interview with Canadian Radio and field visit;
- June 6, school visit from East Jerusalem (meeting and field visit);

- June 7, interview with Italian media ANSA (Marsad office); Delegation of democratic women from Nazareth (meeting and field visit);
- June 15, interview with the New York Times (Al-Marsad office);
- June 17, interview with Al-Hura television channel (live interview from Al-Marsad office);
- June 20, interview with Journalists from Mexico, New Zealand and USA;
- June 23, Interview with the Wall Street Journal, Al-Mayadeen television channel and Israeli radio;
- July 09, visit from Dr. Losy Ladikov, University of Genoa, Italy (meeting and field visit);
- July 20, a group from the Arab Association for Human Rights, Nazareth (meeting and field visit);
- September 12, joint delegation from Al-Haq (Ramallah) and International Federation for Human Rights-FIDH (France), 3-day visit;
- September 25-26, Delegation of volunteers from Jenin, Ramallah and Nablus;
- December 15, Interview with Alhura telechannel;
- December 17, Interview with German T.V.

7. Outputs delivered for the target group

The native Syrian community of the Occupied Golan has been identified as a main target group of the project in addition to other target groups such as, the Israeli audience/authorities and the international community (UN,



Visitors from Germany – Al-Marsad office

EU). Within three years of project implementation, outputs delivered for the target groups are as follows:

- Al-Marsad is a more credible and efficient human rights organization;
- Stronger relationship with the local community as a result of legal consultations, raising awareness (workshops) and litigations before Israeli courts;
- Increasing number of legal consultations;
- Increasing correspondence challenging human rights violations before Israeli authorities and ministries (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, State Comptroller, Land Mine Authority and others);
- Approaching local councils (designated by the Minister of Interior) regarding their practices of human rights violations, corresponding with the relevant authorities to stop these violations;
- Legal research on the ongoing armed conflict in Syria proper;
- Expanding and strengthening the program of settlement observation (settlement expansion, international investment, exploitation of natural resources, discrimination between settlers and native Syrian residents).
- Modifying the website and greater use of social media;
- Legal advice (about 60 legal consultations for the local community);

- Raising awareness on workers' rights (about 50 legal advices and two legal manuals/ know your rights). This specific activity was initiated to explore if there's a need to implement new project on labor rights;
- Litigations before the labor court to challenge violations of workers' rights (6 cases submitted). Exploring the importance of implementing new project of labor rights;
- Petitions to the High Court of Justice (two cases are being prepared which challenge the land mines inside and around the Arab villages and the lack in the schools buildings);
- New donor – Awarded a three-year project from the Arab Human Rights Fund;
- Diplomats, journalists, groups, individuals and activists visiting Al-Marsad for field visits on human rights situation in the Golan;
- Strong relationship with the Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations;
- An efficient internship program for international lawyers and human rights activists.
- Increasing visibility, however there's a need to put more effort on advocacy;
- Stable relations with ICRC, the UN Committee on the investigation of human rights situation on the occupied Arab territories, International Labor Organization (ILO), International Federation for Human rights (FIDH);
- Al-Marsad became a member of FIDH.
- Al-Marsad should step to next stage of its institutional development.

8. Litigations and legal consultations

The external evaluation which conducted in 2015 found that Al-Marsad needs to bring impact litigations to Israeli authorities and courts. Based on this, we work to bring three lawsuits before the Israeli High Court of Justice. One case regarding the lack of security of school buildings, another one on the cleaning of landmines inside Majdal shams and one regarding the illegality of the exploitation of oil. At this stage we are still corresponding with the relevant

authorities as a step of exhausting all procedures before filing a petition to the high court. It is worth noting that the decision to bring impact litigation to

Israeli courts and various authorities was adopted after the external evaluation that was conducted in 2015. Following the evaluation, we all agreed on the need to step to the next stage and engage in litigation to compliment and further the human rights monitoring and research work that Al-Marsad does.

In 2015, Al-Marsad also initiated a pilot project of workers' rights outside the scope of 2015 activities and on voluntary basis. Although Al-Marsad had no resources to launch such a project, following last year's annual International Labor Organization's visit to the Golan which included field visits to local workplaces where we witnessed hard



Meeting with lawyers and civil engineers to discuss discriminatory planning policies in the occupied Syrian Golan

working conditions and exploitation on a grand scale, we decided that it was something that Al-Marsad has a duty to investigate.

As we had no resources we embarked on a pilot project on a voluntary basis which began with around 60 legal consultations.

Concrete findings from the legal consultations:

Our findings from these consultations revealed that...

- Approximately 90% of the local workforce doesn't know their own rights.
- Not only is the local population's workforce often earning below the minimum wage, but they often receive a wage that is 50 or 60% below the national minimum.
- It is women who suffer the most.
- The local population is laboring with no social security in an essentially black market.
- The exploitation of workers happens both in the local market and the Israeli market including the settlements; workers are suffering under both Israeli and local Syrian employers.

Al-Marsad felt a strong need to conduct a project in this area as we have exposed that both male and (specifically) female workers are being barbarically exploited by employers, and they are not aware of their basic rights.

Accordingly, we published two legal manuals (Know your rights) and distributed it amongst workers. The first manual is a general one talking about basic workers' rights in general and is relevant to all workers. The second manual tackles women's labor rights based on their vulnerability and the extra rights guarantees for them by the law. There's a need also to publish a special manual on child workers and the labor rights of children.

We also organized two workshops.

Accordingly, we understood the worker's problems better, and we received 7 cases that we brought to the labor court against specific employers. We are still negotiating these cases but it looks like they will all have a favorable outcome for the victims.

Our expertise shows the urgent need to create a new program of workers' rights to raise awareness on worker's basic rights and bring impact litigation against employers who violate their worker's rights. To this end, we strongly believe that there is an urgent need to conduct such a project to argue against hard working conditions and put an end to the blatant violations of worker's rights and horrible exploitation focusing on women whose labor rights are being violated more than men. Therefore, Al-Marsad is looking for a donor to supporting such a project.



Manual on women labor rights - Arabic

Manual on labor rights - Arabic

We are eager to make this labor rights project a sustainable one, so we can continue to have a real and lasting impact on the day-to-day lives of the locals. In order to make this project sustainable we need to engage in advocacy and raise awareness amongst the local population. To this end, we need resources to get this project off the ground. We are currently trying to identify potential funding opportunities and to mobilize our resources, but it will take few months to mobilize the requested

resources, if any. In order to make this project a fruitful, effective one we need to hire one lawyer who will work exclusively on the labor rights project. In addition we will need to employ one part-time project coordinator/researcher to help ensure that this project runs smoothly.



Manual on labor rights - Arabic

You have suggested integrating this into ongoing activity projects, we would love to, however unfortunately we are restricted in resources. We will not be able to commit to this pressing project until we can mobilize an interested donor. Financially we are limited and we cannot partake in a lot of work on the project until we secure additional resources. Given the success of the pilot project and having gained the trust and support of the local population, (there are many workers now demanding their cases to be taken on) we are strongly motivated to implement this project as a long-term initiative. We would love to integrate this project (which is seen as a priority for us) into our current activities, however we cannot ignore the resource constraints. We first off need to guarantee at least an initial source of funding to kick-start the project. If you find this project interesting and would be interested in providing some initial support by raising our 3-year budget, we would be most grateful.

It is our view that the local population needs assistance in overcoming cultural barriers which are hindering them from realizing their labor rights. Oftentimes workers who are employed by their relatives, friends or neighbors are hesitant to assert their rights. Al-Marsad is in the position to explain to victims, that it is their right to challenge their exploitation. As the project has a special focus on women workers, it will also strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in the occupied Golan.

We believe that once this project is started that it could bring income for Al-Marsad. From our initial experiences we believe that most cases that we could bring before the labor court should result in a positive outcome for the victim. The compensation from the court for the successful cases will pay the lawyer's fees. Additionally Al-Marsad (instead of taking 20% of the victim's compensation) was thinking of taking 6-8% of their compensation. The plan is to take 10-15 cases per year, which would garner a considerable income for Al-Marsad.

Another benefit of the worker's rights project is that it will lead to our collection of data and monitoring and evaluation of the labor situation. These facts and figures can be submitted to the International Labor Organization to monitor the working conditions.

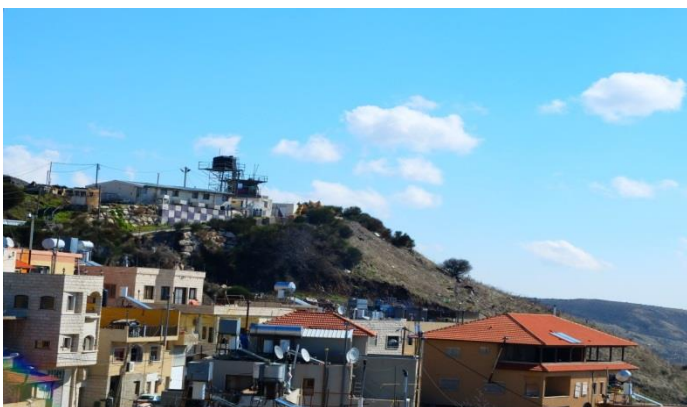
This is an important tool as there are not many resources available on this topic today. It is an underreported issue.

In addition we plan on giving 2-3 hundreds of free legal consultations a year, which will in turn help build our relationship with the local community. Administering free legal aid whilst winning cases at court for our clients will bolster Al-Marsad's credibility amongst the population. As the only human rights organization in the occupied Syrian Golan, Al-Marsad must endeavor to do more work on behalf of real individuals facing discrimination and exploitation in the workplace.

As the occupation of the Golan enters its 50th year next year and as the civil war continues to rage in Syria proper, working on promoting a culture of equal rights is a priority of Al-Marsad at this time. Promoting principles of non-discrimination, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining will ensure that the native Syrian population can enjoy an equality of opportunity and equal rights in the workplace. Labor rights are of the utmost importance in the Syrian Golan as they effect the entire working population.

9. Mine fields and landmines

With regard to litigation brought before Israeli authorities and courts, we work to bring three lawsuits before the Israeli High Court of Justice. One case regarding the lack of security of school buildings, another one on the cleaning of landmines inside Majdal shams and one regarding the illegality of the exploitation of oil. At this stage we are still corresponding with the relevant authorities as a step of



An Israeli military outpost surrounded by mines above houses inhabited by the locals in the center of Majdal Shams.

exhausting all procedures before filing a petition to the high court. It is worth noting that the decision to bring impact litigation to Israeli courts and various authorities was adopted after the external evaluation that was conducted in 2015. Following the evaluation, we all agreed on the need to step to the next stage and engage in litigation to compliment and further the human rights monitoring and research work that Al-Marsad does.

10. Staff members implemented Activities

During 2015 the staff members have implemented the following activities:

I- Majdoleen Safadi, Administrative Assistant/executive Secretary

- Prepares salaries and transfers them to employee's bank accounts;
- Follows daily administrative and financial issues;
- Pays taxes and office bills, follows the bank account, follows-up on financial issues with the accounting office and the project auditor;
- Follows-up with administrative issues for project No. 312-900-1008 for 2013-2015
- Prepares financial reports in coordination with the project auditor;
- Works with the project auditor on the 2014 annual financial report;

- Updating the organization's website, entering data on a regular basis;

II- Salman Fakher-Eldeen, Field researcher

Salman is responsible for the human rights field visits program. During 2015 he was engaged along with the rest of the team in the reception of international and local delegations. During the reporting period Salman, mostly in cooperation with Nizar has carried out several field tours.

Salman also organizes interviews for the international researchers/interns so they can conduct their legal research. He participates in meetings with Israeli and Palestinian NGO's in Palestine/Israel and coordinates meetings for raising awareness among the local community.

III- Karama Abu Saleh, Lawyer

Karama is a lawyer and member of Israel's Bar Association. He replaced Abu Elkher Abu Jabal. Since July 2015, Karama has been conducting various activities, including:

- Providing legal advice to the Arab population of the Golan (around 100 consultancies were given to local community groups and individuals during 2015, including 60 consultation to explore the need for implementing a special project on labor rights);
- Correspondence with various Israeli ministries and authorities (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, state comptroller, the local committee for planning, the authority of land mine cleaning, Ministry of Education, Israeli Water Company – Mekorot, local councils);
- Following Al-Marsad's file with the Israeli nonprofit registrar office in Jerusalem (Approval of the meeting's minutes of the organization's committees, preparing narrative and financial forms and sending them to the nonprofit registrar office in Jerusalem);
- Following up on the cleaning of land mine fields with the Israeli Comptroller Office;
- Two litigations to the Israeli High Court of Justice (Under preparation and to be submitted during 2016);
- 6 cases submitted to labor project on labor court (Exploring the need for implementing a project on labor rights);
- Obtaining data from the local planning building committees regarding restrictions on buildings for native Syrian population of the Occupied Golan including court cases and fines dating back to 1982 through to 2015;
- Two brochures on workers' rights for raising awareness among workers on their rights (Already printed and 6000 copies distributed);
- Correspondence with the Israeli Ministry of Defense regarding a missing Syrian soldier allegedly captured in Southern Syrian by the armed groups and transferred for medical treatment in Israel;
- Registration of a Golani child in the population registry with the Ministry of Interior;
- A testimony before the International Labor Organization during their annual visit to the Golan and Al-Marsad. The testimony related to workers condition in the illegal Israeli settlements in the Golan and the violation of their rights.

IV-Dr. Nizar Ayoub, Director

- Leads the organization's daily work;
- Leads the internship program (Contacts interns, choose interns, supervises the intern's daily work and assists them conducting their research;
- Conducts legal research (drafting statements, position papers and legal reports);
- Follows-up with Al-Marsad's applications for consultative status with ECOSOC, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN);
- Conducts fundraising (contact donors, draft funding proposals and establishing relationships with donors);
- Reports to the donors;
- Networks with local, regional and international human rights NGOs.

V- Dr. Nazeem Brik

- Leads the settlements program;
- Observes and documents settlements activities;
- Conducts an initial report on planning and housing rights;

11. Interns

During 2015, six interns have contributed to Al-Marsad work. The interns conducted their work in cooperation with the local staff, under the daily supervision of the director.

12. Conclusions and highlights

One highlight of 2015 was stronger levels of cooperation with Local and international human rights organizations. We participated in more collaborative meetings than any previous year and we cooperated in specific fields. For example we have been collaborating with "Adalah" on our litigation before the Israeli High Court of Justice and with Al Haq regarding international advocacy (they voted for us and explained our importance to the FIDH leading to our FIDH membership).

Another highlight of 2015 was the increase we saw in the number of field visits which were requested and carried out in the occupied Golan. The increase in the number of individuals and groups requesting a human rights field tour is an indicator of how successful the program has been for local and international audiences and how knowledge of this service that we offer is growing in popularity through word of mouth. Some groups continue to return to Al-Marsad for a visit on an annual visit every year, for example various solidarity groups with Palestine, journalists and the International Labor Organization.

Another key highlight for Al-Marsad was the formation of a closer relationship between the NGO and the local community. As Al-Marsad's fundamental goal is to assist the local community, forming tangible ties with the community has always been our goal. As the external evaluation noted in Al-Marsad's weaknesses, Al-Marsad (up until 2015) was not engaging the public enough and one way to redeem Al-Marsad in this sense was

to begin operating as a free legal advice clinic. The recommendation of the external evaluation was to being taking lawsuits on behalf of local clients as a good method of moving the current work of the NGO forward.

The external evaluation that was conducted med of 2015 came with a principal recommendation that Al-Marsad must progress to the **next stage of its institutional development**. In the view of the Evaluation Team, for the next phase of its development, Al Marsad should expand its work to include human rights issues concerning civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and land rights of the native Syrian community in the Golan. Al Marsad should certainly continue to work on IHL and IHRL violations due to the policies of the Occupation, but, in the evaluators' view, it is also important for Al Marsad to begin to investigate report on and legally challenge discrimination.

Al Marsad should work legally in this regard, not as a legal aid office, but on strategic litigation or test cases before the Israeli courts and other state agencies/institutions to assist the community to promote and defend its rights. Al Marsad needs to show the discrimination faced by the Syrians in Golan at different levels as compared with the Israeli Jewish settlers living in nearby illegal settlements. Accordingly, Al-Marsad began to bring impact litigation to Israeli courts and various authorities to challenge gross human rights violations and discriminatory policies against the native Syrian community of the occupied Golan.

Before 2015 Al-Marsad was mainly involved in advocacy and legal research. While these objectives remain a crucial part of Al-Marsad's work, 2015 saw Al-Marsad bring another skill to its arsenal: a stable strategy for legal advice and representation. Before we began our pilot project on worker's rights Al-Marsad gave roughly 100 free legal consultations per year on an array of subjects. However it is now our goal to conduct 200-300s of consultations a year on worker's rights issues. A clear highlight of 2015 is the creation of a clear strategy of litigation for the labor court. Before 2015, as we afforded the community legal consultations on various different issues our lawyer had no clear strategy for these consultation. We have effectively mobilized our office to offer a specific and targeted legal advice niche. Before the worker's right project we took the cases of two minors who were without an ID, one case we brought before the district court and the other was settled after communications with the to ministry of interior. Before this pilot labour project Al-Marsad's capability to bring complaints mainly only reached the local authorities. However an outstanding achievement of Al-Marsad in 2015 was its engagement with the Israeli Labor court and we wish to continue Al-Marsad's work before this court through building on the worker's rights project.

2015 saw Al-Marsad's realization of the importance labor rights project and to give more legal advice to the local population which we serve in order to progress to the next level as a human rights organization. However in order to advance Al-Marsad in this regard we require mobilizing additional resources, to make worker's rights a reality in the occupied Syrian Golan.

13. Al-Marsad members/General assembly

1. Randa Mdah, an artistandsocial activist (New member);
2. Ni'mat Maryy, design engineer and community activist (New member);
3. Shada Safady, an artist and social activist (New member);
4. Ehab Tarabieh, camera project coordinator, B'TSELEM (New member);

5. Dr. Munir Fakher Eldin, Assistant Professor of Arab Studies at Birzeit University
6. Jamel Abu Jabal, PhD Jurisprudence
7. Atef Safadi, press photographer EPA.
8. Naif Fakhreldeen, LLM Veterinary.
9. Madad Kalani, LLM Communications, (Board of directors chairperson).
10. Madad Ewidat, farmer.
11. Nizar Ayoub, PhD International Law, Lawyer, member of Israel Bar Association
12. Abulkher Abu Jabal, MA Jurisprudence, Lawyer, member of Israel Bar Association
13. Salman Fakher Eldeen, human rights activist

14. Composition of Al-Marsad's team

1. Nizar Ayoub, Director (full time), PhD International Law, Institute of State and Law, Moscow. Lawyer-Member of Israel Bar.
2. Karama Ab, (full Saleh). LL.B, Lawyer Member of Israel Bar.
3. Salman Fakherldeen (full time), Human rights activist, Field worker.
4. Mrs Majdoleen Safadi (part time – 75%), Executive Secretary.
5. Dr. Nazeh Brik (part time 30%), PhD urban planning, senior researcher.

END