



GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR THE
PREVENTION OF AGGRESSION

GIPA Convenor Statement on the Illegal Use of Force in the Territory of Syria

On 12 December 2024, on the heels of Bashar al-Assad's regime falling in Syria, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported conducting more than 350 aerial strikes on 'strategic weapons stockpiles' in Syria.¹ On December 17, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the deployment of the IDF on the Syrian side of the demilitarized 'buffer zone' will continue 'until another arrangement is found that will ensure Israel's security.'²

There is no legal basis for Israel's actions. Specifically, while Israel has referred to its actions in Syria as 'defense operations',³ its uses of force are not lawful acts of self-defense under international law, given there has been no relevant armed attack against Israel, and there is no publicly available evidence that an armed attack was imminent, nor has Israel suggested that this was the case.

Neither regime change nor instability entitle a neighboring state to use force against another state.

The prohibition of the use of force is the cornerstone of international law. Egregious violations of the prohibition threaten to undermine the international legal order as a whole, which risks the national security of all States.

Article 8 *bis* (2) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and United Nations General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974 define State acts of aggression as including the 'invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack...'. The illegal use of force resulting in occupation is also a textbook example of conduct that attracts individual criminal responsibility for the crime of aggression.

Israel should cease using force in Syria immediately and those responsible should be held to account.

¹ [Israel Defence Forces](#), 12 December 2024.

² [Israeli Prime Minister's Office](#), 17 December 2024.

³ [Israel Defence Forces](#), 13 December 2024.