
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 96th SESSION, 2007**Report of the Director-General****Appendix****THE SITUATION OF WORKERS
OF THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

Introduction

1. In accordance with the resolution concerning the implications of Israeli settlements in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories in connection with the situation of Arab workers, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 66th Session (1980), the Director-General again this year sent missions to Israel and the occupied Arab territories and to the Syrian Arab Republic in order to make as full an assessment as possible of the situation of workers of the territories (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the occupied Syrian Golan).¹ In the course of the mission to the occupied Arab territories, the Director-General's representatives held numerous discussions and meetings with Israeli, Palestinian and Syrian interlocutors.²

2. In examining all the issues involved, both during the missions and in the preparation of this Report, the Director-General's representatives bore in mind, as they have always done, the relevant standards of international law, in particular the Hague Convention of 1907 (respecting the laws and customs of war on land) and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war), of which Israel is a co-signatory.

3. The Director-General's representatives were guided by the principles and objectives laid down in the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, including the Declaration of Philadelphia, by the standards and resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference, by the principles enunciated by the supervisory bodies of the ILO, and, more generally, by the issue of rights at work. As indicated in the 1980 resolution, the substantive matters at issue include equality of opportunity and treatment of workers of the occupied Arab territories, the trade union freedoms and rights of those workers, and the psychological, spiritual and material damage caused to Arab workers in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories by the Israeli settlement policy. This approach gives all due weight to principles and rights at work, which, together with employment, social protection and social dialogue, form the pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. The present Report thus takes account of relevant legislation and the information obtained concerning realities on the ground in respect of the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories.

¹As has been pointed out in previous reports, the Golan has been occupied by Israel since 1967 and was unilaterally annexed by Israel in 1981. The position of the Israeli Government regarding the Golan was stated in the following terms: "The ILO mission is meant to collect material for the Director-General's Report on the occupied Arab territories. It is the position of the Government of Israel that the Golan, to which Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration have been applied, is not now such an area. In view of this consideration, approval for a visit of the ILO mission to the Golan was given as a gesture of good will and without prejudice. The decision to facilitate such an informal visit shall not serve as a precedent and does not contravene the Israeli Government's position." On 17 December 1981, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 497 calling on Israel to rescind its decision to annex the Golan, which has never been recognized by the United Nations. The Israeli position is also disputed by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab people of the Golan, which consider the Golan as an occupied part of the Syrian Arab Republic.

² A list of interlocutors is contained in the annex to this Report.

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