

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi**  
**Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations**  
**On the “Middle East - Syria / political”**  
**Before the United Nations Security Council**  
**New York, 18 May 2020**

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*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Mr. President,**

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Pedersen, for his input.

I reiterate our long-standing position that the Syrian crisis must be settled through political means. In that context, we extend our support to the work of the Constitutional Committee, as has been expressed by the Astana format meetings on numerous occasions. While the Committee should be supported to do its work, as a matter of principle, any and all forms of external pressure must be avoided by all, as stipulated in its rules of procedure. At the same time, any possible assistance to the Committee, even by the United Nations, must be extended only at the request of the Committee itself, in accordance with its rules of procedure.

As a principled position, which also has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Astana format summits, we continue to reject any separatist agendas as well as any and all attempts to create new realities on the ground, including through illegitimate self-rule initiatives.

The sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria must be fully respected by all. Accordingly, all foreign forces whose presence is not permitted by the Syrian Government must leave the Syrian territory. A living example in that regard is the occupation of certain parts of Syria by forces of the United States, which continue to support and shield terrorist groups under the guise of combating terrorism.

Similarly, Israel’s acts of aggression against Syria are in gross violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, in the face of which the Syrian Government has a sovereign right to decide how and when to exercise its inherent right to individual or collective self-defence. Such acts of aggression must come to an end.

We also stress that the occupation of the Syrian Golan by Israel is illegal and that the recognition by the United States of its annexation to Israel is null and void. While condemning such unlawful, irresponsible acts, we stress that the Golan is, and will remain, an integral part of the Syrian territory.

Finally, the right to determine the future of Syria belongs exclusively to the Syrians, and the international community should assist them in realizing that right.

**I thank you, Mr. President.**