

Syria Warns All Options on Table for Liberating Golan Heights from Israel



TEHRAN (FNA)- Damascus warned Tel Aviv not to go too far in its occupation of Syria's Golan Heights, saying all options remain on the table for liberating the strategic region, which has been under Israeli occupation for more than five decades.

The stern warning was delivered by Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem on Thursday during a joint presser with his Venezuelan counterpart, Jorge Arreaza, in the capital, Damascus, the official SANA news agency reported.

Syria, Muallem stated, is strongly determined to protect its sovereignty and liberate "every inch" of the country, which has been, since 2011, the scene of a crisis fueled by the US, Israel and their allies with the aim of toppling the Damascus government.

The top diplomat further blasted the US for becoming the sole country in the world to recognize Syria's Golan Heights as "Israeli territory" last month, in a move that marked a break from decades of US foreign policy on the occupied Syrian land and flew in the face of UN resolutions.

Muallem, however, downplayed the impact of Washington's dramatic policy shift on Golan and stressed that it would only produce a "single effect", which is further "isolation" for the US.

He further emphasized the Syrian nation's right to its land and said "every inch of the occupied Syrian territories will be liberated."

"Syria will liberate the occupied Golan by all means, and all choices are on the table," Muallem stressed, adding, "Israel' mustn't go [too] far...We have the will and determination."

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in the closing stages of its 1967 Six-Day War with Arab countries, which also saw the regime occupy the Palestinian

territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem al-Quds and the Gaza Strip.

Tel Aviv unilaterally annexed the Golan Heights in 1981 in a move not recognized internationally.

Later that year, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution, declaring Israel's annexation of occupied Golan as "null and void and without international legal effect". Resolution 497 also called on the regime to rescind its action.

Israel, however, refused to comply with that resolution and began dotting the resource-rich rocky plateau with settlements in defiance of global criticism.

Since 2011, when foreign-backed militancy broke out in Syria, the Tel Aviv regime has been using the occupied part of Golan to prop up the terrorists operating against the Bashar Assad government.

Washington's decision to recognize Israel's annexation of Syrian land came only months after the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, urging Tel Aviv to withdraw from the entirety of the Syrian Golan Heights.

Muallem further criticized the Arab League from failing to adopt a firm stance on Washington's contentious U-turn on Golan at its recent summit in Tunisia.

"Is it possible that the Arab Summit issues a statement on the occupied Syrian Golan which is weaker than Britain's stance?" he asked.

Elsewhere, Muallem said, despite the many gains the Syrian army — backed by Iran and Russia — has made on the battlefield against terrorists, "Our war on terrorism hasn't stopped and the conspiracy against us is continued through the military assault and the economic siege with the aim of prolonging the crisis in Syria in the interest of 'Israel'."

He further dismissed as mere lies President Donald Trump's claims that the US would withdraw its military forces from Syria in the coming months.

"The US administration lies with regard to pulling out its troops, which are illegitimately deployed in Syria, and it isn't our duty to teach them to be honest," Muallem added.

Arreaza, in turn, hailed the Venezuelan and Syrian nations for standing firm in the face of “imperialism” and “US conspiracies”.

“I agree with Minister al-Muallem that the US conspiracy targeting our countries is one,” the top Venezuelan diplomat stated.

“Venezuela will benefit from Syria’s experience in the war against terrorism [and] in facing the US conspiracy,” said Arreaza, adding that there are states at the Security Council that are in cahoots with the US in its attempts to destabilize Venezuela.

He emphasized, however, that his country will successfully foil all the US-backed plots of the country’s right-wing opposition.

Venezuela is in the midst of a political crisis, which broke out in late January after opposition politician Juan Guaido abruptly declared himself “interim president” of Venezuela and urged elected President Nicolas Maduro to step down, in what Caracas has termed as a US-backed coup attempt.

Guaido’s bid was quickly recognized by the US followed by dozens of its regional and European allies. Washington slapped sanctions on the Venezuelan oil sector in support of the opposition figure and went as far as threatening a military option to topple Maduro.

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