

Syrian foreign minister says Damascus has right to restore sovereignty over Israeli-occupied Golan Heights

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Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad addresses Non-Aligned Summit on Monday

Belgrade, October 12 (RHC)--In an address to the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)'s meeting of member states, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad has stressed his country's right to re-establish control over

the Golan Heights, which the Israeli regime has been occupying for more than half a century.

Mikdad said in a statement at the high-level meeting of the NAM states in the Serbian city of Belgrade on Monday that Syria has “every right” to restore the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Mikdad emphasized that Syria is facing all forms of occupation and aggression by the U.S., Turkey and the Israeli regime, reaffirming that Syria will exert utmost effort to bring back all its occupied territories and combat terrorism.

The top Syrian diplomat also reiterated Damascus’ principled stance in support of the Palestinian cause and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital.

Mikdad’s comments came as Syrians rallied in the occupied Golan Heights to protest against Israel’s settlement construction on their land. The protesters marched through the town of Mas’ade in the northern Golan after Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said he planned to establish two new settlements and also double the number of Israeli settlers in the area.

In 1967, Israel waged a full-scale war against Arab territories, during which it occupied a large swathe of Golan and annexed it four years later, a move never recognized by the international community.

In 1973, another war broke out and a year later, a UN-brokered ceasefire came into force, according to which Tel Aviv and Damascus agreed to separate their troops and create a buffer zone in the Heights.

Israel has over the past decades built dozens of settlements in the Golan Heights in defiance of international calls for the regime to stop its illegal construction activities. Syria has repeatedly reaffirmed its sovereignty over the Golan Heights, saying the territory must be completely restored to its control.

The United Nations has time and again emphasized Syria's sovereignty over the territory, calling Israel's occupation a violation of international law.

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