



Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

6572nd meeting

Thursday, 30 June 2011, 11.35 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Messone	(Gabon)
<i>Members:</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Vukašinović
	Brazil	Mr. Fernandes
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement
Observer Force for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2011 (S/2011/359)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2011 (S/2011/359)

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Syria to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/385, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Portugal, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/359, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1994 (2010).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): We voted in favour of resolution 1994 (2010) today as the United Kingdom welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) to maintain stability within its area of operations. It continues to play a valuable and effective role.

We must, however, find a lasting solution to the situation. That will require the cooperation of both parties. We therefore urge Syria and Israel to resume peace negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace agreement, in accordance with the Madrid Conference terms of reference for peace.

The United Kingdom is gravely concerned by the ongoing violence in Syria and the clear threat to regional peace and stability that it presents. In particular, in this context we deplore the loss of life which occurred in UNDOF's area of operations on 15 May and 5 June. We hope that the circumstances which led to these tragic events, including the role of the Syrian Government, will be investigated thoroughly. We urge both parties to show restraint and to refrain from provocations so as to prevent an escalation of tensions along the ceasefire line.

We are also concerned at the Secretary-General's finding that anti-Government demonstrations in Syria have spread to the area of limitation on the Syrian side. We have repeatedly urged the Syrian Government to halt the violence, to respond constructively to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people, and to implement meaningful reforms. It has not done so. Instead, it has met legitimate demands for reform with brute force in which an estimated 1,400 people have died in the past three months. This is completely unacceptable.

We are also very concerned that the Syrian Government continues to obstruct United Nations attempts to help alleviate the crisis and bring assistance to the Syrian people. President Al-Assad refuses to accept phone calls from the Secretary-General; his regime has barred access to humanitarian organizations; and the Human Rights Council-mandated fact-finding mission has been refused permission to enter the country and carry out its work. The Government's actions are causing increasing numbers of Syrian refugees to flood over the borders into Turkey and Lebanon.

The situation in Syria is not sustainable. If we genuinely want to see an end to the violence, this

Council should send a clear message underlining our collective concern. The United Kingdom will therefore continue to press for a Security Council resolution on the wider situation in Syria.

Mr. Berger (Germany): The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was established in 1974. It has been operating for more than 37 years now. We salute the men and women who serve and have served to support UNDOF in the discharge of its mandate. We look forward to receiving in the next report of the Secretary-General an assessment of the capacity of UNDOF to ensure the appropriate operational capability in the future.

On 15 May and 5 June, demonstrations in the UNDOF area of operations resulted in a number of civilian casualties that, to quote paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/359), "put the long-held ceasefire in jeopardy", an assessment we fully share. We deeply regret the loss of life and are gravely concerned about these events, which are the most serious incidents since the establishment of UNDOF's mandate.

Such events cannot go unreflected, which is why we deviated from the long-standing practice of reiterating the same resolution as in previous years. While we call on both parties, Israel and Syria, to fulfil their obligations under the 1974 status-of-forces agreement, we note that these demonstrations would not have been possible without Syrian consent, and we call on Syria to refrain from any action that could provoke further unrest. Throughout the country, Syrian authorities have been cracking down with the utmost brutality on demonstrations against their Government. On 15 May and 5 June, however, they actively encouraged demonstrations against Israel in one of the most sensitive areas of the country. Syria seems to be willing to risk an international conflict in order to divert attention from its repression of the legitimate calls for political freedom voiced by its population. Subsequent riots in the Yarmouk refugee camp indicate that Palestinian refugees have realized that they and their aspirations were manipulated and abused in this very dangerous game.

The violence in Syria must stop. Imprisoned demonstrators must be freed, and instead of spreading fear, meaningful reforms must be implemented. Playing off parts of Syria's multifaceted society against each other will not work. We join in the

Secretary-General's call to the Security Council to express itself on the situation in Syria. For us, this is long overdue.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has played a critical role in maintaining the ceasefire between Israel and Syria since 1974, and we welcome today's vote. The calm in UNDOF's area of operations was seriously disrupted just weeks ago. The United States is deeply concerned about the grave events of 15 May and 5 June in the Golan Heights. We are further troubled by credible reports that the Syrian Government played a role in those demonstrations, which resulted in fatalities and injuries. These actions are a transparent ploy by the Syrian Government to incite violence along the disengagement line in order to divert public attention from its own indiscriminate killings and abuses of the human rights of the Syrian people.

These events display clearly the regime's hypocrisy. It uses the Palestinian cause to encourage violence and risk its long-standing ceasefire with Israel, while continuing to brutally repress the Syrian people and deny their call for reform and democratic change. The Syrian people have shown their courage in demanding a transition to democracy. The Syrian Government must stop shooting demonstrators and allow peaceful protests. It must release political prisoners and stop unjust arrests and torture. It must allow human rights monitors access and start a serious dialogue in order to advance a democratic transition.

In operational terms, we are concerned about the increased restrictions on UNDOF's movement in the area of separation. Both parties must respect the terms of the 1974 disengagement of forces agreement, including by preventing breaches of the area of separation.

Finally, the United States commends the men and women of UNDOF for their dedication, and thanks Major-General Ecarma for his leadership.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish at the outset to emphasize the importance of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force's operations, and to pay tribute to the sacrifices it has made. Today Lebanon joined the consensus in adopting resolution 1994 (2011). We would have preferred that it be technical in nature, as had always been the case in the past, when the resolution was accompanied by a

presidential statement recalling the need to arrive at a comprehensive, peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East. We hope that this will be the case once again in future.

We condemn Israel's attempt to change demographics and to bring about significant changes in the occupied Syrian Golan area, particularly through the extension and expansion of settlements, which is a flagrant violation of international law, of General Assembly resolution 497 (1981) and the Fourth Geneva Convention. We call on Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to withdraw completely from the occupied Golan Heights to the 1967 line. We stress the importance of arriving at a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region of the Middle East.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): Today the Security Council has reaffirmed its support for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). However, the resolution that was adopted today — resolution 1994 (2011) — is profoundly different from its predecessors in its response to the very disturbing developments in the situation in the Golan Heights. Since the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement, the ceasefire line between Israel and Syria had been the most stable borderline in the region; then, in rapid succession, on 15 May and 5 June, major incidents occurred that threatened the ceasefire observed since 1973, jeopardizing stability and security in the region.

Today, therefore, the Council reminds the parties of their obligation to fully respect the 1974 Agreement and the Council's resolutions. Those obligations involve preventing violations of the ceasefire line and the area of separation. The violations of 15 May and 5 June on the Syrian side show that the Syrian authorities did not respect those obligations. The Council also reminds the parties that they must show the utmost restraint, and France deeply regrets the many casualties of those incidents.

UNDOF's movements have been restricted and the Force attacked by the Syrian side. That is unacceptable. Freedom of movement for peacekeepers is, I should recall, a fundamental element in the deployment of peacekeeping operations, as a corollary of the State's consent in accepting such a deployment on its territory. The parties must therefore fully guarantee UNDOF's implementation of its mandate by

ensuring its security and complete freedom of movement.

That is the message that today's resolution sends, reflecting the Council's deep concern about the potential destabilizing influence in the region of the events in the Golan. The origin of those events is clear: the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/359) shows that the Palestinian demonstrators in the area of separation benefited from being ignored by the Syrian authorities, even if they were not actually helped by them. The Syrian authorities were under the obligation to guarantee respect for the ceasefire by preventing violations of the line of disengagement and the area of separation. Those violations took place under the nose of the Syrian security forces, such that the report indicates that they controlled the demonstration.

No one is seeking to deny the legitimacy of the Palestinians' aspirations to achieve an independent, sovereign State, living side by side in peace with Israel, and France has always supported a resumption of negotiations along those lines. What the Council cannot accept is the hypocritical use by the Syrian regime of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and the resulting threat to regional stability. The incidents of 15 May and 5 June are a tragic manifestation of this attempt by the Syrian regime to distract international attention from the aspirations of its own people, which it is now crushing amid bloodshed.

Let me be clear: no attempt at regional destabilization will distract our attention from the brutal and systematic repression of peaceful demonstrators in Syria. Quite the contrary: these actions, which threaten international peace and security, strengthen our determination to see the Council express its views on the Syrian situation. The stability of Syria is crucial for the Middle East, a region whose fragility the Council knows only too well. Such stability can only come about through an end to the violence against the demonstrators and the effective implementation of reforms that meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people to control their own destiny.

Last week the Secretary-General invited the members of the Security Council to overcome their differences and to send this clear message to the Syrian authorities. The resolution that the Council has just adopted unanimously is evidence of the fact that it has maintained its capacity to react when international

peace and security are at stake. We must draw lessons from this and respond to the call of the Secretary-General by working to adopt a resolution that would send to the Syrian authorities the only message that can preserve peace and stability, for which the Council has primary responsibility.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation was the initiator of the first draft resolution on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights for another six months. We support the important stabilizing role played by the Force, and we believe that its presence in the area is necessary until there is an end to tension in the area.

The Russian Federation, which voted in favour of the draft resolution, wanted to continue the long-standing practice by which members of the Council unanimously express, in a presidential statement, their support for the view of the Secretary-General that the situation in the region is unstable and will remain so until a comprehensive settlement is achieved that covers all aspects of the Middle East problem. While there was not unanimity in the Council on this, as there were doubts in this regard, we are confident that this important idea about the Middle East settlement was reflected in the resolution adopted today.

We call on both sides to continue to cooperate actively with United Nations personnel acting under the Force's mandate and within the framework of existing agreements to observe the ceasefire agreement; to assist the United Nations Force in carrying out its mission; and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its staff. We believe that the capacities and resources of the United Nations Force are sufficient for it to carry out its tasks.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the resolution just adopted, of which Russia was a co-sponsor, is technical in nature and bears no relation to developments in the political situation in Syria or in Israel. Syria is not on the agenda of the Security Council because it does not pose a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is watching closely the situation in the Middle East. We commend the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the very important role it

has played in maintaining regional stability, and we support the smooth renewal of UNDOF's mandate.

The events in Syria are an internal affair of that country. It should be left to the parties concerned to find a proper solution through dialogue and consultation. The question of Syria and the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF are two distinct issues and should not be linked, so as to avoid complicating and politicizing the renewal of UNDOF's mandate.

At present, the situation in the Middle East is extremely complex and sensitive. The international community must work to maintain regional peace and stability and to facilitate the efforts of the parties concerned to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East that is based on the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like at the outset to express its appreciation for the efforts being made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and to the members of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). I want them to remember this statement.

UNDOF personnel in the occupied Golan Heights are on a part of our land that has been occupied by Israel since 1967. The reason UNDOF forces are in the Golan is the Israeli occupation of the Golan. I want this fact to remain present in the minds of our colleagues. We would therefore like to express our appreciation for the efforts being made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and by UNDOF personnel in the occupied Golan Heights to observe the Agreement on Disengagement and to maintain peace and security in the Force's area of operations, which is, of course, in implementation of its mandate.

UNDOF has always been, and continues to be, the safest peacekeeping operation of all such operations being carried out by the United Nations throughout the world. Syria has supported and facilitated the work of UNDOF and respected its mandate since the Force was formed in 1974.

Moreover, Syria has maintained close ties with officials of UNDOF and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, as well as with DPKO, for a period of approximately 40 years — the duration of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights.

The periodic reports issued by the Secretary-General since the Israeli occupation of the Golan began in 1967 have expressed appreciation for Syria's positive attitude in cooperating with UNDOF and its personnel as well as in ensuring their safety and respecting their mandate. On behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, we reiterate that we will do everything necessary to maintain the safety of UNDOF's personnel in order to ensure the success of its mandate.

Syria expresses its regret that the long-sought-after just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that certain colleagues have mentioned has not been achieved yet. Israel has not withdrawn from the occupied Golan Heights, in implementation of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981) and of all international initiatives in that respect, including the Arab Peace Initiative and other well-known terms of reference. It has also not complied with international law. This has led, naturally, to the prolonged presence of that force in part of our occupied land.

In that regard, we ask the Security Council to play its due role by putting an end to the Israeli occupation of our land and thus uphold the mandate that it has given itself through its own resolutions and fulfil its task of maintaining international peace and security.

Ever since the start of the recent internal events and developments in Syria, and especially after certain extremists started using violence and bearing arms against the forces of law and order and innocent Syrian citizens, including peaceful demonstrators, it has become clear to us and to many observers throughout the world that some parties, including in this very Security Council, are attempting to involve the Council, on the pretext of weak excuses and justifications, in internal developments that have nothing to do with its role, responsibilities or mandate.

Without going into detail concerning the attempts we have witnessed on the part of some Council members to involve the Council in issues that are none of its business, we must confess our bafflement over the attempts — described to us by certain colleagues, whom we thank — of some of these parties to include references to Syrian domestic affairs in a technical draft resolution extending the mandate of UNDOF. This is a technical issue that the Security Council has addressed in a technical manner dozens of times over the many years of the Israeli occupation of our Golan.

This exploitation of strictly internal developments in Syria is aimed solely at putting political pressure on Syria, and is another indication of how some member States will not hesitate to continue to use the Security Council as a tool to enforce their own policies. Syria expresses its deep appreciation to the Council members that did not get involved in these brazen tactics and suspicious activities.

We note that the reforms announced by President Bashar Al-Assad, which emanate from his belief in the need to implement reforms that will meet the demands and aspirations of the Syrian people, will be applied on the ground through the national dialogue conference, the consultations for which will begin in the next few days. We should keep in mind that some of these reforms have now become a tangible reality on the ground and enjoy the support and the appreciation of the international community, as we have reported consecutively to the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council.

Since the formation of UNDOF in 1974, we have continued to draw the attention of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to the activities of Israel, the occupying Power — and that is its legal title — and its authorities. They have built settlements in the Golan, which now number 44. They continue to build bypass roads around Syrian cities in the Golan and to drain Mas'adah Lake, on which thousands of Syrian farmers depend for their living. They continue to oppress the citizens of the Syrian Golan Heights, who refuse to carry Israeli identification cards and reject the Israeli occupation, and to undertake campaigns to arrest them.

In 1981, the Council unanimously adopted its renowned resolution 497 (1981), which condemned and rejected the Israeli occupying Power's decision to annex the occupied Golan Heights.

Not all of this news, it appears, has reached the ears of some representatives who have spoken today. They have never even mentioned these issues in their statements on United Nations resolutions and the renewal of the UNDOF mandate over the past 30 years. Our people's suffering in the occupied Golan Heights deserved some reference a long time ago. Instead, these speakers focused exclusively on the strictly internal affairs of a founding State Member of this Organization.

According to a report issued in Washington, D.C., yesterday, the recent wars waged by the United States

military have cost \$4 trillion. These wars have led to disasters in Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas of the world. We now also hear of the scandal of NATO's failure to respect the strict mandate of resolution 1973 (2011), and this scandal is there for all to see. These facts, and not some internal domestic incidents that could have taken place in any State Member of the Organization, are relevant to the Security Council's mandate.

My country has received 2 million Iraqi refugees, who fled Iraq because of the American- and British-led military invasion. But we have not put our brothers in camps or asked them to live in tents. We welcomed them as they awaited the liberation of Iraq so that they could return to their own homes and land. Since we first received these 2 million Iraqi refugees, no one in the international community has even offered humanitarian aid to assist us in bearing the burden that has been thrust upon us by the British and United States invasion and occupation of Iraq. We host half a million Palestinian refugees as a result of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and half a million Syrians displaced from the Golan.

Not one of those who have spoken today to express their concern at the internal incidents in Syria has offered any form of humanitarian support to help us meet these dangerous challenges, which are not of our own creation. Moreover, no Hollywood stars have come to visit the millions of refugees who have fled to our country.

Yes, Syria's stability is important — very important — to the Middle East, as one of our colleagues has pointed out. Therefore, threatening this stability is extremely dangerous to the region and international security and stability, especially when such meddling is done by countries harbouring animosity towards us, based on principle and for political reasons. These are the same States responsible for the disasters of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the division of the region. These are important considerations that those with a poor memory should bear in mind when seeking a clear perception of what is happening in the world.

To speak of concern for pluralistic Syrian society, as the representative of Germany did, is not at all consistent with Germany's provision to Israel in recent years of six submarines that can be equipped with nuclear warheads. I will not go into further detail, as I

would have to refer to other speakers who have also furnished Israel with nuclear technology, helped it to build nuclear reactors, and defended its refusal to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place its nuclear installations under international supervision.

All of this is only part of what I would like to discuss, but I would like to thank you, Sir, for having given me the floor. I hope that the Council will focus on real issues within its mandate instead of encroaching upon the sovereignty of a State Member of the United Nations and meddling with its internal affairs.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Prozor (Israel): Israel deeply appreciates the work carried out by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The international community must continue to support its mission, which remains an important component of stability in our region.

As we witness unprecedented turmoil in the Middle East, the need for all parties to fully respect the disengagement line between Israel and Syria has never been clearer. Yet after decades of relative quiet, we have witnessed several brazen attempts to breach the line from the Syrian side and raise tensions in our region.

On 15 May, a large organized group of protesters tore down the Alpha fence in Syria, breached the disengagement line with Israel and carried out acts of violence against Israeli Defence Forces in the village of Majdal Chams. On 5 June, we saw another act of provocation on the line. Hundreds of individuals sought to breach the disengagement line with Israel in the areas of Majdal Chams and Quneitra. They tried to break through the fences in the area, threw Molotov cocktails and other large objects at the Israeli Defence Forces, and used other modes of violence to advance their goals.

Despite its clear responsibilities, the Syrian regime did not prevent demonstrators from arriving at the disengagement line, or the attempts to cross it. To the contrary, these incidents, which could not have taken place without the knowledge of the Syrian authorities, reflect a blatant attempt by Syria to distract international attention from its violent repression of its

own people. The Syrian regime's fingerprints are all over these protests; to my mind, one does not have to be a New York City Police Department forensics expert to detect it.

The events that followed the 5 June protests in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Syria provide one glaring example of Syrian involvement in the demonstration. I think Bashar Al-Assad is the only ophthalmologist I know who is actively engaged in blackening the vision of hope of his own people and, indeed, of the whole region.

The Syrian-Israeli disengagement line has been quiet for decades. The Syrian regime cannot be allowed to disturb this quiet just because it does not want the cries of its own citizens to be heard. I want to thank, on behalf of the State of Israel, the President and all the people who have worked tirelessly in UNDOF over the years because their work, as I said, is an important component in the stability of our region.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.