



**REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9
OF THE CONVENTION**

Fifteenth periodic report of States parties due in 1998

Addendum

Syrian Arab Republic*

[Original: ARABIC]
[4 February 1998]

1. The consolidated twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth periodic reports of the Syrian Arab Republic are submitted in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

2. The Syrian Arab Republic was among the first States to accede to the international conventions against apartheid. It is a party not only to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination but also to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Slavery Conventions, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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8. The international conventions to which the Syrian Arab Republic accedes become an integral part of its domestic legislation and are binding on the judicial and other authorities in the State. In this connection:

(a) The national socialist education syllabus of the Ministry of Education focuses on the need to combat all forms of racism and all forms of sectarianism, feudalism and international imperialism, and also emphasizes the need to ensure the triumph of right and justice, equality of opportunity, nonalignment and the protection of human rights;

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9. The policy pursued by the Ministry of Culture focuses on racial discrimination through the books that it produces and the articles that it publishes in periodicals and magazines, through its promotion of films and tapes that help to achieve this goal and through its prohibition of the films and tapes produced by some bodies seeking to disparage certain races or communities. The Ministry also encourages art exhibitions that highlight racist practices, particularly those which Israel is pursuing against the people of Palestine and the occupied Arab territories.

10. The absence of the phenomenon of racial discrimination in the history of our society explains why the Syrian legislature has not promulgated any laws, decrees or judicial or other directives concerning this phenomenon. However, the legislature has given attention to the basic aspects referred to in article 1, paragraph 1. For example, under the terms of article 307 of the Syrian Penal Code promulgated in 1949, any act or verbal or written statement that is intended to incite, or has the result of inciting, confessional or racial bigotry or strife among the various communities and

component elements of the nation is a punishable offence. Article 308 of the said Code further stipulates that it is a punishable offence for anyone to belong to an association established for the purpose referred to in article 307 above. Articles 69 and 109 of the same Code make provision for the dissolution of such associations and the confiscation of their property. Articles 462 and 463 deal with offences against religious feelings. The Constitution and laws in force in the Syrian Arab Republic guarantee the rights recognized in article 5 of the Convention to all citizens without discrimination. The right to seek legal remedy through the national tribunals and other State institutions (art. 6 of the Convention) is also guaranteed to all citizens without discrimination. In this connection, we wish to point out that there is no so-called Kurdish problem in the Syrian Arab Republic, since all citizens enjoy their full and unrestricted civic rights and obligations. The Kurds do not constitute a grouping, since they are found throughout the country and form part of the fabric of Syrian society. In fact, they hold numerous important political and administrative posts and positions in the country. The issue that has been raised erroneously concerns the Kurdish refugees who entered the Syrian Arab Republic illegally due to the persecution to which they had been subjected in neighbouring countries. With regard to citizens from the Jewish community, they have never been required to perform military service and no special restrictions have been placed on their travel outside the country. The vast majority left the country of their own accord.

11. In 1996, 351,189 Palestinians were registered with the General Agency for Palestine Arab Refugees. They retain their Palestinian identity and nationality, as well as their right to return to their country and their homes. The Syrian Arab Republic provides them with every facility for residence and employment and issues them with special travel documents to enable them to travel abroad. Their presence is temporary until such time as their problem is solved in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly those concerning their right of return.

12. We wish to affirm the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as its resolute desire to cooperate with your distinguished Committee so that we can work together to ensure the full elimination of this scourge and enable peoples to live in a world free from racism, hatred and bigotry.

* This document contains the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth periodic reports due on 21 May 1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998, respectively, submitted in one document. For the ninth, tenth and eleventh periodic reports of the Syrian Arab Republic and the summary records of the meetings at which the Committee considered that report, see documents CERD/C/197/Add.6 and CERD/C/SR.932.