

GOLAN

JOURNAL

DEC 2024



**FORCE COMMANDER
DEPARTS THE MISSION**



IN MEMORY OF THE SAD PASSING OF BRIGADIER GENERAL AMITABH JHA DFC, UNDOF



Brigadier General Amitabh Jha
DFC, UNDOF

UNDOF Pays Tribute to Late Deputy Force Commander.

On 28th December 2024, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) held a solemn vigil in memory of its Deputy Force Commander, who passed away on the 23rd December 2024. The ceremony took place at UNDOF Headquarters, where members of the mission gathered to honour his life, service, and invaluable contributions to peacekeeping.

The Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander Maj Gen Patrick Gauchat led the proceedings, expressing deep condolences on behalf of UNDOF. He highlighted the late Deputy Force Commander's exceptional leadership, commitment, and dedication to the mission's mandate.



The ceremony was attended by the Acting Chief of Mission Support, international staff, military staff officers, representatives of Troop-Contributing Countries (TCCs), and members of the Indian Contingent currently serving in UNDOF. Their collective presence underscored the unity and respect the late Deputy Force Commander inspired across the mission.



UNDOF remains profoundly grateful for his service and extends its heartfelt sympathies to his family, loved ones, and colleagues during this difficult time. His legacy will continue to guide the mission in its pursuit of peace and stability in the region.



HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

Reflections on a Mission Accomplished

As I look back on my tenure in UNDOF, I am filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment, due in part to the dedication, commitment and support of all the peacekeepers and UN staff members who have helped me to feel this way.

It was a great honour and privilege for me to have been appointed by the Secretary General as the HoM and FC of UNDOF on 15 September 2022. The task ahead was clear, as the leader of one of the enduring peacekeeping operations of United Nations, I had to lead the Mission to implement the mission's mandate through the effective execution of the mandated tasks and our end state was to preserve and progress the peace in Golan through scrupulous observation



of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement by the parties to the agreement.

To this end, under my leadership, the mission had to continuously engage with the authorities of both the Alpha and Bravo Sides. More importantly, I together with the mission leadership had to focus our efforts planning and executing operations effectively and supporting the operational activities through the optimum and well calibrated use of the resources under our disposal.



Lieutenant General Nirmal Kumar Thapa
HOM / FC, UNDOF

Equally important to the mission was our emphasis on effective administrative measures for the smooth running and welfare of all the peacekeepers and staffs under my command.

As the nature of things are, no matter how well you plan the first casualties are bound to be your well tailored plans. It was no different for me, as I assumed the leadership of the mission I had to face more than a few challenges and obstacles. First among them was the residual effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the day-to-day events in the mission.

This was immediately followed by the 07 October 2023 attacks in the Alpha Side and subsequent declaration of war in Gaza followed by the expansion of the operations into Lebanon. These events disrupted UNDOF's



HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

supply chain to an extent, and in some cases impacted our operational activities as well. However, with the incredible efforts of the members of UNDOF we succeeded in implementing the mission's mandate and preserving the peace in our Area of Responsibility.

As I am at the cusp of completing my tenure in UNDOF, I would like to reminisce an occasion when UNDOF under my leadership navigated through difficult times and came out with flying colors. One such occasion was in the aftermath of the 07 October 2023 incident in the Alpha Side. The operational environment had drastically changed



and tensions were high even in the Golan. There was a real likelihood of escalation and I was urged from some quarters to order the peacekeepers deployed in the field to be shelter inside. In my opinion, this order would have compromised the very essence of UNDOF mandate and legitimacy. Contrary to the wider expectation, I ordered an increase in operational activity. As a result, the host countries were ensured of UNDOF's continuous work despite the adverse circumstances. I have to commend the Contingents in the sectors who braved it out and implemented my intent with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.



I would like to acknowledge some of the achievements of UNDOF during my time here. One such significant achievement was the completion of incremental return to the Bravo Side as envisaged in UNDOF's Concept of Operations. The deployment of troops in UNP 17A was a major success and we have started the refurbishment of OP 52. These positions will enable greater operational reach and effective monitoring and reporting over the coming years cementing UNDOF's enhanced operational capability. Likewise with the completion of the refurbishment of the Bravo Line Barrels (100 %, All 153), and Alpha line Barrels (almost 80 %) has enabled UNDOF to



HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER'S FAREWELL MESSAGE



accurately monitor and report all incidents in the AOS preserving its sanctity as well as solidifying UNDOF's efforts to preserve and progress the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

Moreover, the efforts of UNDOF's medical has to be praised, as they won the Secretary General's Award for the 'Telemedicine' and have devised a program, 'Walking Blood Bank' which has yielded amazing results, by allowing the mission to draw on a life saving resource while saving finances.



In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) championed by the UN Headquarters, and our collective efforts to minimize the environmental footprint of peace support operations, we have initiated projects such as the installation of solar panels in our UN positions. These initiatives are expected to yield significant dividends in the future, ensuring the cost-effective sustainability of the mission. Furthermore, other notable achievements during my tenure were the enhancement and integration of communications among OPs, UNPs, and all vehicles of OGG and UNDOF significantly boosts the operational capability of UNDOF.

The inclusion of staff officers from various countries worldwide fosters a diverse environment within the mission. Continuous coordination with both parties to the agreement remains a top priority, and establishing reliable working-level liaisons has further improved UNDOF's coordination. Building the confidence of the local population is a challenging task, but UNDOF has undertaken various Quick Impact Projects to strengthen its relationship with the community.



HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

Logistic and administrative support are the backbone of all operational activities. Although the incident on October 7 severely affected the mission's administrative and logistical activities, the continuation of movements through Jordan, the use of alternative supply routes, and improved safety measures have helped sustain and maintain the mission.

The year 2024 also marked the 50 years of existence of the mission, a major milestone when peacekeeping operations have faced numerous challenges regarding their legitimacy and existence. All the success stories, accolades and achievements would not have been possible without the immense contribution of the TCC Contingents, Military Staff Officers, International and National Staffs and not least through the great collaboration and important work of UNTSO OGG. Similarly, the greater impact of the mission in continuing the peace would not have been possible without the support of our colleagues and leadership in the UN Headquarters in New York. The coordination and support provided by the host nations has also played a pivotal role in the success story of UNDOF.



important work of UNDOF to keep the peace in the region. I am sure that I will be witnessing many success stories from UNDOF and I wish the new HoM and FC the very best for the upcoming tenure. At the end, I would like to remember and pray for all the brave peacekeepers of UNDOF who have sacrificed their lives for the greater good of Humanity and for the peace in Golan. Their and their families sacrifices has cemented and continued the legacy of UNDOF in Golan.



As I ponder and introspect, I can't help but feel that the Mission is in a good state, despite numerous challenges that have come our way with the ensuing volatility and unpredictability around the region. I am assured that my successor will find an able and competent group of people progressing the



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR READERS

Welcome to the latest edition of the GOLAN – The UNDOF Journal.

On behalf of all current and former members of UNDOF who have served with the late Brigadier General Amitabh Jha, I would like to pay my sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues in India. He epitomised what UNDOF required throughout his tenure. He will be sadly missed. May he rest in peace.

As military men and women, we are well used to change, and adapting to new circumstances and environments. The operational picture may change, the personnel may change but UNDOF remains the same. During this period of unpredictability, we have seen the environment we work in change. UNDOF has had to face some very challenging situations in the past six months resulting in delays of contingent rotations of Uruguay, Nepal, and India. Some however have left and to those colleagues and friends, we wish you a fond and happy reunion with your families. To our new colleagues and friends we wish you a warm welcome and a safe and successful tour of duty. We also saw the Force Commander and Head of Mission, Lieutenant General Nirmal Kumar Thapa finish his tour of duty in early December. I'm sure you join me in extending our best wishes to him.

In this edition of the GOLAN, we focus on the theme of reflection. It's being a challenging period for the mission as a whole and all personnel within. Therefore we felt it prudent to reflect on what UNDOF has achieved, while reflecting on those good aspects of the mission.

We remember the sad passing of our DFC in late December. We introduce the team currently situated in UNDOF. Our outgoing FC and HoM reflects on his tenure in charge of the mission. We have articles relating to preparatory requirements for life in the Golan ensuring we maintain access to all our positions, particularly those in the mountains. We also have an article from Captain Pooja Raghav on her experiences in UNDOF. Finally, we reflect on the newest Contingent to join the UNDOF family, KAZCON.

Finally, to you the members of UNDOF. This is your magazine. Pick up your pen (or keyboard) and write an article about your life and experiences here in UNDOF. Do not worry in the slightest if English is not your first language, together we can edit and adjust your article to fit. That's my job. Give it a go.

COMMANDANT DAMIEN KEOGH
EDITOR IN CHIEF
MAJOR SUJAN MAHAT



CONTENTS

• In memory of the sad passing of Brigadier General Amitabh Jha	PAGE 2
• Head of Mission & Force Commander Farewell Message Lieutenant General Nirmal Kumar Thapa	PAGE 3
• Editors Note	PAGE 7
• Meet the Team, UNDOFs Military Branch Chiefs	PAGE 8
• UNDOF events	
◦ NEPCON Medal Parade	PAGE 13
◦ UMIC Medal Parade	PAGE 15
• My Experience in UNDOFs Peacekeeping Mission	PAGE 18
• Preparation of Winter in the Golan Heights	PAGE 22
• KAZASH – First military contingent as Force Reserve Company (FRC)	PAGE 27
• Wellness and Blue Helmets– Food Briefing	PAGE 30
• Civil affairs	PAGE 34

MEET THE TEAM



CHIEF MILITARY PERSONNEL OFFICER.

Lieutenant Colonel Karma Phuntsho Chophyl was born on 18 July 1970 in Wangdue Phodrang, Bhutan. He started his military career as a cadet in the National Defence Academy, Pune, India in 1988 along with the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, India in 1991. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Bhutan Army on 13 June 1992.

He has a wide range of experience in both administrative and operational domains. He served as company Second in Command, Battalion Quarter Master, Record and Personnel Officer, Battalion Adjutant and Company Commander till the rank of Major. As Lieutenant Colonel, he held the key appointments of Chief Engineer of Engineer Unit of Royal Bhutan Army, Staff Officer of Deputy Chief Operation Officer 'A', and Chief Audit Officer. He has been commanding the Commando Battalion of the Royal Bhutan Army since 2023.

Following his commissioning, he underwent Young Officers Course, Junior Command Course, Senior Command Course at Army War College, Mhow, India and Bachelors in Technology in Civil Engineering from College of Military Engineering, Pune, India. In addition to military courses, he completed a Masters of Business Administration majoring in Human Resource from Bangalore, India.

His first UN experience was in MONUSCO in 2021-2022, at Goma city, Democratic Republic of Congo, as a Military Observer.



CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER.

Lieutenant Colonel Tomáš Pusztai was born on May 14, 1980, in the east of the Czech Republic in the small town of Lanskrone. He began his military career in 1994 by entering the Secondary Military School of the Ministry of Defense, where he graduated as a specialist in weapons and ammunition. He subsequently served in non-commissioned officer positions and ended his NCO's career as Command Sergeant Major of the 15th Engineer Brigade.

In 2007, he graduated at the University of Defence in the field of military and civil engineering and started his career as an officer. During his military service, he was appointed to Command and Staff positions at various tactical levels in the Czech Armed Forces and in military operations abroad.

Since 2023, Lieutenant Colonel Tomáš Pusztai was appointed as a Chief of Engineers at the Headquarters of the Territorial Forces of the Czech Republic.

Chief of the Planning Branch in UNDOF is his first deployment to the United Nations.



MEET THE TEAM



CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Finch is an Australian Army Officer. He commenced his military career at the Royal Military College – Duntroon in 2009 and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Armoured Corps in 2010. As an Armoured Corps Officer, he has served at the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and the School of Armour as a Lieutenant, as a Captain at the Combined Arms Training Centre, 12/16 Hunter River Lances and the 1st Armoured Regiment. As a Major, he served as a Company Commander and as a Military Assistant within Australian Defence Force Headquarters. He is a graduate of the Capability and Technology Management College and also Australian Command and Staff College. He holds a Bachelor of Business, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Capability Management, Master of Project Management and Master of Military and Defence Studies.



CHIEF LOGISTICS SUPPORT OFFICER.

Lt Col Ravi Makhija has been nominated for the position of Deputy Chief of Integrated Services Staff in UNDOF. He was born on 18th July 1983 in New Delhi, India. He started his military career by joining the Military Academy in 2001. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant and was posted to the Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) on the 10th Dec 2004.

He has completed all his mandatory courses including the Junior Command Course from Army War College and the Command and Staff Course from the Defence Service Staff College, Wellington, India. He also holds a Master's Degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from Madras University of India. Prior to his deployment in UNDOF, he served as General Staff Officer (Training).



MEET THE TEAM

SENIOR TRAINING OFFICER.



Major Marcel Muzik was born on 25 February 1980 in the city of Krnov in the Northern part of the Moravia, Czech Republic. He is married and has three children. He started his military career joining the Military academy in Brno 1998, studying air navigation service. He graduated as an engineer in 2003 at the rank of Lieutenant. After thirteen years of active duty, in 2016-2017, he graduated from his Senior Officer Course. Upon his graduation he was posted to the 24th Transport Air Base in Prague - Kbely and has occupied various positions, prior to his nomination to UNDOF as SSOTRNG. He was second in command of 246th squadron. Throughout his 21-years military career, Maj. MUZIK has served overseas five times. First three mission were in KFOR under NATO command. The first, he served as Deputy Airport liaison officer in Pristina, Kosovo, 2007. The second, he served as Airport liaison officer in Pristina, Kosovo, 2009 and the last one in KFOR, Pristina, Kosovo as operational cell liaison officer in 2010. He has served in two missions with the UN, both served as military observers. The first UN deployment was in MINUSCA in 2014, team site in Berberati and later in FHQ Bangui. The last UN mission was in MINUSMA in 2018, team site in Gao and later in FHQ Bamako.

He is always proud to serve under UN flag in any place of the world.

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICER (CITO).



Lt Col Jayaram Baniya was born 06 November 1982 in Bhaktapur, Nepal. He has been married since 2010 and is blessed with a daughter and a son. He embarked on his military career in 2002, joining the Nepalese Military Academy as an Officer Cadet and was commissioned in April 2003.

Upon commissioning, he was posted to the Army Signal Regiment as a Signal Officer. His career advanced with a command assignment at the Infantry Division Signal Battalion, where he served as Chief Signal and CITS Advisor to the Division Commander in Western Region of Nepal. Over a distinguished 23-year career, he has completed numerous military courses, including the Regimental Signal Officer Course, Signal Young Officer Course, Signal Officer Degree Engineering Course, Army Command and Staff Course, and Senior Command Course. His academic achievements include a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies and a Master of Arts in Political Science, both from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

His international experience includes deployments in three United Nations peacekeeping missions prior to his current role as Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO) in UNDOF. His first UN deployment was in MINUSTAH in Haiti in 2007, serving as Signal Platoon Commander for the Nepalese Contingent. In 2014, he was deployed in UNDOF as Company Commander at Mt. Hermon Complex and in 2020, he served as a Military Observer in MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

MEET THE TEAM



CHIEF LIASION OFFICER.

Lieutenant Colonel Ilyas Mustafin was born 01 January 1983 in Oskemen city, in the Republic of Kazakhstan. He started his military career joining the Military school in Almaty city, under the badge of infantry. He got commissioned as a Lieutenant in 2004. His first appointment was as a platoon leader in an Infantry Company. In 2011-2012 he graduated from Command and General Staff College (CGSC).

After graduation from CGSC he was appointed chief of peacekeeping training section in Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Brigade. He was the focal point of peacekeeping activities carried out with international counterparts. In 2015, he was selected and deployed to United Nations Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara as a military observer completing thirteen (13) months.

In 2018, he was appointed to Combat Readiness Department, as a desk officer in Chief of General Staff overseeing the peacekeeping section.

In 2022, he got promoted as a Chief of Peacekeeping Directorate, in International Cooperation Department of Ministry of Defence.



MILITARY POLICE - FORCE PROVOSAL MARSHAL.

Lieutenant Colonel Jamal-ddin Bamie enlisted into the Ghana Military Academy in 2004. He was commissioned into the Ghana Armed Forces in September 2006 and deployed as an Infantry Officer with the 64 Infantry Regiment. He is a product of Presbyterian boys School Legon.

Jamal has successfully completed all his mandatory military career courses with the Battalion Commanders' course being the last. He holds a degree in Geography and Resource Development, certificates in Counter Terrorism, Conflict and Crisis Management, Exclusive Economic Zone Management, Peace Operations and Combined Joint African Exercise, Defence Management, Counter Explosive Devices, Exclusive Economic Zone Management and Operations, MILOBS and Staff Officers Course, Minor Staff Duties, Young Officers Course, Company Commanders Course, Junior Staff course, Senior Staff course, Battalion Commanders course and multidimensional Peace Support Operation course, masters in Project Management course, Defence and International Politics course. He has also served on various peacekeeping missions in different capacities. These include Platoon commander UNOCI 2007, Adjutant - UNIFIL 2009, Officer commanding -UNMIL 2015, UNIFIL 2018, Deputy chief U5 plans - MINUSCA 2021.

Jamal has a passion for technological innovations especially in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT). He is married with one child. His hobbies include playing badminton, reading novels and watching football and going to the gym.



MEET THE TEAM

FORCE MEDICAL OFFICER.



Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Drishti RL Shah from Nepali Army was appointed as Force Medical Officer in UNDOF commencing in December 2023. Highly motivated Consultant Physician and a Diabetologist by profession and also a Lecturer in Army Medical School she has been serving in Nepali Army for the past 20 years. UNDOF is her third United Nations Mission after UNMIS and UNIFIL in 2006.

Having completed high school from Convent and Jesuit Institution, Medical School from Islamic Women's Institution, Masters and Speciality studies from Catholic University and coming from Hinduism and Buddhism practising background, she has multicultural exposure. This is a bonus to her in the service of United Nations.

Over the time she has built a diverse range of skills and qualities through experiences of working both as Medical Officer and commander in various remote military postings in her country.

Experiences she earned in UNDOF have inspired her in becoming more mature both in her thoughts and deeds. She believes in working collaboratively as a team with colleagues to achieve institutional goals.

She takes with her and cherishes her parents' invaluable and unconditional blessings, sister's support, husband's cooperation and pride and contentment of her two children in all the endeavours of her life.



CHIEF OBSERVER GROUP GOLAN. (UNTSO)



Lieutenant Colonel Pierre Knutsson was born in Sodertalje in Sweden August 1970 and is married since 1996. He has two daughters and two grandchildren, all living in Sweden. Currently he is living in Stockholm the capital of Sweden.

He started his military career 1989 joining Armoured Corps Mechanized Infantry and after military school he became an instructor at a platoon level. He served in various appointments at Battalion level over the next 20 years. He completed all mandatory military school courses up to the rank of Major.

After graduating at the National Defence University, he became a Lieutenant Colonel. Since 2014, he has held numerous positions at the Swedish Armed Forces HQ, in Stockholm. He has held positions at operational level, consisting of operational planning of future operations and at strategic level consisting of reporting Swedish capabilities to NATO in preparation for joining NATO. His most recent position has been as Chief of Staff within one Department of the HQ responsible for planning and conducting development of forces and future capabilities within joint capabilities. This is his third UN mission. The first was in Bosnia 1993 with UNPROFOR, the second was in 2016-2017 with UNMOGIP as MA to HoM and this mission is as COGG within UNTSO under OPCON of FC UNDOF.



NEPCON MEDAL PARADE: HONORING NEPALESE PEACEKEEPERS IN UNDOF



The Nepali Medal Parade ceremony, was conducted on 15 August 2024 to present the Nepali Contingent with their United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) medal.

It is a proud tradition celebrating the dedication and valor of the Nepalese peacekeepers. These Nepali soldiers have dedicated themselves to the service of peace, providing stability in one of the world's most volatile regions. The medal parade ceremony commemorated their achievements and highlighted the longstanding commitment of Nepal to UN peacekeeping missions.

Nepal has a proud legacy in UN peacekeeping, joining the UN in 1955 and contributing over 150,000 personnel to 44 missions worldwide.



As the top troop contributor in the UN, peacekeepers from Nepal, including NEPCON XII in the Golan Heights, have played a critical role in fostering global peace and stability.

A parade ceremony honoured this legacy as the Nepalese Peacekeepers stood in formation to receive the UN medal.



NEPCON MEDAL PARADE: HONORING NEPALESE PEACEKEEPERS IN UNDOF

Bearing the inscription "In the Service of Peace," the medal symbolizes their dedication in global peace. The event celebrated their service and sacrifices in challenging conditions, highlighting their professionalism and commitment to peace.

The medal parade ceremony took place in the presence of the Chief Guest, Head of Mission and Force Commander of the mission, Lieutenant General Nirmal Kumar Thapa, Deputy Force Commander of the mission (DFC), Chief of Mission Support (CMS), and Chief of Staff (COS), along with national and international staff officers and esteemed guests were present in the ceremony.

The medal parade was led by Major Narayan Chhetri of UNDOF Force Headquarters Support Unit NEPCON XII. A total of 57 Nepalese Peacekeepers participated in the parade, including 3 officers, 3 JCOs, and 51 other ranks.



The parade was a remarkable event that showcased both the discipline and cultural heritage of the Nepali Army. The soldiers, organised in platoons, demonstrated their precision and professionalism on the parade grounds.

During the parade, Lt Gen Nirmal Kumar Thapa expressed appreciation for the excellent work done by the units of the Nepali Army. Senior National Officer of Nepali Army in UNDOF, Lieutenant Colonel Sanjiv Bhandari also congratulated the troops serving in the mission.

During the parade, the Nepalese Peacekeepers paid homage to the flags of the United Nations and Nepal, symbolizing the unity and international cooperation.



UMIC'S MEDAL PARADE: A CEREMONY OF DEDICATION AND HONOR IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS



On September 23, 2024, the Fifth Uruguayan Mechanized Infantry Company (UMIC) contingent celebrated a landmark moment in its year-long deployment with a Medal Parade held at the Main Square of UNP 80. The event marked a formal recognition of the contingent's dedication to peace under the United Nations flag, bringing together UMIC personnel and UNDOF Mission Team Leadership to honour the sacrifices made by the 210 members of UMIC.

A Ceremony of Gratitude and Honour

The Medal Parade was a poignant expression of the United Nations' appreciation for UMIC's service. The event began with the arrival of the Head of Mission/Force Commander (HoM/FC), Lt. Gen. Nirmal Kumar Thapa, who saluted the troops and set the tone for the day. The Parade Commander and Deputy Commanding Officer of UMIC, Maj. Fabricio Nuñez, requested permission to commence, and the HoM/FC proceeded to inspect the troops, acknowledging their dedication and composure.

After the inspection of the parade, the national anthem of Uruguay resonated across the grounds, filling the UNP 80 with a powerful reminder of UMIC's homeland and the pride felt by each member. The presenting of medals followed, during which Lt. Gen. Thapa, joined by the Deputy Force Commander, Chief Supply



Chain Management and Chief Operations Officer, presented medals to the parade. The medals, inscribed with the words "In the service of peace", represented the core mission of UN peacekeeping and served as a testament to UMIC's commitment to stability and safety.



UMIC'S MEDAL PARADE: A CEREMONY OF DEDICATION AND HONOR IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Recognizing UMIC's Accomplishments

The parade also celebrated UMIC's exceptional performance and contributions to the mission. Since arriving in the Golan Heights on October 13, 2023, UMIC has excelled in its operational duties, carrying out a series of impactful humanitarian and tactical tasks. These included CASEVAC missions —ensuring that critical medical needs were met in life-threatening situations. UMIC's medical personnel provided treatments to local civilians when requested.

Working closely with the FRC EOD team, UMIC conducted operations to clear landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXOs), and remnants of war, safeguarding civilians and fostering a safer environment. Additionally, the unit led Tactical Casualty Care Courses, one of which was attended by members of other contingents, underscoring UMIC's role as a source of expertise and collaboration within UNDOF. Through these and other regular patrols and observation tasks, UMIC upheld its commitment to peacekeeping in the most challenging sector of the UNDOF mission.



Speeches from Leadership: Acknowledgment and Appreciation

The ceremony's orator offered an eloquent reflection on the purpose and significance of the medals, reminding attendees that the UN medal is "a recognition of those who served for the cause of peace under the flag of the United Nations." The phrase, "In the service of peace," engraved on each medal, captures one of the UN's foundational ideals and symbolizes the values that UMIC has embodied during its deployment.

A Moment of Camaraderie and Celebration

With the formal proceedings concluded, the Medal Parade transitioned to a reception, where guests were invited to enjoy a variety of dishes, including traditional Uruguayan. This moment of relaxation offered an opportunity for the UMIC members, leaders, and guests to share in a moment of camaraderie and connection, reflecting on the year's experiences and challenges overcome.

The celebration of Uruguayan culture through cuisine provided a taste of home for UMIC personnel, reinforcing the bonds formed over the past year and highlighting the human aspect of peacekeeping.



UMIC'S MEDAL PARADE: A CEREMONY OF DEDICATION AND HONOR IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Reflections on a Year of Service

The Medal Parade was a powerful testament to UMIC's contributions to the UNDOF mission. Each medal symbolizes a year of perseverance, resilience, and sacrifice—qualities that have characterised UMIC's service in the Golan Heights. Over the past year, UMIC and UNDOF has been more than just a peacekeeping force; it has been a symbol of stability, compassion, and commitment in a region that has known instability.

As UMIC personnel prepare to return home, the memories of their service and the impact they have made will remain. The Medal Parade was not only a recognition of the service provided under the United Nations flag but also a celebration of the values UMIC upheld in fulfilling its mission.

For all who attended, the ceremony captured the essence of peacekeeping: a commitment to humanity, unity, and the tireless pursuit of peace.

The words "In the service of peace" etched on each medal will forever symbolise for their holders, the time expended in the Golan Heights, a legacy of dedication, honour, and the unbreakable bond of those who served.

1st Lt. Juan Núñez
UMIC Personnel Officer
UNDOF



MY EXPERIENCE IN UNDOFS PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Serving in the United Nations

Serving as a part of the United Nations (UN) contingent while representing the Indian Army, particularly as a lady officer, has been one of the most fulfilling and trans-formative experiences of my career. This unparalleled opportunity provided me with not only a platform to contribute to global peacekeeping efforts but also a chance to showcase the capability, dedication, and strength of women in uniform on an international stage.

Being part of the Military Police Contingent added a unique layer of pride and responsibility, underlining the importance of Military Police at a global stage. The mission allowed me to break barriers, serve as a role model, and advocate for the importance of gender inclusivity within the armed forces. It was a profound experience that highlighted the evolving role of women in peacekeeping and demonstrated the significant contributions they make toward global security and conflict resolution.

Being deployed in a multinational environment was a testament to the changing dynamics of military service. Interactions with officers and personnel from diverse countries helped me build a deeper understanding of the universal challenges faced in peacekeeping operations, as well as the unique solutions different nations bring to the table. Each day presented opportunities to learn and teach, to listen and share insights, creating a collective knowledge base that enhanced our operational effectiveness.

Representing the Indian Army—a force known for its discipline, valour, and professionalism—in such an esteemed international arena was not just an assignment; it was a mission that reinforced my belief in the necessity of a cooperative global approach to peace and stability.

Assisting Various Crossings Across the Border

One of the core duties I was entrusted with during my deployment was assisting with border crossings. This aspect of the mission was both challenging and rewarding, as it required meticulous planning, coordination, and the ability to respond swiftly to unexpected developments. Ensuring the safe and orderly passage of personnel and supplies across borders was crucial for maintaining the flow of operations and supporting mission objectives.



Ensuring the safe and orderly passage of personnel and supplies across borders was crucial for maintaining the flow of operations and supporting mission objectives.

The experience honed my logistical skills as well as planning and deepened my understanding of cross-border regulations, protocols, and the complex nature of peacekeeping in conflict zones. I was responsible for liaising with local authorities and coordinating with military units to ensure that every crossing adhered to stringent security measures while maintaining the humanitarian principles that guided our mission.

In addition to the operational challenges, assisting border crossings brought to light the socio-political complexities that often accompany peacekeeping missions. Each crossing was a delicate balance of diplomacy, negotiation, and tactical execution. I learned to navigate these intricacies with care and precision, fostering relationships that were vital for mission success.

These engagements not only enhanced my communication skills but also instilled a profound appreciation for the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in a diverse operational landscape. The ability to understand and bridge cultural divides proved essential, as did the capacity to make decisions under pressure when unexpected issues arose, such as sudden changes in local policies or shifts in the security situation.

MY EXPERIENCE IN UNDOFS PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Assisting in Rotations of Units for Smooth Transitions

Another significant responsibility I managed was, overseeing the rotations of units rotating into and out of the mission. This process was vital for sustaining the operational effectiveness of the mission. Facilitating the seamless transition of incoming and outgoing units required close collaboration with various military and administrative entities. I worked diligently to ensure that these rotations were executed smoothly, minimizing any disruption to the mission's tempo. This task involved coordinating transportation, managing schedules, and addressing any unforeseen challenges that arose during the transition phase. The success of these rotations depended on precision and teamwork, reinforcing my leadership skills and adaptability.

Managing the rotations also provided me with a deeper understanding of strategic deployment and logistical operations at a global scale. The meticulous planning required to transport troops and equipment across different terrains and under varying conditions highlighted the significance of preparation, adaptability, and resourcefulness. These rotations were often complex, involving



coordination with not just military authorities but also with international agencies and local government representatives to ensure a seamless transition. The experience emphasized the importance of maintaining open channels of communication and the ability to troubleshoot in real time, qualities that are indispensable in any leadership role.

The operational aspect of managing rotations was further enhanced by the personal connections formed during these transitions. Each unit had its own story, challenges, and motivations, and working with diverse groups of soldiers offered insight into the human element of peacekeeping. These experiences enriched my perspective on the values of empathy, support, and understanding in leadership. The successful handover between units often depended on fostering trust and cohesion, and I took pride in contributing to this critical aspect of the mission.

Medical Evacuations

One of the most critical aspects of peacekeeping operations is ensuring the safety and well-being of all personnel. Medical evacuations were a stark reminder of the high stakes involved in such missions. During my tenure, I played an integral role in organizing and facilitating MEDEVACs to provide timely and efficient medical assistance to those in need. These operations demanded quick thinking, decisive action, and the ability to remain calm under pressure. Each successful evacuation was a testament to the collective expertise and dedication of the entire contingent, reaffirming the importance of readiness and comprehensive training.

MY EXPERIENCE IN UNDOFS PEACEKEEPING MISSION

The responsibility of coordinating medical evacuations extended beyond immediate response; it required detailed pre-planning and scenario training. The trust placed in me during these high-pressure situations was a testament to the rigorous training and deep-seated commitment of the Indian Army to uphold the highest standards of operational readiness. The challenges faced during MEDEVACs included rapid mobilization, securing safe routes, and maintaining communication with all parties involved—each factor critical for the success of such missions.

In addition to overseeing the tactical aspects of MEDEVACs, I was involved in post-operation evaluations that focused on areas for improvement and lessons learned. This iterative process of assessing and refining our medical response capabilities was key to enhancing the overall preparedness of the contingent. It reinforced the understanding that peacekeeping requires a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to problem-solving. The lessons learned from each evacuation were invaluable, contributing not just to the success of future missions but to the broader goal of continuous improvement in peacekeeping operations.



Cultural Programs and Healthy Exchange of Ideas

Beyond the operational aspects, my experience with the UN mission was enriched by numerous other activities that fostered camaraderie, cultural understanding, and personal growth. Cultural programs offered a platform for showcasing the arts, traditions, and customs of

Participating in cultural exchange programs allowed me to share the rich heritage of India while also learning from colleagues representing diverse backgrounds and nations. These interactions fostered mutual respect and helped build lasting friendships that transcended borders. Additionally, the exchange of ideas with military professionals from around the world expanded my strategic perspective and deepened my appreciation for the shared commitment to peace and stability.



each participating nation, fostering an atmosphere of unity amid diversity. I took part in organizing events where we presented Indian music, dance, and traditional cuisine. These programs served as reminders of the common threads of humanity, even amidst the backdrop of complex peacekeeping missions. The exposure to varied cultural practices not only enhanced my diplomatic and interpersonal skills but also provided insights into the values and beliefs that drive different military contingents and their approach to operations.

The exchange of ideas was not confined to formal meetings or debriefings. Informal discussions over shared meals, collaborative training exercises, and joint community outreach programs were all part of the experience. These interactions reinforced the notion that peacekeeping is as much about people as it is about policies. By understanding the perspectives and experiences of others, I gained valuable insights that shaped my own leadership philosophy. This holistic approach to military engagement—one that values people and relationships as highly as strategy and tactics—became a cornerstone of my development as an officer.

MY EXPERIENCE IN UNDOFS PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Daily Fitness Activities

Daily fitness activities were another cornerstone of life during the mission. Physical fitness has not only been essential for maintaining operational readiness but has also played a vital role in mental well-being. Leading and participating in fitness routines with fellow officers and soldiers created a sense of unity and shared purpose.

These sessions were a reminder of the resilience and discipline required for effective peacekeeping. Engaging in regular physical training built not just physical endurance but mental fortitude, fostering a spirit of resilience that was palpable among the troops.

Participation in fitness activities also underscored the importance of work-life balance, even in high-stakes environments. It was a testament to the belief that physical strength and mental agility go hand in hand. Through group runs, exercises and strength training, we cultivated a sense of unity that translated to better teamwork in operational settings.

The mutual encouragement and shared victories in these fitness sessions carried over into our mission duties, creating a supportive environment where each member felt valued and motivated.

Unbreakable Bonds: Friendships Forged

My experience was enriched by friendships with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. We shared laughter, supported each other through challenges, and formed lifelong connections through-

- Shared meals and stories from our cultures. Collaborated on projects, relying on each other's strengths.



- Stood together during difficult times, forging unbreakable bonds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my tenure as a lady officer in the Indian Army's contingent with the United Nations was a period of immense professional and personal growth. It is an honour to contribute to such a noble mission and to demonstrate the capability of women leaders in military roles on an international platform. This experience is sure to enrich me both at a personal as well as at a professional level.

Captain Pooja Raghav
Det Cdr, FMPP
UNDOF



PREPARATION OF WINTER IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS



Introduction

With the advent of winter in Golan Heights, it is imperative to proactively plan transportation infrastructure, implement preventive vehicle maintenance, establish a recovery plan, ensure winter stocking, and forward feeding for the cut-off axis which is critical to ensure safety, effective operational logistics support, and connectivity for all national and international staff and UN Military personnel. With its elevated terrain and distinctive climate, the Golan Heights often experiences heavy snowfall, icy roads, and freezing temperatures that can disrupt daily life and hinder essential services.

Preparing for these harsh winter conditions involves concerted efforts between local authorities, road maintenance teams, and emergency services to keep transportation routes open and safe and these preparations are further bolstered by inherent UN engineering, supply, transport, and logistic support. The Key strategies include pre-emptive road salting, snow removal operations by pistenbully/ snowmobiles, and ongoing monitoring of weather patterns to predict and respond swiftly to adverse conditions for better foresight and planning. Specialized equipment, such as snowploughs and de-icing trucks, are essential in managing roadways, especially in areas prone to heavy snow accumulation.

Additionally, driver awareness training, equipping their vehicles with winter tyres, emergency kits, and understanding safe driving practices in icy conditions. This comprehensive approach not only minimizes the risks associated with winter transportation by manifolds but also supports local staff and UN personnel's commerce during the colder months. Effective winter preparation in the Golan Heights is vital for

maintaining safety, accessibility, and resilience in one of the most challenging regions for winter weather in the area.



Preparing for Winter Transportation in the Golan Heights

The Golan Heights is known for its harsh and unpredictable winter climate, which brings cold temperatures, heavy snowfall, and icy conditions. These factors can significantly impact transportation operations for both military and civilian sectors in the region. Effective winter preparation ensures that essential movement, supply chains, and response capabilities remain operational during these challenging months. This article explores critical strategies and practical steps for preparing transportation for winter in the Golan Heights, encompassing vehicle readiness to infrastructure support and contingency planning.



PREPARATION OF WINTER IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS



Pre-Winter Maintenance and Inspection

In the preceding months to winters all fluids, particularly engine oil, coolant, and windshield washer fluid are checked if they are rated for winter conditions. Antifreeze and winter-grade engine oil should be added to all vehicles to prevent freezing, to ensure smooth operation and better lifespan/longevity of the vehicle. A coolant that uses antifreeze and can withstand freezing temperatures shall only be used.

Battery Health

Battery performance often decreases in cold weather, so it's essential to test batteries and replace any that are weak. Cold weather reduces battery efficiency, so testing batteries and replacing any with weak charge capacity is essential.

Wipers

Windshield wipers should be in excellent condition, and winter-grade washer fluid is an essential requirement to prevent freezing and maintain visibility.

Brake System

Inspection and servicing of brakes should be done well in advance as they are critical for safe operation on icy and snowy roads.

Heating System

Ensuring that heating systems and defrosters work well to keep drivers comfortable and maintain visibility is another important aspect.

Tyres

Equip vehicles with winter tyres or all-season tyres with good tread depth for better traction on snow and ice. Tyre pressure should be monitored regularly, as it can decrease with cold temperatures. For extreme conditions, equipping vehicles with snow chains or studded tyres is also essential.

Fuel and Engine

Fuel Additives In colder climates, diesel can become gel in low temperatures and hence anti-gel additives is added to diesel fuel if required.

Block Heaters Installing block heaters to help warm the engine before starting with the aim of reducing wear and tear. This will ensure that the vehicle runs smoothly in freezing temperatures.

Emergency Kits Equipping vehicles with emergency supplies, such as blankets, flashlights, shovels, sandbags, ice scrapers, snow shovels, snow chains, a flashlight, first-aid supplies, and extra food and water is another vital step that helps in case of any vehicle breakdown.

Additional Visibility Aids Installing Parking assist, Rear view cameras, convex mirrors in the vehicle, and hill assist will prove advantageous to drivers.

Defrosting and De-icing Application of de-ice sprays and ensuring defrosting systems are functional for all windows and mirrors for all vehicles.

Driver Training and Safety Protocols

Conducting winter driver training for UN staff, emphasizing safe driving techniques on icy or snowy roads with special emphasis on maintaining a safe speed, increasing following distance/maintaining a safe gap between vehicles, braking gently, applying a handbrake on slopes and during uphill movement when required. Enforcement of speed restrictions and mandating the use of seatbelts and other safety practices will help reduce the occurrence of accidents.

Regular Monitoring Establish a protocol for ongoing vehicle checks throughout winter to address any wear or damage due to winter conditions promptly.

PREPARATION OF WINTER IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Preparatory tasks by Engineers

Road Maintenance and Snow Clearance

An efficient winter road plan is vital to keep peacekeeping activities running normally in the Golan Heights during winter. The North sector can receive up to 10 Feet of snow. The area becomes impassable during the winter season. The engineer section prepares well in advance by clearing all landslides and installing winter route markers before winter commences. When the snow sets in, the only mode of conveyance is either by foot or by snow mover (pistenbully/over-snow vehicle).

After the culmination of winters, the engineer section in conjunction with transport and heavy platoon again takes up the task of improving of Operational track from Pos 12A to Hermon Base to Hermon South up to Hermon Hotel. Given the terrain in the Golan Heights, steep or winding roads may require additional attention to prevent hazardous conditions.

Coordination among municipalities, military logistics units, and civilian transportation/contractual services also plays a crucial role in ensuring consistent snow removal and road clearance efforts.



Infrastructure Reinforcement and Inspection. Winterizing the infrastructure in the Golan Heights is essential to support transportation operations. Road Supporting infrastructure and other critical structures should undergo inspections before the winter season to identify and repair any structural vulnerabilities that cold weather could worsen. Reinforcing guardrails, barriers, and signage helps reduce the risk of accidents, especially on elevated or gradient-ridden exposed road sections. Water drainage systems should be checked and cleared of any obstructions to prevent the pooling of water, which can freeze and create dangerous patches of ice.



Rockfall barriers may also be necessary in areas where snow melt could destabilize slopes, leading to landslides the authorities can mitigate the potential impact of snow, ice, and freezing temperatures on transportation networks by reinforcing key infrastructure before winter. The engineering section undertakes the construction of 500m of RCC roads every year. The total 2.5 km RCC road that has been constructed so far has proven to be a milestone in connecting inaccessible areas through better means.

Preparatory tasks by FTS (Weather Monitoring and Communication)

Real-time weather monitoring and communication play a central role in winter transportation safety. Winter storms can develop rapidly in the Golan Heights, and accurate weather forecasts help make informed decisions about road closures, delays, and resource allocation. The FTS with the help of weather stations and mobile apps may provide live updates that can help transport personnel anticipate changing conditions. Communication systems should be robust enough to alert drivers, maintenance teams, and response personnel of deteriorating weather conditions, giving them ample time to adjust travel plans. Implementing a centralized



PREPARATION OF WINTER IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Communication command center for large-scale winter events can streamline efforts and improve coordination across different agencies. Designated contact points within the military, law enforcement, and emergency services may ensure timely information sharing and help prevent misunderstandings during high-stress situations.

Contingency Planning and Emergency Response

In winter, the frequency of occurrence of unexpected events such as road closures, accidents, and vehicle breakdowns is relatively high as compared to the balance portion of the year. Effective contingency planning can ensure a swift response and maintain transportation flow even in challenging situations. Emergency response plans should include pre-established detours, strategically placed recovery vehicles, and clear communication channels for drivers. Staging emergency vehicles by the contingents and transport section, such as tow trucks and ambulances, in strategic locations can help reduce response times. Quick-response teams should be trained to handle vehicle recovery and assist stranded motorists, particularly on roads prone to snow accumulation or poor visibility. Supply chain continuity is also critical during winter. By developing backup routes and stockpiling essential goods, we can reduce the risk of shortages of supply and vehicle maintenance cover in the Golan Heights. Military units stationed in the region should prepare to distribute emergency supplies in case of isolation or if weather conditions cut off their access to regular supply chains.



Ensuring Public Awareness and Education

Keeping the public informed about winter safety practices can reduce accidents and improve overall transportation efficiency. Educational campaigns, whether through media announcements or notices/flash boards, can provide drivers with tips on winter driving, vehicle maintenance, and emergency preparedness. Providing regular updates on road conditions and expected weather patterns also allows personnel/drivers to plan their travel better. Signage along major routes should include warnings about potential hazards, such as icy patches or steep slopes during the winter. Installing digital message boards on key roads can display real-time alerts about closed routes, alternative paths, or upcoming severe weather events.

Coordinating with Military and Civilian Resources

Winter transportation preparation in the Golan Heights often requires coordination between military and civilian resources. Military vehicles, with their advanced off-road capabilities, can assist in extreme winter conditions, particularly in remote or hard-to-reach areas. Joint drills between military and civilian agencies can improve readiness and familiarize personnel with response protocols.

Civilian Transportation Networks

Buses and trucks from contractors/MOVCON may need to work in tandem with military logistics units to ensure that essential goods reach their destinations. This inter agency coordination helps build a flexible, adaptive response system capable of maintaining transportation functionality during the most challenging winter weather.

PREPARATION OF WINTER IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Challenges

The treacherous terrain and inclement weather in the region further intensify the adversities faced by UN staff especially incapacitating the logistics. Some of the challenges faced by the UN logisticians are listed below: -

- Geo-political situation.

- Human limitations factors like psychological barrier and mental and physical fatigue.

- Procurement Complexities.

- Lead time.

- Non-availability of civ staff during non-working hours thus limited staff availability.

Conclusion

Preparing for winter transportation in the Golan Heights necessitates a multifaceted and comprehensive approach that integrates vehicle readiness, infrastructure fortification t, and real-time communication. By ensuring that vehicles are winterized, maintaining road infrastructure, and having contingency plans in place, authorities can



mitigate the impact of severe winter conditions on transportation networks. Coordination among civilian, military, and emergency services enhances response capabilities, while public awareness initiatives contribute to safer travel for all stakeholders.

A robustly prepared transportation network is essential for maintaining mobility, supply chains, and public safety in the Golan Heights during winter. With meticulous planning and collaborative effort, both military and civilian agencies can effectively navigate the challenges posed by the region's harsh winter climate and ensure uninterrupted operations in the months ahead.

Major Anuradha
SO Maint/ Transport Section
UNDOF



KAZASH - FIRST MILITARY CONTINGENT AS FORCE RESERVE COMPANY

By order of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 161 dated April 19, 2024, 139 Kazakh peacekeepers were deployed to the mission area in the Syrian Arab Republic on the Golan Heights.

This was preceded by multilateral meetings of the military-diplomatic Corps of the Ministry of Defence with other states and directly with the UN. These steps were taken following the proposals of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the creation of a road map for the development of the peacekeeping potential of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan, against the backdrop of emerging crisis situations in the world that cause destabilization of lasting international peace and security.



To carry out the mission, Kazakh military personnel conducted a series of measures, including thorough selection and training in accordance with UN standards, and deployment in the mission area. Comprehensive six-month training was organised at the Peacekeeping Operations Centre of the Ministry of Defence.

The training of military personnel involved instructors from KAZ Peacekeeping Operations Centre (KAZCENT), Demining Centre, and Military Medicine Centre. Classes were organised in strict accordance to the training programmes and requirements of the Integrated Training Service (ITS) of the UN.

The military personnel learned English, rules of engagement (ROE), and norms of international and humanitarian law. In practice, tasks were worked out for securing a peacekeeping base, organising checkpoints, patrolling, explosive devices disposal, counter IED, providing medical assistance and evacuation. Additionally, officers completed certified UN education courses to enhance their qualifications and achieve a common understanding of UN standards.

To improve practical skills and operational compatibility with the contingent's staff officers, training sessions were held on making military decisions at the operational-tactical level.

According to assessments by Kazakh experts and UN inspections, the contingent's personnel demonstrated a high level of training and motivation.

The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan has undertaken a comprehensive set of measures to fully equip the mission with modern weapons, military equipment, and other assets that meet UN standards. The contingent is equipped with armoured wheeled vehicles fitted with combat turrets, as well as essential life-support equipment. Kazakhstan contingent has high-mobility vehicles and engineering equipment. One of the vehicles, modified for the evacuation of wounded, is equipped with an oxygen apparatus, defibrillator, medications, and other medical equipment. Thus, the contingent is a self-sufficient combat unit capable of performing all assigned tasks as the reserve of the UNDOF Force Commander.



Currently, the Kazakh peacekeeping contingent, being in the mission area, performs and is ready to perform the following tasks:

- Patrolling throughout the area of responsibility;
- Neutralizing IEDs, UXOs, and other explosive devices;
- Reinforcement, evacuation, and medical evacuation of
- UN observer posts;
- Escorting OGG military observers;
- Deploying a unit of platoon size or company anywhere in any mission area;
- Participating in logistical movement;
- Any tasks from the Mission Commander;
- Maintaining constant combat readiness of the entire unit.

During their service in this mission, the Kazakhstan peacekeeping contingent as the Force Reserve Company has repeatedly confirmed its readiness to perform tasks and commands, establishing itself as the most prepared company of dedicated, professional, strong-willed, and morally upright individuals. This assessment was given by the mission leadership. This is the result of the hard work of all personnel and company command.

KAZASH - FIRST MILITARY CONTINGENT AS FORCE RESERVE COMPANY

Constant combat readiness requires a high level of physical skills, morale and professional qualities from each soldier. To achieve this level, various activities, training sessions, and discussions are conducted daily with the personnel. These activities are aimed at maintaining and improving the physical condition, morale, and professional skills of the military personnel.

The activities include physical training, covering various aspects: from cardio workouts and strength exercises to specialised military training such as marches, obstacle courses, and tactical exercises. These workouts help soldiers maintain a high level of endurance, strength, and overall physical readiness, which is critically important for performing combat tasks.

These training sessions conducted with the personnel cover a wide range of topics. They include training in tactical techniques, working with modern weapons and equipment, and survival skills in extreme conditions. Special attention is paid to developing leadership qualities and teamwork, which contributes to creating a cohesive and effective unit.



dangerous tasks, helping them remain calm and confident in any circumstances.

This measure, implemented jointly with the mission training cell (MTC), has a positive trend in keeping personnel trained and professional. Joint training as well as joint implementation of tasks in a multinational environment also contributes to the exchange of experience and best practices, which enhances the overall level of training of Kazakh peacekeepers and shows interoperability of Kazakh troops.

Moreover, regular activities and training



Discussions and psychological training sessions are aimed at maintaining the morale and psychological resilience of the military personnel. During these activities, issues of moral and ethical nature, behaviour norms in combat conditions, and methods of overcoming stressful situations are discussed. Psychological support plays an important role in preparing soldiers for performing complex and

sessions contribute to strengthening discipline and responsibility among military personnel. Each soldier understands the importance of their role in the overall mission and strives for continuous improvement of their skills and knowledge. This creates an atmosphere of professionalism and mutual respect within the team, which is key to successfully completing assigned tasks.

KAZASH - FIRST MILITARY CONTINGENT AS FORCE RESERVE COMPANY

Thus, daily activities, training sessions, and discussions are an integral part of the preparation of Kazakh peacekeepers. They help maintain a high level of combat readiness, physical fitness, and morale, ultimately contributing to the successful completion of the mission and the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, the first Kazakh peacekeeping contingent on the Golan Heights has demonstrated a high level of training and professionalism. Thanks to thorough preparation, including physical training, tactical exercises, and psychological support, Kazakh military personnel successfully carry out assigned tasks, ensuring safety and stability in the conflict zone.

The joint efforts of the company command and the mission leadership have contributed to the creation of a cohesive and effective unit ready to perform any tasks. Kazakh peacekeepers have established themselves as reliable and professional defenders of peace, which has been highly appreciated by the UNDOF mission.



This experience not only strengthens Kazakhstan's international authority but also makes a significant contribution to maintaining global peace and security.

The Kazakhstan peacekeeping contingent continues to demonstrate an example of dedication and professionalism, serving as an important element in the international peacekeeping system.

LT/COL Sukhab Appazov
DCO/2IC FRC
UNDOF



WELLNESS AND BLUE HELMETS: FOOD BRIEFING

Wellness is a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fueling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit.

Conflicts, natural disasters, and complex emergencies present substantial health challenges to United Nations (UN) peacekeepers deployed in mission areas. Health problems of UN peacekeepers are typical global health issues with complicated and cross-border health risk factors.

A healthy lifestyle offers many benefits, including helping to prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and other chronic diseases. Another important benefit is that healthy routines enhance your immunity.

Immunity is your body's defense against foreign organisms. Taking care of yourself will help your immune system take care of you.



The immune system is the body's way of protecting itself from infection and disease; it fights everything from cold and flu viruses to serious conditions such as cancer.

Tips to enhance immunity:

1. Eat well
2. Be physically active
3. Maintain a healthy weight
4. Get enough sleep
5. Quit Smoking
6. Avoid too much alcohol



WELLNESS AND BLUE HELMETS: FOOD BRIEFING

Food is one of the basic necessities of life. Food contains nutrients—substances essential for the growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues and for the regulation of vital processes. Nutrients provide the energy our bodies need to function. **Boosting immunity through diet** involves consuming a variety of foods rich in essential nutrients.



You Are What You Eat. Choose Foods that Boost Immunity and Fight Infection.

Here are some foods known for their immune-boosting properties:

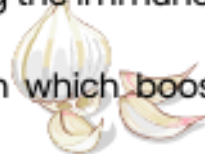
1. Citrus fruits: oranges, lemons and grapefruits are rich in vitamin C, which enhances the production of white blood cells, crucial for fighting infections.



2. Berries: strawberries, blueberries and raspberries are packed with antioxidants like vitamin C and flavonoid, which help in boosting the immune system.



3. Garlic: this contains compounds like allicin which boost the immune system and reduce the severity of colds and flu.



4. Ginger: this has an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which help in strengthening the immune system and reducing the risk of illness.



5. Yogurt: this and other fermented foods contain probiotics which are beneficial bacteria that support gut health. Healthy gut is essential for a strong immune system.



6. Leafy greens: spinach, kale and Swiss chard are rich in vitamins A, C, E, which help in fighting off infections.



7. Nuts and Seeds: almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that support immune function.



8. Turmeric: contains cur-cumin, a compound with powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which can help in boosting immunity.



9. Green tea: this is rich in antioxidants like flavonoid and epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), which have been shown to enhance immune function.



10. Protein- rich foods: lean meats, poultry, fish, tofu and legumes provide the building blocks for immune cells and antibodies.



WELLNESS AND BLUE HELMETS: FOOD BRIEFING

Overall lifestyle factors like **regular exercise**, **adequate sleep** and **stress management** play a crucial role in maintaining immunity.



Preventing glucose spikes during meals involves making dietary choices and adopting habits that help regulate blood sugar levels.

Here are some strategies to help prevent glucose spikes:

1. **Low Glycemic Index (GI) foods:** non- starchy vegetables, legumes, whole grains (quinoa and barley), nuts, seeds, most fruits (except watermelon and pineapple). This foods release glucose slowly into the bloodstream, resulting in more stable blood sugar levels.
2. **Fiber- rich foods:** Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Fiber slows down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrate which can help prevent rapid spikes in blood sugar levels.
3. **Pair Carbohydrates with Protein and Healthy Fats:** Whole- grain bread with avocado and eggs or fruit with Greek yogurt or nuts. This can help slow down the absorption of glucose and reduce the glycemic response of a meal.
4. **Watch Portion Sizes:** Large portions of carbohydrates in one sitting can lead to spikes in blood sugar levels.
5. **Limit Refined Sugars and Simple Carbohydrates:** Sugary drinks, candy, pastries, and white bread can cause rapid spikes in blood sugar levels.

WELLNESS AND BLUE HELMETS: FOOD BRIEFING

6. Stay Hydrated: Drinking water throughout the day can help regulate blood sugar levels and prevent dehydration which can contribute to spikes in blood sugar.

7. Be Mindful of Alcohol Consumption: Alcohol can affect blood sugar levels, especially when consumed on an empty stomach or in large quantities.

8. Monitor timing of meals and snacks: Eating regular meals and snacks spaced throughout the day can help maintain stable blood sugar levels.

9. Exercise regularly: Physical activity helps improve insulin sensitivity and can help regulate blood sugar levels. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate- intensity exercise per week.

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.
Life gets better when health is your first priority.



LT. COL. DR. DRISHTI R.L. SHAH
FORCE MEDICAL OFFICER
UNDOF



United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) supports the Industrial Institute in Khan Arnabah with the installation of a new PV solar system

Young people have an important role to play in sustaining peace and security in their communities, their countries and to a wider extent around the world. They must actively participate in the implementation of the peace agreements. In particular, people who have been embroiled in war or victims of as a result of war; they need professional skills in order to be successfully reintegrated into their communities. There must be adequate institutions and trade schools available that can take their needs into account. When they are prepared, it will undoubtedly be easier for them to play an essential role in promoting peace and development in their country.



is already serving Khan Arnabah and all its surrounding villages with a population of around 25,000 people. It is worth noting that the school has 400 students as direct beneficiaries of which 300 are male and 100 are female.

The project consists of:

Two full direct PV solar systems, each one is 15 KVA with charger batteries.

Full connecting cables with control panel for each system.

UNDOF provided training and education of three teachers and two students to familiarize themselves with the system in order to be in a position to manage it on behalf of the institution. The calculated cost of the project was: 49,580 US Dollars.



For this year, UNDOF will implement six Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) costing about 300,000 US dollars in the area under its responsibility. Thus, the Industrial institute was among the identified projects for this year. According to the manager (Director) of the school, it's been 14 years since the industrial Institute in Khan Arnabah, a region of Syria, which has seen some difficult times, which has seen limited developments and have continuous supply of electricity. It was arduous and hard to use the different laboratories of the school and corroborate theory into practice due to a lack of power. Furthermore, he stated that: "the realisation of this project would help us to accomplish our work with a higher level of professionalism and efficiency. We are very grateful to the Mission for this valuable support" reiterated the school's Manager.

Approved by the Project Review Committee in Sept 2024, the project of: Provision of a 30kVA solar power system for the Industrial Institute which



"On November 28th, a delegation of UNDOF Mission comprised of the Force Commander, Head of Mission, the Deputy Force Commander, the acting Chief Mission Support, Civil Affairs Officer and different colleagues and staff officers participated in the inauguration of the project. The UNDOF team was also joined by the representatives of the Ministry of Education for Quneitra Governorate, the school's manager, teachers, students' representatives at the ceremony.



"The project is also aligned with number 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) calling for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This will undoubtedly contribute to reducing Climate Risk which is already in an advance phase of degeneration in our planet" added the UNDOF Force Commander in his speech. He further encouraged students and staffs to take good care of the investment for future students.

One of the students, during his testimony, informed the UNDOF team "that the project came truly at the right time. Before, they would have encountered a lot of difficulties in running their laboratories, but with the new system in place; the laboratories are fully functional. They are very grateful to the UNDOF Mission for the project."

Marie Rose Fernande Alexandre
Civil Affairs Officer
UNDOF



When young people, men and women are educated, the Sky is the limit!
This is what these young female students tried to express in this picture.

