

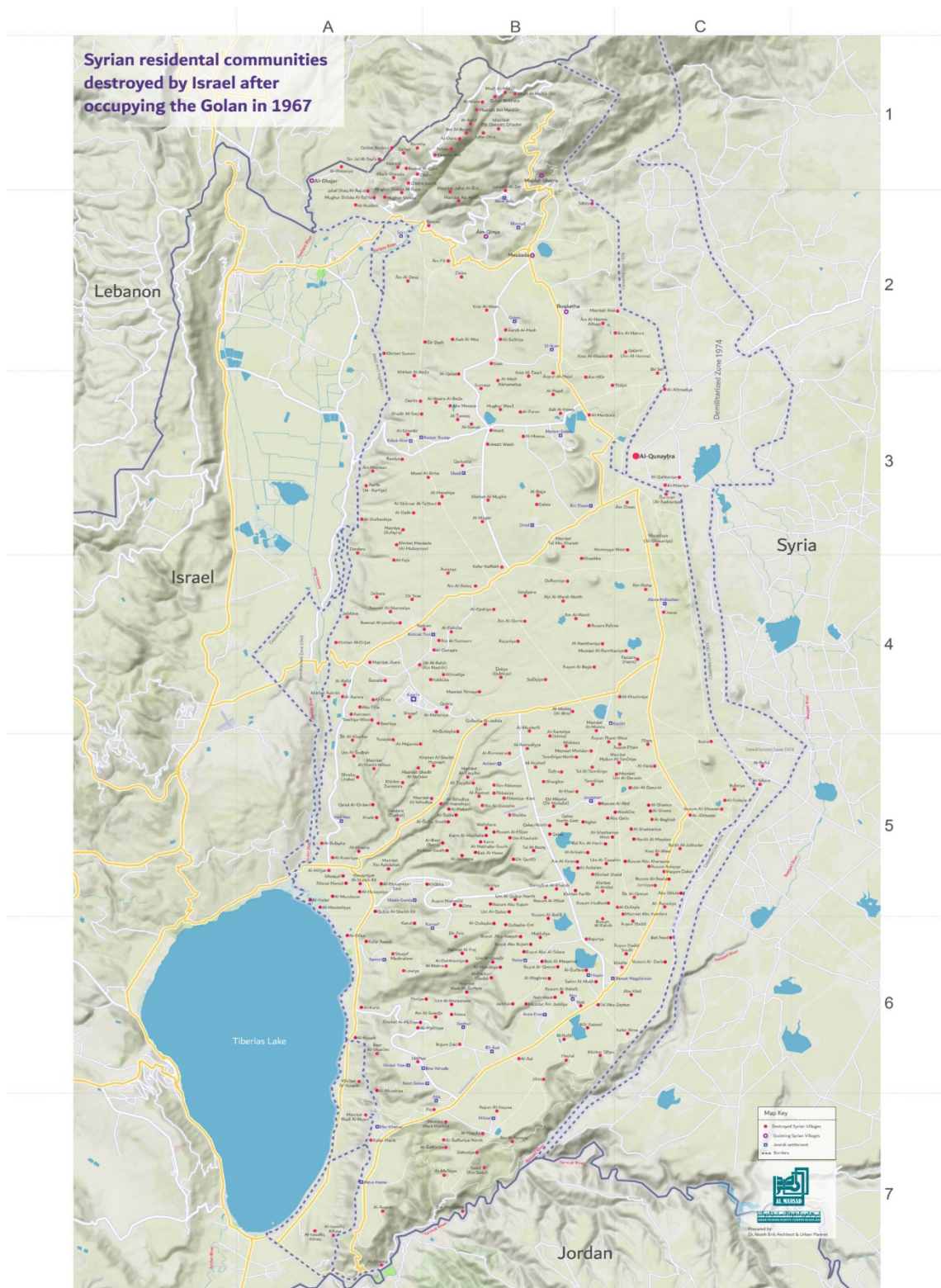


AL-MARSAD
ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2021
ISSUED MAY 2022

AL-MARSAD

ARAB HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE IN GOLAN HEIGHTS

www.golan-marsad.org



Map of the Syrian residential communities destroyed by Israel after occupying the Golan in 1967

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1. INTRODUCTION

Al-Marsad – Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights ('Al-Marsad') has continued its efforts to monitor, document, research, and raise awareness of the human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan during 2021. This report explores the organization's activities of research, awareness-raising/advocacy, and legal aid provided to the Syrian community in the occupied Golan in 2021. Our activities, for example, include correspondence with Israeli authorities; workshops for the local community; legal aid (consultations and litigation); Advocacy; field visits for local and international delegations; organization of a cultural festival called **"Jawan Cultural days"**; meetings and correspondence with journalists, government officials and politicians; and information obtained during legal research.



The opening ceremony of the cultural festival "Golan cultural Days."

Al-Marsad has made significant achievements during 2021 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, especially concerning legal support to the Syrians and the legal confrontation of the wind turbine project. Al-Marsad achieved essential local and international advocacy activity that testifies to the organization's credibility and increased influence in fulfilling its human rights mission.

Al-Marsad has deepened its roots, especially within the local community, and strengthened its international and local credibility and reputation as the only human rights NGO in the occupied Syrian Golan. As the activity report shows, Al-Marsad has overcome challenges influencing the local Syrian community. Our continuous work on the wind farm project exemplifies this. Additionally, we strengthened our cooperation with dozens of local agriculture associations, school parent committees, and grassroots initiatives, such as the Fateh Al- Mudarris Centre for Culture and Arts and the Golan for Developing Arab Villages. To this end, we are proud that Al-Marsad is becoming more influential and gaining more credibility than ever. This situation is challenging for the organization and increases our responsibility, especially toward the local community. Implementing the cultural festival was an opportunity to revive cultural activities inside the community.

A severe and disturbing issue that has been seriously impacting the Syrians in the Golan is that the Israeli authorities have continued to pursue the development of the illegal wind farm project. Amid new threats against project opponents, Energex Renewable Energies Ltd. ('Energex') took

advantage of the COVID-19 lockdown in the Golan to develop sites for its harmful wind farm project.¹ On December 10, Israeli police fired rubber bullets and tore gas against Syrians in the occupied Golan, causing numerous injuries and arresting several Syrians. This is the culmination of several days of aggressive police action against Syrian civilians and farmers peacefully protesting against a wind turbine project developed by Energex, an Israeli energy company, on Syrian agricultural land.²

The armed conflict in Syria has meant that the Syrian population in the Golan remains wholly isolated from the rest of Syria, including friends and family. The conflict has also cut off vital export lines for apple sellers in the Golan's Syrian villages, hurting the region's overall economy. Until a final peace agreement ends the conflict in Syria, these issues will continue to cause problems for Syrians in the Golan. This means Israel will proceed with its settlements policies while the Remaining Syrians will suffer from systematic discriminatory policies in gross human rights violations.

Last but not least, Israel continues to validate dozens of discriminatory laws that blatantly violate the rights of Syrians, such as the right to adequate housing; The seizure of land and severe restrictions on the use of land for urban planning and expansion; the presence of dozens of minefields between agricultural fields and adjacent to Arab villages; Frequent power cuts in Syrian towns, especially in the freezing winter, due to defects and shortcomings in the electricity networks inside the villages. Moreover, the Israeli authorities refuse to register newborns whose families stay abroad for work or study because they were born to families who hold Israeli residency. Still, they choose their "life center" outside Israel.

The following summarizes Al-Marsad's activities during 2021.

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

The daily living situation of the Syrians in the occupied Golan remains challenging. Israel, the occupying, continues to practice discriminatory policies against the Syrian community (approx. 27.000 persons) and takes advantage of the ongoing military conflict in Syria proper to claim 'sovereignty' over the Golan.

Israeli discriminatory policies and the persistent imposition of new facts on the ground, mainly after "Trump's Declaration," and the ongoing military conflict in Syria required greater attention on issues such as settlement expansion, natural resource exploitation, activities and policies of the local councils, and discrimination in housing and planning rights. Particular focus should be given to the acceleration of settlement expansion due to Trump's Declaration accepting Israel's claimed sovereignty over the occupied Golan.

Israeli pressure eventually led to United States President Donald Trump recognizing the occupied Golan as part of Israel in March 2019. Trump's decision, which violates international law, validates and supports Israel's settlement expansion and natural resource exploitation policies to accelerate 'Israelization' policies designed to undermine the Golan and its Syrian community's

¹ Amid new threats against project opponents, Energix continues to develop its illegal windfarm in the Occupied Golan.

<http://golan-marsad.org/amid-new-threats-against-project-opponents-energix-continues-to-develop-its-illegal-windfarm-in-the-occupied-golan/>

<http://golan-marsad.org/energix-exploiting-covid-19-lockdown-in-occupied-golan/>

² Israeli police fired rubber bullets and tear gas against Syrian civilians in the occupied Golan.

<http://golan-marsad.org/israeli-police-fired-rubber-bullets-and-tear-gas-against-syrian-civilians-in-the-occupied-golan/>

Syrian and Arab culture and identity. This recognition validates and supports Israel's settlement expansion and natural resource exploitation policies to accelerate the 'Israelization' of the Golan while the Syrians remain victims of systematic discriminatory policies. Following Trump's declaration, Israeli media disclosed that the Israeli government has been discussing a plan to settle 250,000 new Israeli citizens in the Golan and build 30,000 new housing units in Katzrin, the most significant settlement in the occupied Golan.



Filed tour, destroyed Syrian villages.

The Israeli cabinet held its weekly meeting on December 26, 2021, at the "Mevo Hama" settlement and unveiled a plan to spend \$317 million to double the Jewish settler population in the Golan. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett vowed this was the "moment" to boost the number of Jewish Israelis living in the territory. Benet declared, "Our goal is to double the population in the Golan," He presented his one-billion-shekel (\$317 million) program to improve housing, transportation, tourism, and medical facilities in the settlements. The plan ignores the rights and the needs of the indigenous Syrian population of the Golan.

Israeli authorities have continued to pursue the development of a large wind farm project (31 wind turbines, up to 220 meters in height each) owned by Energex Renewable Energies Ltd. As previously mentioned, Al-Marsad published a comprehensive report (Arabic and English) on its investigation of the wind turbines project titled "*WINDFALL: The Exploitation of Wind Energy in the Occupied Syrian Golan.*"³ The report was launched and distributed in March 2019 during a public event in the village of Majdal Shams that about 250 people attended.

³ Link: <http://golan-marsad.org/wp-content/uploads/Windfall-%E2%80%93The-Exploitation-of-Wind-Energy-in-the-Occupied-Syrian-Golan.pdf>



Filed tour, destroyed Syrian villages.

As previously reported, Al-Marsad formed partnerships with the Association of Civil Rights in Israel ('ACRI') and Planners for Planning Rights ('BIMKOM') to contest the project from a legal perspective. The three NGOs agreed to work together to use all available lawful means to follow up on and examine the legal and planning aspects of the project, starting with filing an administrative objection against the project. The complaint was filed in the names of 8 agriculture cooperatives and apple store associations, including more than a thousand Syrian farmers. In the meantime, the three NGOs have been working on a petition to the High Court of Justice to contest the project. Nowadays, the three NGOs are reviewing their decision to file a petition, given a high probability that a potential judgment will become a tool for the company to strengthen its position, as the experience over the past decades shows that the Supreme Court supports the official Israeli policies, especially when it comes to the collective rights of Palestinians inside Israel, and in the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan. As we believe that the court ruling will not be in our favor, this will seriously weaken the peaceful struggle of the community against the wind farm project.

As a result of our legal work of contesting the project, Al-Marsad became June 2019 the first human rights organization to be sued under Israel's controversial anti-BDS law. Despite Al-Marsad not engaging in BDS-related activities, Energex used the anti-BDS law to sue Al-Marsad to silence the organization and others who expressed concerns about the wind farm's legality and impact on the Syrian population. In addition, supporters of the wind farm launched a smear campaign against Al-Marsad and other community activists that recently culminated in death threats and threats to damage property. The Israeli police have so far failed to act.

In response, agents of, and individuals associated with, Energex launched a campaign that continues to date 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. In March 2019, supporters of Energex's project sent a defamatory letter to Al-Marsad's most extensive funder, personally lodging attacks against Al-Marsad employees and claiming that Al-Marsad mismanaged its finances. When this did not stop Al-Marsad from disseminating its report and hosting meetings on the project, Energex filed a lawsuit against Al-Marsad in June 2019.

Energex's suit is based on Al-Marsad's investigative report on Energex's project. In addition to suing for 900,000 ILS (approximately Al-Marsad's annual budget as posted publicly online), one of Energex's demands is that Al-Marsad retracts and apologize for all the material that has been published regarding the project. The lawsuit alleges that Al-Marsad's report is slanderous and calls for a boycott of Israel, violating 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 be to stop Al-Marsad's activities and eliminate the only human rights organization in the Golan.



The Legal Committee combating the Wind Turbine Project in northern Golan holds one of its regular weekly meetings at the Al-Marsad office.

The last hearing in the case against Al-Marsad was held on September 30, 2021, in Nazareth Magistrate Court. In response to the judge's suggestion for mediation, both parties (Al-Marsad and Energex) have agreed on a mediator, Advocate Amos Gabrieli from Kfar Saba. The first meeting with the mediator will take place on June 6, 2022.

Conflict in Syria: The conflict is of enormous concern to Syrians in the Golan. People are worried about families in the rest of Syria and the increased militarization of the region. Crossing from the Golan to the rest of Syria is no longer possible. Farmers in the Golan have also lost important markets for their produce. The Israeli government uses the conflict to further its claims to the Golan. The settler population in the Golan has increased by a third since the conflict began and has seen Israel intensify pressure on foreign governments to recognize its claim over the Golan. The daily living situation of the Syrians in the occupied Golan remains challenging. Israel, the occupying, continues to practice discriminatory policies against the Syrian community (approx. 27,000 persons) and takes advantage of the ongoing military conflict in Syria proper to claim 'sovereignty' over the Golan.

The changes mentioned have increased activities for the project team. This has meant that our small team works under increasing work pressure. In particular, the success of our legal representation and advice work is creating much additional pressure on Al-Marsad's lawyer. Developing new and existing relationships with other NGOs has been very successful and has increased pressure on the organization to provide partners with the required information.



A field tour of the agricultural lands on which wind turbines are to be built

3. IMPORTANT CHANGES WITHIN AL-MARSAD

There have been no principal changes within Al-Marsad throughout 2019-2021. Regardless of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Al-Marsad has increased its international advocacy activities and correspondence with the local authorities to respect human rights. During the reporting period and the Economic, Social, and cultural activities, particular focus is given to Energex's wind farm project.

Al-Marsad has had much success in its cultural rights project, New Ways of Seeing. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Al-Marsad postponed a cultural festival three times. Eventually, Al-Marsad managed to organize with Fateh Al-Mudarris Center for Arts and Music, the Golan for Developing Arab Villages, and two other grassroots groups eight days cultural festival, which lasted from 23-30 June 2021.

Al-Marsad has also continued working intensively to balance the involvement of different genders within the organization. Al-Marsad achieved promising results in 2020 when four women became members of the organization's general assembly. The public group elected a new board and audit control committee on March 1, 2020.

The Board:

A. Committee

1. Hiba Abu Saleh, Private law office.
2. Madaa Al-Mughraby, Dentist.
3. Madak Kalany. Engineer.

4. Madad Ewidat, farmer.

B. Audit Control Committee

1. Shada Safadi, artist and community activist.
2. Wesam Sharaf, human rights lawyer.

While the organization has constantly been encouraging human rights activists from outside the Golan to support its work, dozens of international, Israeli, and Palestinian human rights defenders have remained supportive of our work over the past years. As a result, three Palestinian women interested in our work joined Al-Marsad in 2020, and they took over their duties in January 2021. A list of their names and titles is below:

1. Maha Abdaalh (East Jerusalem), LL.M. international law. International Advocacy Officer, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Brussels.
2. Aml Aun (Nazareth), M.A. political science, Cornell Law School.
3. Muna Dajani (East Jerusalem), ph. D, international law, Lecturer at London School of Economics and political science (LSE).



Activity for children during the cultural festival “Golan cultural days.”

4. RESEARCH REPORTS

Al-Marsad’s legal work in 2021 focussed on current discriminatory Israeli policy initiatives; Settlement expansion; Natural resource exploitation; Planning and housing regulations, Economic, social, and cultural rights restrictions, and property destruction.

In 2021, Al-Marsad published the following reports:

- Nature reserves in the occupied Golan: The environment in the service of land control policy.

<https://golan-marsad.org/nature-reserves-in-the-occupied-golan-the-environment-in-the-service-of-land-control-policy/>

- Position paper: Establishing new water reservoirs in the occupied Golan.

<https://golan-marsad.org/nature-reserves-in-the-occupied-golan-the-environment-in-the-service-of-land-control-policy/>

- Updating the map of the destruction of the Syrian villages in the occupied Golan by Israel (English & Arabic). Under publication.

<https://golan-marsad.org/map/>

- Forty years of the annexation of the Golan and imposition of citizenship.

<https://golan-marsad.org/forty-years-of-the-annexation-of-the-golan-and-imposing-citizenship/>

- Al-Marsad condemns the assassination of Medhat Al-Saleh.

<https://golan-marsad.org/al-marsad-condemns-the-assassination-of-medhat-al-saleh/>

- Al-Marsad's statement on the recent silencing calls by the occupation security forces for activists from the Golan.

<https://golan-marsad.org/al-marsad-statement-on-the-recent-silencing-calls-by-the-occupation-security-services-for-activists-from-the-golan/>

5. PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GOLAN

- Correspondence with Israeli authorities and ministries (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, State Comptroller, Land Mine Authority, planning committees, and others).
- Field visits and meetings for local and international individuals and delegations, including journalists, civil society groups, NGOs, IGOs (ILO and ICRC representatives), tourists, and students.
- Update of Al-Marsad website to make it compatible with mobile devices. Increased use of social media platforms.
- Coordinated with various NGO coalitions around the globe for targeted messaging campaigns, especially about 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 Euro-Med Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights, CIDSE, and ESCR-Net – International Network for Economic, Social and cultural rights.
- Changing Al-Marsad website design.
- Close cooperation with local and international NGOs and coalitions for targeted messaging campaigns, especially about the wind farm project and the SLAAP lawsuit brought against Al-Marsad.
- An Increasing number of our Facebook page followers.
- Shadow report regarding Israel's implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – Al-Marsad and the Legal Clinic of Cornell Law school.
- Contribute to the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) report of *Target Locked: Unrelenting Israeli smear campaigns to defund human rights groups in Israel, Palestine, and the Syrian Golan*.
- Position paper: Establishing new water reservoirs in the occupied Golan.
- Updating the map of the destruction of the Syrian villages in the occupied Golan by Israel (English & Arabic).

- Research paper: “Hermon National Park as a tool of restriction of planning and housing rights of the indigenous Syrian community of the occupied Golan” (Ongoing).
- monitor the settlement expansion and its impacts on the rights of the remaining Syrian community in the Golan.
- Implementation of a joint project, “Mapping the resistance,” with LSE and Bir-Zeit University. The project culminated in the publishing of a book titled: “The untold story of the Golan Heights.”

6. Cultural Festival: “Jawlan Cultural Days.”



cultural festival main poster

- Vision

The occupied Syrian Golan “Jawlan” has been going through a new phase during the last decade. This decade is characterized by anxiety, blurring of the scene, imbalance, and loss of peace of mind. The surrounding circumstances and their repercussions on the Syrian community of the Golan generated a state of frustration and a decline in effectiveness on several levels. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the noticeable shrinkage that affected the civil and cultural spaces in the Jawlan, specifically with the beginning of the events in Syria, and in part, as a direct result of them. We believe that the fluctuating social dynamics and the destabilization of public consensus, revealed by recent conflict issues within the Jawlani society, point to the "disintegration of the public sphere" as we knew it. The emergence of a "new public sphere," with a new distribution of power shares, is shaping.



opening ceremony of the art exhibition “Golan Cultural Days.”

The last decade provided favourable conditions for the colonial system to push the policies of integration and adaptation in the occupied Syrian Jawlan to their limits. It is no secret that it seeks to seize important joints in the public sphere, extract political representation and decisions from civil society, and hold its cultural field. This is because tightening control over the public sphere cannot be achieved without possessing the cultural area and controlling its contents.

The vacuum and the regression of actors in the arts and culture have allowed a broader expansion of the “culture” of colonial power through creating spaces, establishing youth movements, and containment projects, where “Culture” is the outer shell. At the same time, at the core lie the agendas of altering consciousness and distorting identity.

The scene is not entirely bleak, as this preamble might suggest. It is undoubtedly insufficient to capture this period and understand the transformations that occurred during it. Still, it is necessary to say: that reactivating the civil and cultural margin has become essential after ten years of atrophy. It had become a fundamental social and political need before; it was a purely artistic luxury.

Despite the vacuum, and perhaps because of it, an opportunity is formed for our society to revitalize the field of independent indigenous culture in a way that represents and resembles it, Free from the agendas and coercions of all authorities and defending its cultural values and identity.

“Jawan Cultural Days” is an activity by the community, and it aspires to celebrate its culture and arts; both are the condition of “awareness” and the field of its formation, while the song, the painting, the poem, the play, the film, the symposium, and the intellectual dialogues are its tools. An active cultural life revives the spirit in the public space, expands the scope of public freedoms, deepens critical thinking, gives social processes their positive meanings, and consolidates belonging to this land.

This step will contribute to strengthening the sense of collectively in our Jawlan to establish hope and bond with the strength of the community.

We believe that the public space is not the preserve of the elite or an authority. As individuals and society, we deserve to celebrate qualitative cultural content that is available to all and respects our minds, away from the prevailing culture of consumption.



Evaluation workshop of the cultural festival “Golan cultural days.”

7. OUTPUTS DELIVERED TO THE TARGET GROUP

The native community of the Golan is the leading target group of Al-Marsad’s work. Supplemental target groups include Israeli civilians and authorities, international non-profit organizations, state-level politicians, and intergovernmental institutions. In 2021, Al-Marsad’s outputs included the following:

- Over 1000 Syrians received legal consultations on political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights (housing rights, right to education, permanent residency status, discriminatory policies related to utilities, etc.).
- Daily legal support and consultations to the native community regarding the wind turbines project (General objection on behalf of 8 agriculture cooperatives of about 1000 members, the Dentists Association, and Schools’ parental committees).
- 2 cases were closed by arbitration (court arbitrator), and workers paid compensation. Three points are still pending in court.
- Extensive legal support for eight agriculture cooperatives regarding the wind turbine project.
- Raise awareness of the implications of Israel’s local elections in the Golan regionally, internationally, and within the local community.
- Raised awareness locally, regionally, and internationally for the issues surrounding the wind farm project set to be built on native Syrians’ private lands. This included producing a complete legal report on the project’s implications.
- Corresponded with local planning committees to scrutinize infrastructure maintenance in the Syrian village of Majdal Shams.
- Corresponded with the Israeli Ministry of the Interior regarding applications for

- permanent residency.
- Produced four legal reports on human rights and humanitarian law issues in the Golan.
- Worked with politicians worldwide to advocate for fundamental human rights to be afforded to the native population of the Golan and for Israel to be held accountable for its violations of international law.

8. STAFF MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Staff engaged in the following activities throughout 2021:

A. Salam Said Ahmad, Executive secretary/Accountant

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

B. Wael Tarabieh – Manager, Economic, Social and Cultural rights program

- Leads the Economic, Social, and Cultural rights program;
- facilitate non-legal workshops and provide consultations.
- Coordinate and lead the annual cultural festival "Golan Cultural Days";
- Conduct research papers and draft statements;
- Represent the organization in local and international conferences, workshops, and activities related to its work;
- Administer and feed the organization's website and Facebook page;
- Conduct field tours for local and international groups, journalists, and diplomats.

C. Karama Abu Saleh, Lawyer

- Provided legal advice to the Arab population of the Golan (More than 1000 consultations to local community groups and individuals in 2021);
- 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, and the Israeli local and district planning committees);
- Followed up on Al-Marsad's file with the Israeli non-profit registrar 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 labor 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);
- Followed up with Al-Marsad's applications for consultative status with ECOSOC and The European-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN);
- Conducted fundraising (contacted donors, drafted funding proposals, and established relationships with donors);
- Reported to donors;
- Networked with local, regional, and international human rights non-profits; and,
- Conducted interviews on behalf of Al-Marsad.

E. Nazeh Brik, Senior researcher

- Conduct research on settlements, settlement expansion, and discrimination in housing rights against the indigenous Syrian community;
- Update the map of “Syrian residential communities destroyed by Israel after occupying the Golan in 1967;
- Lead a program “settlement monitor”;
- Conduct field tours for local and international groups, journalists, and diplomats;
- Represent the organization in local and international conferences, workshops, and activities related to its work;

F. Interns

The travel restrictions resulted in Covid 19 Pandemic not physically enabling Al-Marsad to host international interns. But only some interns were engaged in helping the organization draft legal research and submissions.

Throughout 2021, dozens of local interns contributed to Al-Marsad’s work. The local interns were intensively engaged in supporting the cultural festival “Golan cultural Days.”

9. CONCLUSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Al-Marsad has made significant achievements during 2021 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, especially regarding legal support to the Syrians and the legal confrontation of the wind turbine project. Moreover, Al-Marsad achieved essential local and international advocacy activity that testifies to the organization’s credibility and increased influence in achieving its human rights mission.

Al-Marsad’s work has been expanded during the project implementation to include new activities focused on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights programming. Legal services, especially legal consultancy, have become a cornerstone of Al-Marsad’s daily work. Al-Marsad has strengthened its cooperation with Palestinian and Israeli Human Rights NGOs Al-Haq, ACRI, BIMKOM, and Adalah concerning legal services. Moreover, Al-Marsad formed strong ties with various organizations that work on collective advocacy, including ESCR-Net, The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Euro-Med Network for Human Rights, and Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS).

Al-Marsad continued during the project implementation to investigate, map, and research the human rights situation in the occupied Golan, reporting to the relevant Israeli authorities and challenging human rights violations and discrimination before various Israeli authorities and in Israeli courts in specific cases.

Al-Marsad is pursuing an intense campaign to raise awareness among Syrians about their rights and actively involve independent activists in lobbying for community rights. 2021 witnessed many local advocacy achievements among the Syrians of the Golan.

Al-Marsad has continued its usual international advocacy activities despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Berlin speaking tour was conducted virtually. Increased interaction with and advocacy before the U.N. 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 increasing demands for cooperation and assistance locally, regionally, and internationally. Al-Marsad keeps trying to find new funding sources and intends to do so to meet these demands.

