



Joint Statement **Condemning the Israeli Attacks on South Syria**

March
Paris, France

We strongly condemn the Israeli attacks on Southern Syria and the ongoing Israeli occupation. These violations endanger civilian lives, have the potential of triggering new waves of internal and external displacement, and risks further instability in Syria and the region. These attacks further undermine an already fragile humanitarian situation in a country, which has already suffered from over thirteen years of war, economic collapse, and mass displacement.

Context:

Since the outbreak of the Syrian Revolution in 2011, civilians in different regions including in the south, have been subject to various human rights violations by several actors, including the former Assad regime, affiliated security entities and Iranian-affiliated groups, and other local armed groups. Following the intervention of Iran and its proxy forces such as Hezbollah, Israel escalated its military involvement, and while Israel has continuously adopted a posture of strategic ambiguity it has more increasing and more blatantly acknowledged its attacks and has more explicitly escalated its military involvement primarily through airstrikes against specific targets with the ostensible aim of disrupting weapons shipments and military movements of actors associated with Iran. During Israel's widespread military campaign in Lebanon at the end of 2024, Israel also widely targeted Syria, including one attack on April 2024 against the Iranian Embassy in violation of international law, which killed several individuals, including civilians.¹

Israel's increasing militarization in Syria:

Since the fall of the former Assad regime in December 2024, Israel has further escalated its military activity against Syria, launching more than 350 airstrikes across different military positions.² The attacks destroyed military assets such as weapon warehouses, ground forces, and aircraft and navy vessels. In January, several airstrikes targeted crossing points between Syria and Lebanon, inflicting damage to houses and leaving several people injured.³ Israel claimed that the strikes destroyed over 70% of the Syrian Army's strategic military capabilities.⁴ Further, Israel unilaterally revoked the 1974 disengagement agreement⁵ with Syria considering it to be void and proceeded to enter and occupy territory in the established buffer zone and beyond it, moving into areas of Mount Hermon and in areas of southern Damascus.⁶ Israel claims that the occupation is "temporary measure" to ensure that certain armed groups are unable to take advantage of power vacuums.⁷ UN officials have called on Israel to withdraw and have called for "urgent de-escalation" stressing that the 1974 disengagement "remains in force" and must be upheld, "including by ending all unauthorized presence in the area of separation and refraining from any action that would undermine the ceasefire and stability in Golan."⁸

In a step of further escalation, on 23 February, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded the complete demilitarisation of southern Syria in the provinces of Quneitra, Deraa and Suweida and added that Israel "will not tolerate any threat to the Druze community in southern Syria."⁹ The Druze minority – who are present in Lebanon, Israel and Southern Syria – who predominantly live in the Israeli occupied Golan Heights have had to navigate complex political tensions that span national borders. Israel's illegal intervention and ongoing occupation of southern Syria constitutes a violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state¹⁰. Furthermore, Israel's actions breach multiple international legal instruments, including the Geneva Conventions (1949), UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 497 (1981), as well as UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974).

Israeli escalations continue to cripple Syria's already devastated infrastructure, further straining the dire humanitarian situation causing more internal displacement and contributing to the broader destabilization of the whole region. By continuing its military aggression in Southern Syria and beyond, Israel has further exacerbated tensions between Syrian, regional, and international actors, pushing the region further away from any prospect of stability and peace.

We, the undersigned, call on the international community to take urgent action to prevent Israel from further escalations, withdrawal from the recently occupied lands in Southern Syria, and ensure the protection of civilians in accordance with international law. All efforts must be directed towards genuine conditions of peace rather than fueling further cycles of violence, displacement, and instability.

Signatories:

- 1-Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)**
- 2-ALSHARQ News**
- 3-ACTION FOR SAMA**
- 4-Ceasar Files for Justice (CF4J)**
- 5-De-Colonizer**
- 6-Dozana**
- 7-Entraide et Fraternité**
- 8-Future Makers Team**
- 9-Frontliners For Change (FFC)**
- 10-HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement**
- 11-KISA Cyprus**
- 12-Mahabad Organization For Human Rights (MOHR)**
- 13-Palestina solidariteit**
- 14-SUPPORT IN BELGIUM AND OVERSEAS -SBO**
- 15-Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)**
- 16-SYCAC**
- 17-The Day After**
- 18-THE EMPOWER PEACE INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIC OF ACTION Organization**
- 19-TOTOL For Relief and Development**
- 20-Union of Relief and Development Associations in Lebanon (URDA)**
- 21-Union of Progressive Jews of Belgium**
- 22-Vrede vzw**
- 23-Women Now for Development**
- 24-Warsheh team**
- 25-11.11.11**

1 The attack violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), which guarantees the inviolability of diplomatic premises and the safety of their personnel. See: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

2 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-has-stuck-over-320-targets-in-syria-taking-out-70-of-army-capabilities/>

3 <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-kills-two-lebanon-syria-border-bombings>

4 <https://acleddata.com/2024/12/19/syria-israeli-airstrikes-reach-an-all-time-high-after-assad-regime-falls/>

5 <https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/9424>

6 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-has-struck-over-300-syrian-sites-assad-fell-why-1>

7 Note that since 1967 Israel continues to illegally occupy the Syrian Golan Heights.

8 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158131>

9 <https://apnews.com/article/israel-syria-druze-military-clashes-e1d6da3cc97d121de161699d1aca61e3>

10 <https://legal.un.org/repertory/art2.shtml>