

Forum: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

Issue: The issue of the Israeli Presence in the Golan Heights

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INTRODUCTION

The Golan Heights, a rocky plateau separating Israel and Syria of major strategic importance, have been a matter of dispute for many decades, with tensions rising significantly in the region in the last year. The Israeli presence in an area considered by the United Nations as Syrian territory poses a threat not only to the stability of the former country, but also to its people.

The dispute dates back to the 1967 War, when Israel attempted, and succeeded in occupying part of the region. Immediately after the invasion, the country started to build illegal settlements in the area while also violently expelling ethnoreligious communities living in it, such as the Druze. In spite of Syria's attempt to regain the Golan Heights six years later, it was without success, and therefore the United Nations sent peacekeeping forces to ensure that security and peace are maintained¹.

The current situation in the Golan Heights, however, remains particularly dangerous, with Israel launching air attacks and violating the sovereignty of Syria continuously, all for the purpose of expanding its territory and building illegal settlements. Despite the presence of a UN-monitored buffer zone² aiming at preventing the escalation of conflict, the issue remains unsolved, risking not only for innocent lives to be taken, but for sociopolitical and economic chaos to prevail.

In general, it is imperative that this issue be tackled and that the violations of human rights in the area be stopped as soon as possible. In an ever-changing world, resolving sociopolitical problems is of utmost importance, and therefore all states need to work together to achieve peace and security for all.

¹ Staff, Al Jazeera. "Is Israel Trying to Entrench Its Occupation of the Golan Heights?" *Al Jazeera*, 16 Dec. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/16/is-israels-trying-to-entrench-its-occupation-of-the-golan-heights.

² Staff, Al Jazeera. "What Is the Golan Heights and Who Controls It?" *Al Jazeera*, 29 July 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/29/what-is-the-golan-heights-and-who-controls-it.



Figure 1: The Golan Heights³

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Annexation

Annexation is the possession of a piece of land or a country, in most cases by using force⁴. Israel declared the annexation of the Golan Heights formally in 1981⁵.

Armistice

Armistice can be defined as an agreement made by opposing sides in the context of a war to stop fighting for a certain amount of time. In other words, it is the cessation of arms⁶. Israel and Syria signed an armistice in 1974 in an attempt to prevent the escalation of conflict.

Buffer zone

A buffer zone is any designated area of land or sea which is created to separate two opposing forces or groups. This area belongs to neither of the hostile powers, therefore it is considered neutral, and aims at mitigating or neutralizing potential conflict. In the topic of the

³ BBC. "Golan Heights Profile." *BBC News*, 25 Mar. 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14724842.

⁴ "ANNEXATION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Dictionary.cambridge.org*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/annexation.

⁵ Staff, Al Jazeera. "What Is the Golan Heights and Who Controls It?" *Al Jazeera*, 29 July 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/29/what-is-the-golan-heights-and-who-controls-it.

⁶ "Definition of ARMISTICE." *Www.merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/armistice.

Israeli presence in the Golan Heights, the United Nations have established such a zone, which however has not proven particularly effective.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

People can be characterized as internally displaced when they are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, natural hazards or other crises within the borders of their country⁷. The Israeli presence in the Golan Heights inevitably leads to the displacement of many Syrian residents.

Peacekeeping missions

Peacekeeping missions are operations, commonly launched by the United Nations, aiming at mitigating conflict and ensuring that peace and security are maintained. What is more, peacekeeping missions facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament and generally in restoring the rule of law⁸.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a political concept that refers to the existence of a dominant power or supreme authority. The sovereign is the entity that exercises power without limitation⁹.

Third party

A third party refers to a person and/or country and/or organization that is less involved in a matter than the main people and/or countries and/or organizations being involved¹⁰. Third party involvement in the issue of the Israeli presence in the Golan Heights is greatly encouraged.

⁷ "Internal Displacement | OCHA." *Www.unocha.org*, www.unocha.org/internal-displacement.

⁸ United Nations. "What Is Peacekeeping." *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2025, peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping.

⁹ Cornell Law School. "Sovereignty." *LII / Legal Information Institute*, Cornell Law School, 2019, www.law.cornell.edu/wex/sovereignty.

¹⁰ Cambridge Dictionary. "Third Party." *@CambridgeWords*, 26 Apr. 2023, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/third-party.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical background

The conflict in the Golan Heights started almost 60 years ago, and the tensions in the area have not ceased ever since. In the 1967 War, also known as the Six-Day-War, between Israel and other Arab nations including Syria, the former managed to occupy a significant part of the area. Immediately after the occupation, Israel started to build illegal settlements in the Golan Heights, while also violently expelling an ethnoreligious community living in it, known as the Druze. Notably, the first settlement to be built was the “Herom ha Golan”, by a group of young Israelis in July of 1967¹¹.

Six years later, in the 1973 War, Syria attempted to regain the part of the Golan that was invaded by Israel through a surprise attack, however did not succeed. The war, also known as the “Yom Kippur” war, lasted 20 days, from October 6th to October 26th and resulted in involving both the United States of America (USA) as well as the Soviet Union in confrontation aiming at defending their respective allies¹².

Following the 1973 War, the threat of conflict escalation in the area seemed more and more pressing, leading to the involvement of the United Nations (UN). Therefore, in 1974, the UN deployed peacekeeping forces in the Golan Heights in order to ensure that peace and security between the conflicting parties prevailed, after the signing of armistice between Israel and Syria. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) also established the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) as a means of maintaining the ceasefire. A buffer zone supervised by the United Nations was additionally established, and is still intact today. According to the disengagement agreement, each country may only maintain limited forces and weaponry within specified distances from the buffer zone.

In spite of the above-mentioned measures, however, the tensions between Israel and Syria had not disappeared. On the contrary, in 1981 the Israeli House of Representatives named “Knesset” passed the “Golan Heights Law”, which applied the Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration over the area. The three readings of the law were passed in just one day, and the

¹¹ “Israeli Settlements in Gaza and the West Bank (Part I) - CEIRPP, DPR Study - DPR Publication.” *Question of Palestine*, 1982, www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205221/.

¹² Britannica. “Yom Kippur War | Summary, Causes, Combatants, & Facts.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 16 Nov. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Yom-Kippur-War.

annexation of the Golan Heights was declared on December 14th, 1981¹³. Three days later, the UNSC passed Resolution 497, opposing the Israeli occupation of the Golan. Even today, the area is considered by the United Nations as Syrian territory.

Finally, the conflict was greatly shaped by the civil war in Syria, starting on the 15th of March, 2011 and lasting 13 years. The civil war officially started when pro-democracy protests erupted throughout the whole country, opposing the authoritative rule of the Al-Assad dynasty, and specifically that of Bashar Al-Assad, the ruler at the time. In response to the uprising, the Syrian government used violence, however failing at repressing it. Eventually, the war ended in 2024 with Bashar Al-Assad fleeing the country¹⁴. The war undeniably left a trail of destruction behind, leaving Syrian residents having to fight for their survival. In the context of the issue in the Golan Heights, right after the fall of the infamous dynasty, Israel built even more illegal settlements in the region¹⁵, resulting once again in the internal displacement of thousands of Syrians.

The current situation in the Golan Heights

The current situation in the Golan Heights is characterised by danger for the local population as well as by continuous attacks and territorial disputes. More specifically, Israel has launched over 200 air attacks at Syria since the fall of the Al-Assad dynasty and the end of the Syrian civil war¹⁶. Areas such as Damascus are being targeted continuously, and specific landmarks in the Syrian capital such as the defense ministry have been struck. The result of the afore-mentioned attacks is catastrophic. Since November, 462,000 people have been internally displaced¹⁷, and thousands have lost their lives because of the conflict, including residents of Lebanon¹⁸.

¹³ "Applying Israeli Law to the Golan in 1981 and the West Bank in 2020 | the Jerusalem Post." *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 2 June 2020,

www.jpost.com/israel-news/applying-israeli-law-to-the-golan-in-1981-and-the-west-bank-in-2020-629946.

¹⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Syrian Civil War | Facts & Timeline." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Britannica, 6 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War.

¹⁵ Jazeera, Al. "Israel Approves Plan to Surge Settler Population in Occupied Golan Heights." *Al Jazeera*, 15 Dec. 2024,

www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/15/israel-approves-plan-to-surge-settler-population-in-occupied-golan-heights.

¹⁶ Hussein, Mohamed A. "Mapping Israel's Expanding Air Attacks across Syria." *Al Jazeera*, 4 June 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/4/mapping-israels-expanding-air-attacks-across-syria.

¹⁷ "Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (as of 28 April 2025) - Syrian Arab Republic." *ReliefWeb*, 8 May 2025,

reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-humanitarian-situation-report-no-5-28-april-2025.

¹⁸ Reuters Staff. "Costs of Israel-Hezbollah Conflict on Lebanon, Israel." *Reuters*, 27 Nov. 2024, www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/costs-israel-hezbollah-conflict-lebanon-israel-2024-11-26/.

Unfortunately, despite the recent indirect talks urging for calmness in the region as a means of preventing the escalation of greater conflict, the situation seems to worsen day by day. World leaders continue to encourage ceasefire and promote peaceful dialogue and diplomatic negotiations as a means of tackling the issue. It has been proposed that borders can be a matter of negotiation and Ahmed al-Sharaa's administration has expressed his support for returning to the terms of an agreement similar to that of 1974 which resulted in the creation of the UN buffer zone¹⁹. Nevertheless, Syria wishes to secure part of the Golan Heights once again under the terms of a potential upcoming peace agreement²⁰.

The significance of the Golan Heights and the dangers in case of conflict escalation

The Golan Heights: a point of utmost political and strategic significance

The Golan Heights are undeniably a point of utmost political and strategic importance. Southern Syria as well as Damascus are very clearly visible from the top of the rocky plateau, giving Israel the opportunity to conveniently monitor Syrian movements²¹. Additionally, the topography of the Golan Heights makes it particularly difficult for Syrian attacks against Israel to occur.

The Golan Heights serve other purposes as well. Being an arid region, the area serves as a key water source; a necessity for local populations but also a significant advantage for the military. Lastly, the volcanic soil can be used for cultivation, taking the fact that the land is fertile into consideration.

Political instability and overall vulnerability

In the case of further conflict escalation, undoubtedly political chaos and vulnerability will prevail. Not only will the two conflicting parties be greatly affected on a political scale, but bordering countries could potentially be involved in the conflict as well, leading to a wider war.

Notably, tensions have already risen in the last few days between Lebanon and Israel. Not only are Syrian refugee camps being struck, but the Bekaa Valley was also turned into a

¹⁹ Jazeera, Al. "Israel Attacks Western Syria despite Recent Indirect Talks to Calm Tensions." *Al Jazeera*, 30 May 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/30/israel-attacks-western-syria-despite-recent-indirect-talks-to-calm-tensions.

²⁰ BBC. "Golan Heights Profile." *BBC News*, 25 Mar. 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14724842.

²¹ BBC. "Golan Heights Profile." *BBC News*, 25 Mar. 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14724842.

target in July of 2025²². An attack in the latter area resulted in the death of 12 people²³, including Hezbollah fighters. The air attacks currently taking place in Lebanon are reportedly the deadliest in the region since a UN-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon last November; a truce which was continuously violated by the former²⁴.

Humanitarian concerns

The conflict in the Golan Heights used to, and continues to result in all types of humanitarian issues. Human rights violations occur constantly, with thousands being internally displaced and others losing their life to air attacks. Innocent civilians including children have faced death as an undeserving punishment. What is more, landmines are a constant threat to civilians living in the area of the Golan, as they have had the injury or the death of 60 people since 1967²⁵.

Notably, it's not just the residents of Syria and of the Golan Heights that are at risk. With the escalation of the conflict, the residents of bordering countries are to be negatively affected as well, an example being the Lebanese people currently being deprived of their fundamental human rights due to violations and attacks.

Fragile economy

Inevitably, the escalation of greater conflict in the Golan Heights would cease economic development. As proven historically, especially after World War I (WWI) and World War II (WWII), any country engaged in conflict is bound to later on suffer from economic troubles.

Even though neither Syria nor Israel are considered as Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) the rise of war involving them would undeniably damage the economy, with inflation augmenting, economic output falling dramatically, and government funds being allocated differently than at times of peace²⁶.

²² Jazeera, Al. "Israeli Air Strikes Kill 12 in Eastern Lebanon despite Ceasefire." *Al Jazeera*, 15 July 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/15/israeli-air-strikes-kill-12-in-eastern-lebanon-despite-ceasefire.

²³ Jazeera, Al. "Israeli Air Strikes Kill 12 in Eastern Lebanon despite Ceasefire." *Al Jazeera*, 15 July 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/15/israeli-air-strikes-kill-12-in-eastern-lebanon-despite-ceasefire.

²⁴ Jazeera, Al. "Israeli Air Strikes Kill 12 in Eastern Lebanon despite Ceasefire." *Al Jazeera*, 15 July 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/15/israeli-air-strikes-kill-12-in-eastern-lebanon-despite-ceasefire.

²⁵ Kreniske, J. S., et al. "Landmines in the Golan Heights: A Patient's Perspective." *Case Reports*, vol. 2014, no. aug24 1, 25 Aug. 2014, pp. bcr2014205756–bcr2014205756, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bcr-2014-205756>.

²⁶ "Economic Fallout: The Price of War." *Keil Institute of the World Economy*, 14 Feb. 2024, www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/news/economic-fallout-the-price-of-war/.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Israel

Israel is one of the two countries being involved in the issue of the Golan Heights currently controlling approximately 1.200 square-kilometers of the area. The country, immediately after obtaining part of the Golan Heights in 1967, started to build illegal settlements in the region and has not stopped ever since. Increasing activity in building settlements was also observed right after the fall of Bashar al-Assad, the last member of the al-Assad dynasty in 2024, which marked the end of the civil war in Syria. Currently, over 30 illegal settlements exist in the Golan Heights, housing about 31,000 Israeli settlers²⁷.

Moreover, despite not facing international support, and in spite of world leaders urging for diplomacy and for peaceful negotiations to prevail, Israel continues to launch air attacks across Syria, claiming to do so in self-defense. These actions not only set thousands of lives in danger, but generally threaten international peace and security.

Lebanon

Lebanon's role in the issue of the Golan Heights is crucial, being a bordering country and having access to the region. Recently, tensions have risen between the country and Israel, with attacks becoming more and more frequent. A Lebanon-based terrorist group, namely the Hezbollah has also been involved in the topic, with Israel accusing the group of launching attacks against it, a statement that the group denied in 2024²⁸. The Hezbollah terrorist group performs both as a militant group, as well as a Shiite muslim political party, meaning they are followers of Shia Islam. Additionally, their leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed by an Israeli air force in September 2024, allowing for chaos to prevail and for tensions to rise even more²⁹.

Generally, with Lebanon also being involved in the issue at hand, it is very probable that the conflict broadens. This is the reason why it is imperative that action be taken as soon as

²⁷ Jazeera, Al. "Israel Approves Plan to Surge Settler Population in Occupied Golan Heights." *Al Jazeera*, 15 Dec. 2024,

www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/15/israel-approves-plan-to-surge-settler-population-in-occupied-golan-heights.

²⁸ Staff, Al Jazeera. "What Is the Golan Heights and Who Controls It?" *Al Jazeera*, 29 July 2024,

www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/29/what-is-the-golan-heights-and-who-controls-it.

²⁹ Council on Foreign Relations. "What Is Hezbollah?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 4 Oct. 2024,

www.cfr.org/background/what-hezbollah.

possible, as a means of avoiding political chaos, additional human rights violations, and economic damages.

Syria

Syria is the other of the two countries greatly involved in the issue of the Golan Heights along with Israel. The state is called to not only face the trail of destruction the 13 year-long civil war has left behind, but additionally is found face to face with having to resolve the issue of the Israeli presence in the Golan Heights.

Syria receives continuous air attacks by Israel; however, it has the support of the international community and all Member States except for the United States of America (USA) regarding which of the states involved in the conflict has sovereignty over the area of the Golan.

United States of America (USA)

The United States of America (USA) is directly involved in the conflict of the Golan Heights, being the only country that acknowledges the annexation of the region by Israel, recognizing it as a part of the former. The Trump administration proclaimed “the United States recognizes that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel” on March 25th, 2019. A few years later, the Biden administration kept the above-mentioned policy in place³⁰.

European Union

The European Union, consisting of 27 countries in the European continent, does not recognize the annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel, and supports that the area is Syrian territory occupied by the state of Israel³¹. More specifically, countries such as France have publicly encouraged Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights, showing respect to the 1974 disengagement agreement³². The same stance is additionally kept by the United Nations (UN).

The International Crisis Group

³⁰ Harb, Ali. “Three Years On, US Still Views Syria’s Golan as Israeli Territory.” *Www.aljazeera.com*, 25 Mar. 2022, www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/25/three-years-on-us-still-views-syrias-golan-as-israeli-territory.

³¹ Staff, Al Jazeera. “What Is the Golan Heights and Who Controls It?” *Al Jazeera*, 29 July 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/29/what-is-the-golan-heights-and-who-controls-it.

³² Nicholson, Tom. “France Tells Israel to Halt Golan Heights Incursion.” *POLITICO*, 11 Dec. 2024, www.politico.eu/article/france-israel-middle-east-golan-heights-syria-un-war-defense-idf-buffer-zone/.

The International Crisis Group is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) which aims at mitigating conflict and handling crises in a world-wide scale, including the ones in the Middle East³³. The International Crisis Group is currently called to assist in restoring peace and security in the region of the Golan Heights, and has as its aim to protect all civilians residing in the said area.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

| DATE | DESCRIPTION OF EVENT |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 5th, 1967 | June 5th, 1967 marks the start of the War of 1967, during which Israel occupied a big area of the Golan Heights |
| October 6th, 1973 | Six years after the War of 1967, Syria attempted to regain the area of the Golan Heights under Israeli occupation but without success. October 6th marks the start of the Yom Kippur War. |
| 1974 | The United Nations deploy peacekeeping forces in the region, following the armistice signed between Syria and Israel |
| May 31st, 1974 | The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) establishes the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) as a means of maintaining ceasefire |
| December 14 th , 1981 | The Knesset, the Israeli house of representatives, passes "the Golan Heights |

³³ Lemery, Christopher. "Guides: Middle East Studies and Research @ Pitt: IGOs, NGOs, & Interest Groups." *Pitt.libguides.com*, pitt.libguides.com/middleeast/ngosigos.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Law”, which applied Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration to the Golan Heights, therefore declaring the annexation of the area |
| December 17 th , 1981 | The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passes a resolution opposing Israel’s occupation over the Golan Heights |
| March 25 th , 2019 | The Trump administration officially recognizes the Golan Heights as a part of Israel ³⁴ |

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Resolution 497 (1981)

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passes Resolution 497, on December 17th, 1981, which opposes the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. The resolution decided that “the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect”³⁵. The UN’s stance on the issue has not changed ever since, as it considers the Golan Heights as a Syrian territory.

The Golan Heights Law

Passed by the Knesset, the Israeli House of Representatives, or in other words, the parliament³⁶, the “Golan Heights Law” applies Israeli jurisdiction, administration and law in the region of the Golan Heights. The law’s three readings were passed in just one day, on

³⁴ “Golan Heights: Trump Signs Order Recognising Occupied Area as Israeli.” *BBC News*, 25 Mar. 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47697717.

³⁵ Security, UN. “Resolution 497 (1981) /: Adopted by the Security Council at Its 2319th Meeting, on 17 December 1981.” *United Nations Digital Library System*, UN, 17 Dec. 1981, digitallibrary.un.org/record/26751?v=pdf.

³⁶ *Www.gov.il*, 2024, www.gov.il/en/departments/knesset/govil-landing-page.

December 14th, 1981³⁷. This was also when Israel formally declared the annexation of the Golan Heights.

Proclamation on Recognizing the Golan Heights as Part of the State of Israel

The President of the United States of America (USA) Donald Trump proclaimed that his country acknowledges the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, and states that “any possible future peace agreement in the region must account for Israel’s need to protect itself from Syria and other regional threats”³⁸, also mentioning the Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based terrorist group³⁹.

Notably, tensions between Hezbollah and Israel have risen in the past months, serving as an additional hazard to resolving the issue.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

There have been a lot of attempts aiming at resolving the issue of the Israeli presence in the Golan Heights, especially when the problem first emerged.

Previous attempts made by the United Nations (UN)

Following the wars of 1967 and 1973, an armistice was signed between the two conflicting parties, namely Israel and Syria. Directly after the signing, the UN took action, by creating a buffer-zone in the Golan Heights area, which is still in use today. However, it is important to point out that it has not been particularly effective, as Israeli illegal settlements have been established within this designated territory.

Furthermore, the United Nations (UN) established the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) as a means of tackling the issue. The aim of the UNDOF was to maintain the ceasefire between the above-mentioned countries. Its strength involved 1,224 personnel, 60 staff officers, 47 civilian international staff and 1,117 TCC personnel⁴⁰. In addition to the UNDOF,

³⁷ “Applying Israeli Law to the Golan in 1981 and the West Bank in 2020 | the Jerusalem Post.” *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 2 June 2020,

www.jpost.com/israel-news/applying-israeli-law-to-the-golan-in-1981-and-the-west-bank-in-2020-629946.

³⁸ “Proclamation on Recognizing the Golan Heights as Part of the State of Israel – the White House.” *Trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov*,

trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-recognizing-golan-heights-part-state-israel/.

³⁹ National Counterterrorism Center. “National Counterterrorism Center | Groups.” *Www.dni.gov*, www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/hizballah.html.

⁴⁰ “Facts and Figures.” *UNDOF*, 18 Nov. 2016, undof.unmissions.org/facts-and-figures.

peacekeeping forces were deployed in the region in order to facilitate the political process, protect civilians' rights and assist in the disarmament.

Previous attempts made by world leaders

Finally, recent attempts include world leaders' encouragement to resort to peaceful dialogue and negotiations as a means of resolving the issue in the area of the Golan Heights. It has been reported that some Syrian-Israeli negotiations are taking place secretly, especially in July of 2025, leading to the end of sanctions from the United States of America (USA) to Syria⁴¹. Additionally, the French President Emmanuel Macron assured the Israeli Prime Minister, namely Benjamin Netanyahu, that France is dedicated to avoid further escalation of conflict in the region of the Golan Heights⁴².

Unfortunately, as of now, all of the above have not led to the mitigation of the conflict in the area of the Golan. It is important still, that the international community encourages the two conflicting parties to resort to peaceful negotiations.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Facilitating dialogue and negotiations

As it has already been encouraged by world leaders, facilitating peaceful dialogue and negotiations between the conflicting parties could help end the issue regarding the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights.

By having discussions regarding borders and by establishing agreements, Israel and Syria could find a solution to the issue that has been tormenting the local population. The involvement of the President of the Lebanese Republic, namely Joseph Aoun, is additionally encouraged, given the launch of air attacks by Israel to the country.

Finally, third party involvement could potentially serve as a solution to treating the issue.

Implementation of additional peacekeeping missions

⁴¹ "The Syrian-Israeli Talks: Is an Agreement on the Horizon?" *Epc.ae*, 2025, epc.ae/en/details/scenario/the-syrian-israeli-talks-is-an-agreement-on-the-horizon-.

⁴² RFI. "France "Committed" to De-Escalation of Regional Conflict after Golan Attack." *RFI*, 29 July 2024, www.rfi.fr/en/international/20240729-france-committed-to-de-escalation-of-regional-conflict-after-golan-attack.

Another realistic and feasible solution to tackle the issue in the Golan Heights would be to implement additional peacekeeping operations. Taking the fact that the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has not been particularly effective in mitigating the conflict into consideration, its reinforcement and/or the launch of another peacekeeping operation would undeniably ensure the proper protection of thousands of innocent civilians.

The additional or new peacekeeping missions would also take out the task of maintaining the buffer zone intact until further diplomatic engagement, and limit the air attacks that are currently being launched to Syria and Lebanon by Israel.

NGO involvement

Non-Governmental Organizations could undoubtedly help in solving the humanitarian concerns currently circulating the area of the Golan. Organizations such as the International Crisis Group focusing on mitigating crises in the Middle East can ensure the protection of civilians living in or close to the rocky plateau. Such civilians could be Syrian Nationals or ethnoreligious groups that used to live in the area but never left, even after the Israeli occupation.

NGOs are capable of launching campaigns to raise money to assist vulnerable populations that are in danger of, or have already been plagued by the conflict between Israel and Syria. Restoring security for innocent residents and civilians in the region is of utmost importance.

Return to the terms of the 1974 disengagement agreement

Finally, a possible solution could be the return to the terms of the 1974 disengagement agreement. As it has already been stated by Ahmed al-Sharaa's administration, this solution is greatly supported, not only by Syria but by third parties as well.

Should this solution be supported, the two conflicting parties involved in the issue, potentially Lebanon as well, will always need to abide by the terms of the disengagement agreement and not breach it, as it was done in the past.

It is still significant to note, however, that Syria wishes to re-secure part of the Golan in any potential future agreements.

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