



AL-MARSAD
ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2019
ISSUED IN JULY 2020

AL-MARSAD

ARAB HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

www.golan-marsad.org



Al-Marsad, ACRI, and BIMKOM: Objection presentation session at the National Infrastructure Committee (“NIC”), Jerusalem, 17 July 2019.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Al-Marsad – Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights (‘Al-Marsad’), as the only human rights organization in the occupied Syrian Golan (‘Golan’), has continued its efforts to monitor, document, research, and raise awareness for the human rights situation in the Golan. This has included examining and confronting Israeli policies at the national and international levels that violate international law, human rights law, and international humanitarian law. This report discusses Al-Marsad’s activities during 2019 and how these activities have contributed to the overall protection of and respect for human rights in the Golan.

The information covered in this report comes from Al-Marsad’s daily work, activities, and project outputs. Al-Marsad’s projects primarily involve legal aid (consultations and representation); legal research and report publishing; advocacy; correspondence with Israeli authorities; workshops for the local Syrian community; field tours for local and international delegations; meetings and correspondence with journalists, international non-profit organization partners, government officials, and politicians; and, grassroots activist supports.



Participants of Al-Marsad cultural program, “New Ways of seeing”, in a workshop entitled “Roots of Blues Music”, in the Hawa Dafi’s studio.

In 2019, Al-Marsad continued to grow in numerous ways, building on the organization’s past work to create new avenues for engagement. Al-Marsad’s relationship and cooperation with the Syrian community in the Golan – the target group – has become stronger than ever during 2019. Throughout the year, we were able to engage with the

entire community to raise awareness of and craft protections for fundamental human rights. Consequently, the organization has become more influential and reputable within the community. This is largely due to our pro bono legal representations and consultations as well as our open workshops.

Special focus is still being given to a massive wind farm project that aims to seize the private lands of the indigenous Syrian community, and consequently destroy its traditional agricultural economy. This project has exacerbated the housing problem in the region as well and limits the expansion of three of the remaining five Syrian villages in the occupied Golan. Al-Marsad has been playing an essential role in raising awareness about the peaceful and legal struggle against this project.



Al-Marsad, ACRI, and BIMKOM host a public meeting to prepare for the public objections to the wind farm project in the occupied Golan, 6 May 2019.

With this increased outreach within the Syrian community and internationally, the local population's confidence in Al-Marsad has grown as more individuals, groups, politicians, international organizations, and other stakeholders in the region have approached Al-Marsad to cooperate, obtain legal advice, request information, or file complaints against various Israeli authorities. Al-Marsad has also expanded its resources to work more on economic, social, and cultural rights issues.

The following summarizes Al-Marsad activities during 2019.

2. CHANGES IN THE SITUATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES

The daily living situation of the indigenous Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan remains precarious and challenging. Israel continues to practice discriminatory policies against the Syrian community (approx. 27.000 persons), benefiting from the ongoing conflict in Syria to strengthen its control and claimed 'sovereignty' over the Golan. Israeli pressure led to the United States President Donald Trump recognizing the occupied Golan as part of Israel in March 2019. This recognition validates and supports Israel's policies of settlement expansion and natural resource exploitation to accelerate the 'Israelization' of the Golan. Following Trump's declaration, Israeli media disclosed that the emboldened Israeli government has been discussing a plan to settle 250,000 new Israeli citizens in the Golan by 2048 and build 2 new towns in addition to 30,000 new housing units for settlers.

The armed conflict in Syria has meant that the Syrian population in the Golan remains completely isolated from the rest of Syria, where many relatives and associates of the indigenous Golani population reside. The conflict has also cut off vital export lines for apple sellers in the Golan's Syrian villages, hurting the overall economy of the region. Until there is a final peace agreement that ends the conflict in Syria, these issues will continue to cause problems for Syrians in the Golan.

Another issue that has seriously impacted Syrians in the Golan, is the Israeli authorities' development of a large wind farm project (31 wind turbines, up to 220 meters in height each) owned by Energix Renewable Energies Ltd. ('Energix'). This project will be implemented on the very limited private land that still belongs to the remaining native Syrian community in the Golan. The project is expected to have a disastrous direct impact on about 3,509 dunams of Syrian farmland (approximately 20% of the agricultural lands that still belong to the native Syrian community).

In September 2018, Al-Marsad began researching Energix's wind energy project and creating an open forum for peaceful and constructive dialogue about the project within the community. As part of this work, Al-Marsad facilitated a committee of public activists to continue educating Syrians in the Golan about all of the implications of the project. The committee circulated a petition contesting the project that has almost 5,600 signatures to date. Al-Marsad also published its own comprehensive report on its investigation into the project in Arabic and English titled: "***WINDFALL: The Exploitation of Wind Energy in the Occupied Syrian Golan***".¹ The report was launched and distributed in March 2019 during a public event in the village of Majdal Shams that was attended by about 250 people.

¹ Link: <http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Windfall-%E2%80%93-The-Exploitation-of-Wind-Energy-in-the-Occupied-Syrian-Golan.pdf>



Public meeting where Al-Marsad launched its legal report, Windfall – The Exploitation of Wind Energy in the Occupied Syrian Golan, 23 March 2019.

In addition to this, Al-Marsad contacted the Association of Civil Rights in Israel ('ACRI') and Planners for Planning Rights ('BIMKOM') to discuss how to initiate a legal strategy to contest the project within Israel. Al-Marsad, along with ACRI and BIMKOM, filed an administrative objection against the project in the names of 8 agriculture cooperatives, apple store associations, health care associations, and school parental committees.



Al-Marsad, ACRI, and BIMKOM: Objection session at the National Infrastructure Committee (“NIC”) to challenge the Wind Turbine Project. Jerusalem, 17 July 2019.

Al-Marsad and its team has been working intensely with the Syrian community to share information about Energix’s project since January 2019, when Al-Marsad first published its investigative report in English. After Al-Marsad’s publication, agents of and individuals associated with Energix launched a campaign to smear Al-Marsad, its employees, and those involved with the organization. The stated purpose of this smear campaign was to force Al-Marsad to close. After weeks of intimidation, those associated with the smear campaign sent a letter to Misereor, Al-Marsad’s largest funder, denouncing Al-Marsad and spreading falsehoods about its operations. When this did not stop Al-Marsad from continuing its human rights work, Energix filed a lawsuit against Al-Marsad. Energix’s suit is based on Al-Marsad’s investigative report into Energix’s project. In addition to demanding 900,000 ILS (approximately Al-Marsad’s annual budget as posted publicly online), one of Energix’s requests is that Al-Marsad retract and apologize for all the material it has published regarding the project.

Energix’s lawsuit alleges that Al-Marsad’s report is slanderous and calls for a boycott of Israel, in violation of Israel’s widely condemned anti-boycott law. This is the first time a non-profit human rights organization registered in Israel has been sued under Israel’s anti-boycott law; thus, it has the chilling potential to set a dangerous precedent for freedom of expression. In line with the smear campaign launched immediately after Al-Marsad’s report was released, the ultimate goal of this legal action seems to not only be to stop Al-Marsad’s activities, but to eliminate the only human rights organization in the Golan altogether.



Initial hearing in the case against Al-Marsad, Nazareth Magistrate Court, 12 February 2020

The first hearing in the case took place in Nazareth Magistrate Court on February 12, 2020, and the second hearing was supposed to take place on June 30, but has been postponed until September 30 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that at this hearing the court will listen to arguments regarding the claim that Al-Marsad violated Israel's anti-boycott law.

3. IMPORTANT CHANGES WITHIN AL-MARSAD

The General Assembly and the Board of Directors held five meetings during 2019. Four new members have joined the General Assembly. A new Board of Directors and Audit Control Committee were elected in December 2019.

Al-Marsad – Board of Directors

Hiba Abu Saleh - advocate and human rights activist, M.A Law, Haifa University;
Madad Ewidat – farmer and community activist;
Madad Kalany - M.A in Aviation Communications;
Madaa Al-Mughraby - dentist, Damascus University;

Al-Marsad - Audit Control Committee

Shada Al-Safadi – artist and community activist, M.A of Fine Arts, Damascus University;
Wisam sharaf – lawyer and human rights activist, LLB, Haifa University.

Al-Marsad has continued working intensively to balance the involvement of different genders within the organization. Al-Marsad achieved promising results when it added four new women members to the General Assembly.

Four international interns from Italy, Ireland, the U.S., and the U.K. joined Al-Marsad during 2018. Additionally, six local interns joined Al-Marsad to help with the ‘New Ways of Seeing’ pilot project, which is supported by the European Endowment for Democracy. Al-Marsad’s individual staff activities are described further in section 8 of this report.

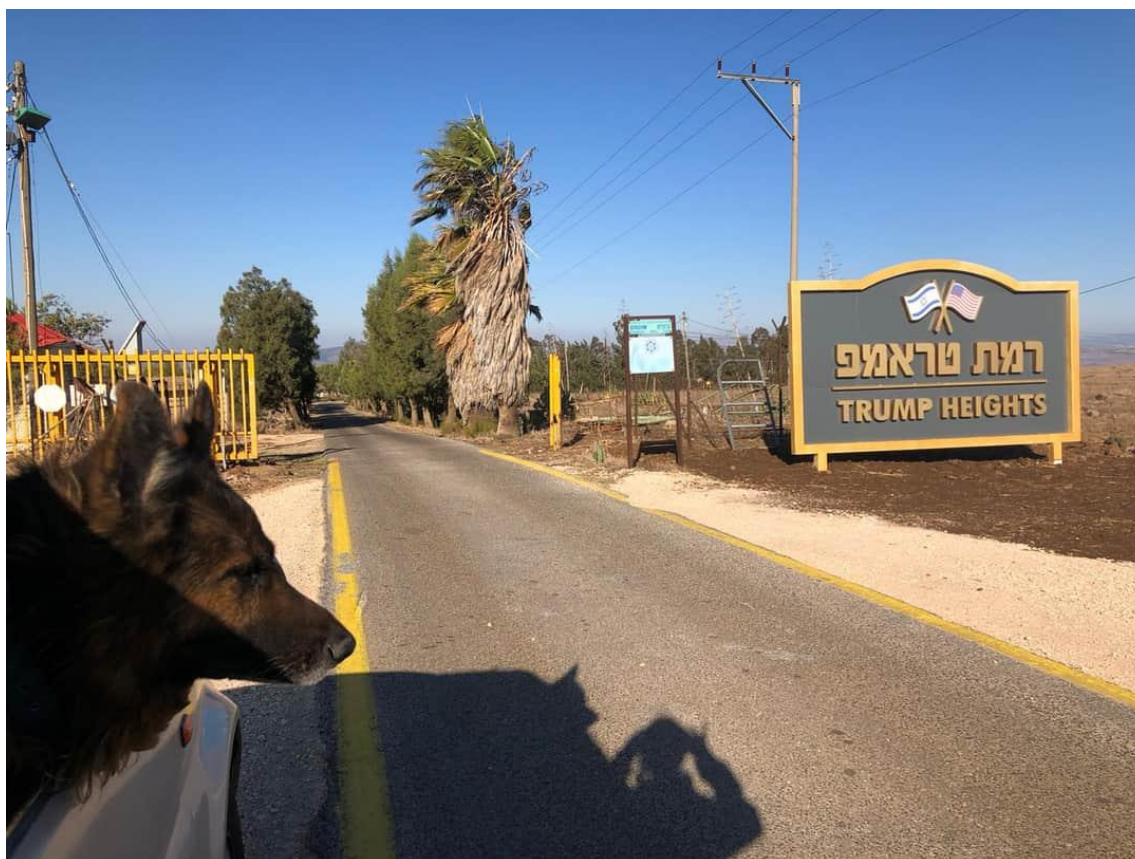
Aside from these changes, there have been no principal changes within Al-Marsad throughout in 2019.

Regarding our areas of focus and in addition to our work on Energix’s project discussed above, Al-Marsad has increased its activity in its international advocacy, correspondence with the local authorities, and field visit tours. Al-Marsad has also seen a lot of success in its cultural rights project, New Ways of Seeing. The project has been especially important for the way it has mobilized and empowered the young generations in the Golan. The project has been very effective in filling some of the arts and cultural gaps apparent in the Golan’s Syrian villages.

Israeli policies to alter ‘facts on the ground’ through discriminatory policies, settlement expansion, natural resource exploitation, cleaning of land mines, activities and policies of the local councils, and discrimination in housing and planning rights, have also required Al-Marsad’s attention. Special focus has been given to the acceleration of settlement expansion and discriminatory policies due to U.S. President Donald Trump’s declaration accepting Israel’s claimed sovereignty over the occupied Golan. As an expression of thanks to President Trump, the Israeli government decided to create a new settlement named Ramat Trump (or ‘Trump Heights’), which is located in the northern Golan.



The entrance to Ramat Trump, including the official Israeli emblem and the American eagle (Sourced from Rubi Hammerschlag archive, 13 July 2020).



The entrance to Ramat Trump,

New and on-going partnerships with Bimkom, ACRI, Adalah, Al-Haq, and other international and regional NGOs have allowed Al-Marsad to expand its reach on advocating key issues, obtaining support for project activities, and providing effective legal advice and representation to local Syrians. Increased cooperation with the local community has resulted in a greater demand for legal advice and consequently has led to more communications and complaints being filed with Israeli authorities. This has meant that team members are under increasing work pressure. In particular, the success of our legal representation and advice work is creating a lot of additional pressure on Al-Marsad's lawyer.

The development of new and existing relationships with other NGOs has been very fruitful but has also led to increased pressures on the organization to coordinate, perform field investigations, and provide partners with the information they require. Al-Marsad has been working with ACRI on different human rights issues. Al-Marasad has also established a new relationship with Bimkom while continuing and maintaining good relations with regional organizations like Al-Haq, Al-Mezan, The Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinian's Rights in Jerusalem, Adalah, Who Profits, and De-Colonizer.



International interns conduct legal research, Al-Marsad's offices,

A large change in Al-Marsad's work has been its new focus on grassroots organizing support. Al-Marsad still operates as the only human rights organization in the Golan but continues to build strong relationships with other grassroots initiatives in the region. In 2019, these initiatives included the schools' parent committees, farmer cooperatives, young activist movements, and worker's groups. Several members of these collectives are in regular contact with and volunteer for Al-Marsad to achieve the community's goals. Al-Marsad's closest grassroots cooperation has been with the Fateh Mudarris Centre, which was founded and is run by a group of local artists and community activists. Al-Marsad has partnered with the Fateh Mudarris Centre to run cultural rights activities and has even built an internship program with the Centre for local activists and volunteers.



Field workshop in Haifa: “New Ways of seeing”, a project implemented in cooperation with Fateh Al- Muoddarris Centre for Arts and Culture.



Al-Marsad, ACRI, and BIMKOM: Public meeting to prepare for the objections against Energix’s wind farm project, 6 May 2019.

Internationally, Al-Marsad has also altered its activities to utilize various partnerships. In 2019, Al-Marsad has continued working more closely with international human rights organizations, including International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Euro MED Rights, CIDSE, EU MEP, and others. Al-Marsad has, for the first time, expanded its work

into the U.S. in 2019 in response to President Trump's declaration on the Golan. Al-Marsad conducted multiple advocacy tours to build partnerships and share information with policy makers. Al-Marsad also became a member in ESCR-Net, The International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that connects over 280 NGOs, social movements, and advocates across more than 75 countries.

These new and ongoing partnerships with international and regional NGOs allow Al-Marsad to expand its advocacy reach, obtain support for project activities, and provide effective legal advice and representation to local Syrians.

4. IMPLICATIONS ON THE ORGANIZATION'S WORK

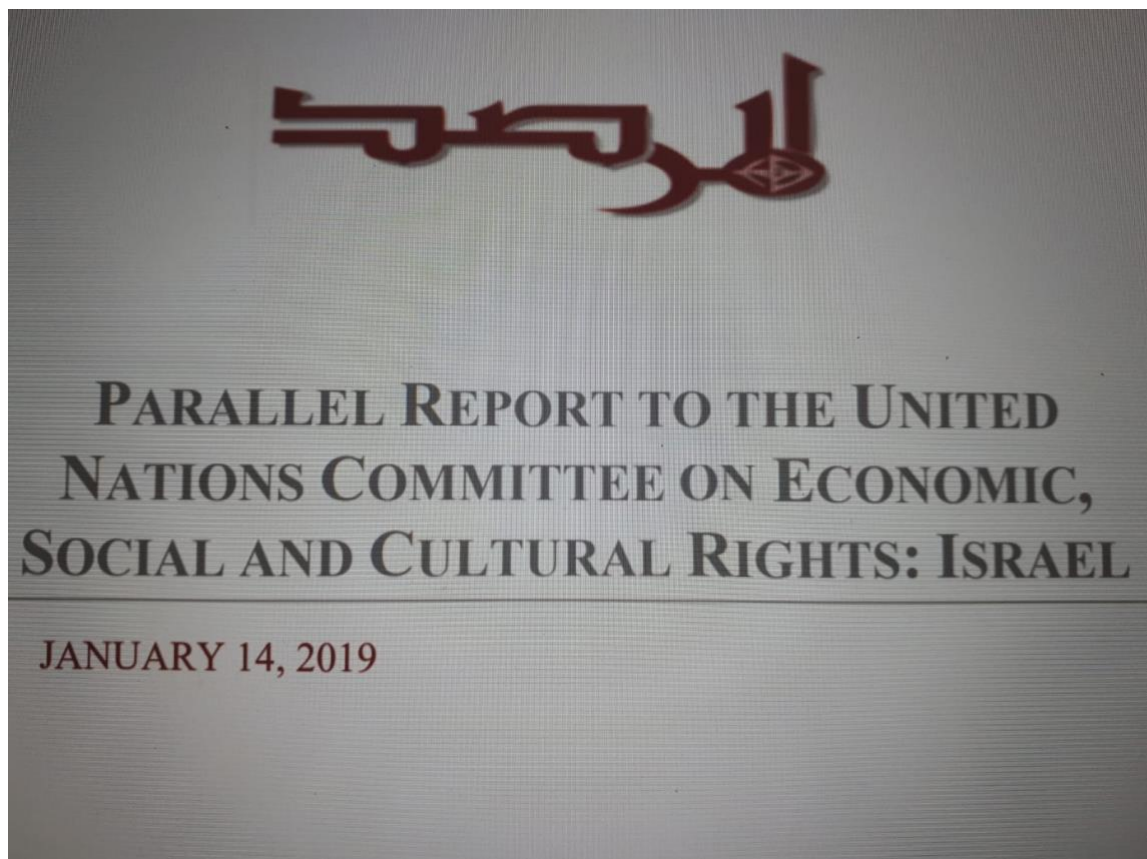
Changes in Israeli policies to form 'facts on the ground' to facilitate Israel's 'sovereignty' claim to the Golan, especially after President Trump's declaration, have created many implications for the organization's work because they have created a greater need for Al-Marsad's services. To combat Israel's actions and uphold native Syrians' rights, Al-Marsad has had to focus more on its legal research, advocacy efforts (both locally and internationally), strategic litigation, and community legal consultations. Luckily, with Al-Marsad's increased work, the local community has become more engaged with human rights issues and standing up for itself.

5. RESEARCH REPORTS

Al-Marsad's legal work in 2019 focussed on current discriminatory Israeli policy initiatives, including Energix's wind turbines project; settlement expansion; natural resource exploitation; planning and housing regulations; economic, social, and cultural rights restrictions; and, property destruction.

In 2019, Al-Marsad published the following legal research:

1. Windfall: The Exploitation of Wind Energy in the Occupied Syrian Golan (Arabic & English – published).
<http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Windfall-%E2%80%93-The-Exploitation-of-Wind-Energy-in-the-Occupied-Syrian-Golan.pdf>
2. More Shadows than Lights: Local elections in the Occupied Syrian Golan (Arabic):
<http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Election-report-proofreading-Arabic.pdf>
3. Parallel Report on Israel's Violations of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Al-Marsad_Parallel-Report-to-CESCR_14.01.2019.pdf



4. Joint Parallel Report on Israel's Violations of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Al-Marsad, Al-Haq, Cornell Law Clinic).

http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/AM-AH_Joint-Parallel-Report-to-the-CESCR-Israel-2019.pdf



5. Al-Marsad Urgent Appeal to the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinions and Expression, and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Al-Marsad_Urgent-Appeal-to-UN-Experts.pdf

6. PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GOLAN

Al-Marsad believes that significant achievements were made in 2019, especially with regard to local and international advocacy which is an indicator of the organization's credibility and increased influence.

2019 left an instinctive imprint on the organization. As the activity report shows, Al-Marsad has overcome challenges to assist the whole indigenous Syrian community in the Golan. Our continuous work on Energix's wind farm project exemplifies this. Additionally, we have collaborated more with dozens of local agriculture associations, school parent committees, and grassroots initiatives, such as the Fateh Mudarris Centre for Arts and Culture and the Golan for Developing Arab Villages. We can now say that we believe the organization has become more credible and influential than it ever has been. This situation increases our responsibility, especially towards the local community.



“New Ways of Seeing” project Field workshop in Ein-Qeniya Village on the “Ethnic fabrics in the Golan, prior to 1967.” A project implemented in cooperation with Fateh Mouddarris Centre for Arts and Culture.

Over 2019, Al-Marsad implemented the following main activities:

Advocacy

As stated earlier, 2019 witnessed for the first time an increased public discourse within the local community about violations of their human rights. Al-Marsad became locally and internationally more credible than ever and is now a key source of information for international and local actors hoping to know more about what is happening in the Golan.



Al-Marsad, ACRI, and BIMKOM: public meeting to prepare for the objections against Energix's wind farm project in the occupied Golan, 6 May 2019.

Internationally, Al-Marsad engaged in a widespread campaign to raise awareness for its work and the human rights issues impacting Syrians in the Golan. This campaign has included social media engagement, working with journalists, public presentations, bilateral and multilateral meetings with politicians, bilateral and multilateral meetings with state and intergovernmental institutions, and engagement with partner NGOs. This has included dozens of meetings at the EU, the UN, and with the U.S. government. Additionally, this has included Al-Marsad's mention in numerous news publication and appearances on news programs.



Al-Marsad presenting background information on the human rights situation in the Golan at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, U.S.A., 9 October 2019

Legal consultations, representation and correspondence

- There has been a significant increase in the number of direct beneficiaries of legal advice and representation.
- Al-Marsad has a stronger relationship with the local community as a result of legal consultations, awareness raising workshops, and litigation in Israeli courts.
- Correspondence with the local councils over school building deficiencies led to the building of new school rooms, removal of safety hazards and installation of A/C in classrooms.
- Correspondence with various Israeli authorities to address discriminatory policies against the indigenous Syrian community and violations of their rights, including: Ministry of Interior, Social Security Authority, The Ministry of Defence, Local Councils, and planning and zoning authorities.

Research

- Numerous in-depth legal reports produced and widely distributed around the globe.
- Dozens of legal statements regarding the human rights situation in the Golan.

- Increased use of Al-Marsad research and publications by intergovernmental bodies (e.g. UN), journalists, NGOs, and academics.
- Heightened awareness around the world for the human rights issues afflicting indigenous Syrians in the Golan.

Al-Marsad continues to have strong relationships with journalists around the globe as well. Al-Marsad provides journalists with current information on the Golan and also has facilitated different reporters' work by assisting them with securing interviews and researching information on different issues.

As always, Al-Marsad remains in contact with Israeli authorities, ministries (e.g. Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Interior, the Israeli Comptroller, the Landmine Authority, planning committees, etc.), and the Israeli controlled Local Councils in the native Syrian villages.

7. OUTPUTS DELIVERED TO THE TARGET GROUP

The native community of the Golan is the main target group of Al-Marsad's work. Supplemental target groups include Israeli civilians and authorities, international NGOs, state-level politicians, and intergovernmental institutions. In 2019, Al-Marsad's outputs includes:

Advocacy

- Correspondence with diplomatic missions of EU members and Permanent Members of UNSC in Tel Aviv.
- Contact with European politicians, government officials, NGO and IGO representatives, and journalists – both directly (meetings, calls, letters) and by a mailing list and social media platforms.
- Correspondence with Israeli authorities and ministries (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, State Comptroller, Land Mine Authority, planning committees and others).
- Correspondence with Israeli controlled local councils (designated by the Minister of Interior).
- Field visits and meetings for local and international individuals and delegations, including: journalists, NGOs, IGOs (including WHO, UN, ILO and ICRC representatives), tourists and students (from: Columbia University and Cornell University, SOAS, and Leiden University).
- Updates to Al-Marsad website to make it compatible for mobile devices. Increased use of social media platforms.
- Coordinated with various NGO coalitions around the globe for targeted messaging campaigns, especially with regard to the wind farm project and the lawsuit brought against Al-Marsad.
- Formed informal and formal ties with various organizations that work on collective advocacy, including EuroMed Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights, CIDSE, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International.
- Written acknowledgement of human rights abuses in the occupied Golan from the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights for the first time ever.
- A UN Special Procedures inquiry into the anti-boycott law case against Al-Marsad.
- Built formal relationships with U.S.-based NGOs for the first time.
- Built formal relationships with U.S. government offices for the first time.
- Worked with politicians around the world to advocate for basic human rights to be

afforded to the native population of the Golan and for Israel to stop its violations of international law.

Legal consultations, representation, and correspondence

- Over 1,000 people received legal consultations on political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights (housing rights, right to education, permanent residency status, and discriminatory policies related to utilities, etc.). Most of the consultations were related to the wind farm project.
- Filed three cases in the magistrate court regarding labor rights violations. Two cases were closed by arbitration and compensation was paid to workers. One case is still pending.
- Submitted general objections to the National Committee of Infrastructure in Jerusalem in cooperation with ACRI and BIMKOM. The objections were heard on July 17 before an investigator in Jerusalem and more than 350 (7 buses) native Syrians travelled from the Golan to participate in the hearing process.
- Submitted 63 personal objections on behalf of indigenous Syrians to the National Infrastructure Committee in Jerusalem. These objections were heard by an investigator on the 14th and 24th of July.
- Filed an appeal to the Ministry of Interior, against the local authority's decision to charge property tax and not exempt the organization from paying.
- Representing 5 students who are studying in Germany before the Ministry of Interior and the Social Security Authorities to stop the revocation of their residency ID's.
- Representing a local resident that was sued by Energix for allegedly violating their contract with the company.
- Engaged with the private lawyer who is representing Al-Marsad in a lawsuit that was filed by Energix.

8. STAFF MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Staff engaged in the following activities throughout 2019:

A. Majdoleen Safadi, Accountant

- Prepared salaries and transferred them to employee bank accounts;
- Conducted daily administrative and financial tasks;
- Paid taxes and office bills, monitored Al-Marsad's bank account, and followed up on financial issues with the accounting office and program auditor;
- Prepared financial reports in coordination with the program auditor; and,
- Updated the organization's website, entering data on a regular basis;

B. Wael Tarabieh, Project Manager

- Manager of Al-Marsad's economic, social, and cultural rights project, including the 'New Ways of Seeing' project;
- Helped empower grassroots groups in the Golan through a variety of assistance;
- Networked with local, regional, and international human rights NGOs;
- Conducted interviews on behalf of Al-Marsad;
- Local and international advocacy.

C. Karama Abu Saleh – Lawyer

- Provided legal advice to the local Syrian population of the Golan (450 consultations to local community groups and individuals in 2018);

- Corresponded with various Israeli ministries and authorities (e.g. Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, the Israeli Comptroller, Local Councils, the Landmine Authority, Ministry of Education, Israeli Water Company – Mekorot, and the Israeli local and district planning committees);
- Followed up on Al-Marsad's file with the Israeli non-profit registrar's office in Jerusalem as required by law;
- Followed up on Israel's obligations to clear landmine fields with the Israeli Comptroller and the Israeli Army; and,
- Represented local workers and filed cases with the Israeli labour court.

D. Nizar Ayoub – Director

- Led the organization's daily work;
- Led the internship program (contacted interns, chose interns, supervised the interns' daily work and assisted them in conducting their research);
- Conducted legal research (drafted statements, position papers, and legal reports);
- Conducted fundraising (contacted donors, drafted funding proposals, and established relationships with donors);
- Reported to donors;
- Networked with local, regional, and international human rights NGOs; and,
- Conducted interviews on behalf of Al-Marsad.

E. Aaron Southlea

- International officer, fundraising and international advocacy;
- Conducted research and analysis of key human rights issues impacting Syrians in the Golan;
- Drafted and published investigative reports and briefs on the human rights situation in the Golan;
- Conducted multiple in-person advocacy tours in the U.S., at the UN, and at the EU;
- Coordinated and liaised with international partner NGOs on a variety of issues;
- Contacted funders and met with funders;
- Helped draft and send fundraising proposals;
- Managed social media and email statements to Al-Marsad's listserv;
- Assisted with updating website and other media;
- Conducted interviews on behalf of Al-Marsad and worked with journalists to provide information on the Golan;

F. Interns

- Throughout 2019, four international interns contributed to Al-Marsad's work. The interns conducted their research in cooperation with the local staff and under the daily supervision of the Director in Majdal Shams. Additionally, Al-Marsad hosted eight local Syrian interns to participate in the economic, social, and cultural rights project under the supervision of the project's manager, Wael Tarabieh.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Al-Marsad's team continues to be involved in mapping, investigating, and researching the human rights situation in the occupied Golan. Our work is being expanded to include new activities focused on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights programming. Legal services, legal research, and advocacy, including representations and consultations is still the cornerstone of Al-Marsad's daily work.

In the local community, at a grassroots level, Al-Marsad is pursuing a rigorous campaign to raise awareness about individuals' rights and to support independent activists in lobbying for community rights. In terms of international advocacy, Al-Marsad has expanded its advocacy efforts into the U.S. for the first time where it has found a lot of traction, appealing to many NGOs working on Israel-Palestine and Syrian issues. Al-Marsad has also increased its interactions with and advocacy before the U.N. The U.S. recognition of the Golan as belonging to Israel has thrust Al-Marsad into the spotlight, forcing the whole team to work constantly with media and partners to raise awareness for the human rights issues in the Golan. Increased advocacy has also led to new fundraising opportunities as awareness for Al-Marsad's work has grown exponentially. However, with expanded attention, Al-Marsad's workload has increased as it now needs to meet growing demands for cooperation and assistance locally, regionally, and internationally. To meet these demands, Al-Marsad will need to find new sources of funding and is intent on doing so.

Looking towards the future, lots of work remains to be done. For instance, the contested wind farm project discussed above is still being developed. Al-Marsad plans to fight this project however it can. Additionally, many people are still reluctant to discuss human rights violations for fear of reprisals from the Israeli authorities or because they believe that change is not possible. Al-Marsad will continue to engage marginalized groups within the community, as it has done with the launching of the 'New Ways of Seeing' project, to encourage them to stand up for their basic human rights. This goal serves as the foundational motivation for Al-Marsad's launching of a full economic, social, and cultural rights program at the start of 2019.

The Israeli authorities continue to implement policies targeting civil society organizations that document illegal Israeli policies in the occupied territories and Israel. These policies make it hard for Al-Marsad to receive funding and interact with donors. In 2019, Al-Marsad was able to achieve almost all of its stated activities. The positive results of this work can be seen in increasing public activism within the native Syrian community and a greater global awareness for the plight of local Syrians in the Golan.

Despite the many obstacles that lay ahead, Al-Marsad remains fully committed to delivering effective, on the ground services to indigenous Syrians in the Golan while

campaigning locally and around the globe for the protection of basic human rights and international law in the region.