

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 21 April 1969.

Syria's third periodic report was due 30 June 1994.

Reservations and Declarations: General declaration; paragraph 1 of article 26.

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 21 April 1969.

Syria's second through fourth periodic reports were due 18 August 1984, 1989 and 1994 respectively.

Reservations and Declarations: General declaration.

Racial Discrimination

Acceded: 21 April 1969.

Syria's 12th through 15th periodic reports (1992 through 1998) were submitted as one document (CERD/C/338/Add.1/Rev.1) which is pending for consideration at the Committee's March 1999 session; the 16th periodic report is due 21 May 2000.

Reservations and Declarations: General declaration; article 22.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 18 September 1990; ratified: 15 July 1993.

Syria's second periodic report is due 13 August 2000.

Reservations and Declarations: General reservation; articles 14, 2 and 21.

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1998/20, para. 4), prepared as per the request in the 1997 resolution of the Commission (1997/2), notes that the UN Department of Public Information continued its activities related to human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan. [These are discussed in greater detail in the profile on Israel.]

At its 1998 session, the Commission adopted a resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan (1998/2). The resolution was adopted by a roll call vote of 35 in favour, 1 opposed, and 19 abstentions. The Commission, *inter alia*: recalled relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly; reaffirmed the illegality of the Israeli decision of December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction, and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan; reaffirmed the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force; deplored Israeli settlement in the occupied Arab territories and Israel's refusal to cooperate with and receive the Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices; reaffirmed the importance of the peace process and expressed concern about the halt in the process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks; and called on Israel to comply with relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan. The Commission: emphasized that displaced persons of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and recover their properties; called on Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and

identity cards on Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan; stated that all legislative and administrative measures and actions that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void and constitute a flagrant violation of international law; and called on UN members not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions to which the resolution referred.

THEMATIC REPORTS**Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights****Arbitrary detention, Working Group on:**

(E/CN.4/1998/44, paras. 6, 14, 15;

E/CN.4/1988/44/Add.1, Opinion No. 2/1997)

The government informed the Working Group (WG) that some of the persons named in the WG's Decisions 29/1996 and 31/1996 had been released, and others were due to complete their sentences before the end of 1997.

Opinion No. 2/1997 related to the arrest of a civil engineer and businessman in 1980 by a group of security officers. The WG noted that they did not know the reasons for the arrest, the detention had never been acknowledged, and they did not know whether the man had ever been charged or tried for any criminal offence. The family did learn that he was being held in Palmyra (Tadmur) prison and, in 1992, the family tried to apply at military police quarters in Damascus for a permit to visit. The responsible officer informed the family that the man was indeed in the Palmyra prison and was to be released shortly. The family had not received any additional news from or about him since.

In its September 1996 reply, the government confirmed the arrest in 1980 on a charge of belonging to an armed terrorist group involved in murders and bomb attacks in Syria. According to the government, the man was tried and sentenced to death by judgement No. 28 of 9 June 1996.

The WG stated that the government's reply: contained no information on the person's current status with regard to criminal law; did not indicate whether he had been able to lodge any appeals; did not indicate to what group the men allegedly belonged and on what grounds it is classified as a "terrorist group"; did not provide any details of the murders allegedly committed by the group, of the bomb attacks it allegedly carried out, of the places and dates of the attacks, or of the man's alleged role in the organization; did not indicate why the individual was not tried until 15 years after being taken into custody, what judicial or other organ was responsible for ordering his arrest without charges or trial during this period, under what law or legal provision he was held without trial for more than 15 years, and what court was responsible for trying him.

The WG also noted that the government had provided no information on the trial — such as the acts for which the