



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 12 September to 3 December 2013

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past three months, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution [350 \(1974\)](#) and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently through resolution [2108 \(2013\)](#).

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was generally maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. Violations of the ceasefire by both sides are set out below. The Syrian Arab Armed Forces continued to deploy personnel and equipment inside the area of separation and carried out military activities and security operations against armed members of the opposition in the UNDOF area of operation, at times in response to offensives carried out by members of the armed opposition. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and military equipment is in violation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israeli and Syrian forces.

3. Military activities conducted by the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in the area of separation have the potential to increase tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries and pose a risk to the local civilian population and United Nations personnel. As underscored by the Security Council in its resolution [2108 \(2013\)](#), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation.

4. In the context of the clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, there were several reports of firing across the ceasefire line, including by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in what they asserted was retaliation for fire from the Bravo side that had landed on the Alpha side. On 12 September, five artillery rounds and a tank shell from the Bravo side landed across the ceasefire line (see para. 7). There was no retaliation from IDF. On 21 September, IDF informed UNDOF that there had been a mortar impact on the Alpha side. UNDOF requested IDF not to retaliate but, subsequently, IDF fired an



artillery round across the ceasefire line that landed in the vicinity of Al Bakar in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. IDF informed UNDOF that, during the night of 22 September, an IDF patrol west of the technical fence in the vicinity of United Nations observation post 51 had been fired upon four times by an unknown person on the Bravo side. The IDF patrol had responded by firing a shot. On 8 October, IDF informed UNDOF that a mortar round had landed some 600 m west of the ceasefire line, to the west of Al Horaye. IDF did not retaliate. On 9 October, IDF informed UNDOF that an IDF position some 1.5 km from United Nations position 37 had been hit by artillery fire, injuring two IDF soldiers and damaging the position. UNDOF requested IDF not to retaliate and the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate to take all measures to stop the Syrian armed forces from firing towards the ceasefire line. When IDF informed UNDOF that it intended to retaliate, United Nations personnel in positions in the line of fire went into shelters. Subsequently, IDF fired two rounds at a Syrian armed forces position along the Bravo line. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that the IDF rounds had killed two soldiers and injured four officers. On two occasions on 20 October and once on 21 October, an artillery round from the Bravo side impacted across the ceasefire line. IDF did not retaliate. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line are violations of the Disengagement Agreement.

5. On several occasions during the reporting period, inadvertent crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians, primarily shepherds, was observed by United Nations personnel on the ground. This also included persons digging out and removing landmines, as further described in paragraph 21. On 15 September, a person who had been wounded in an explosion in the southern part of the UNDOF area of operation in the vicinity of the Bravo line was taken by armed members of the opposition across the ceasefire line, where he was transferred to a civilian ambulance escorted by an IDF vehicle. From 9 to 19 November, UNDOF observed at least 10 wounded persons being transferred by armed members of the opposition from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line to IDF. On 23 September, a shepherd was apprehended by IDF after crossing the ceasefire line in the vicinity of Al Rafid. He was released the following day at the Alpha gate to UNDOF, which in turn handed him over to the Syrian authorities at the Bravo gate. On 8 October, civilians fleeing the shelling by the Syrian armed forces of Jabbata al-Khashab crossed the ceasefire line and returned after the shelling had subsided. On 20 October, UNDOF observed an IDF aircraft fly over the area of separation before returning to the Alpha side.

6. Heavy clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition continued throughout the reporting period, in particular in the villages of Jabbata, Trunje, Ufaniyah, Al Horaye, Al Quatanyia, Bir Ajam, Braika and Al Rafid in the area of separation. Small arms fire from inside the area of separation and heavy artillery, mortar, main battle tank, machine gun and anti-aircraft fire from the area of limitation in close vicinity to the Bravo line occurred on a daily basis. Heavy fighting also occurred in the areas of Khan Arnabeh, Al Baath and Al Hamidiyah, principally along the main UNDOF supply road. On 20 October, during artillery firing by the Syrian armed forces on the villages of Al Rafid and Abu Garah, fire impacted on several instances across the Alpha line. United Nations personnel at observation post 53 sought shelter for some time during the fighting. Following an initial attack by members of the armed opposition in which they consolidated their hold on Ufaniyah and Al Horaye, the Syrian armed forces heavily bombarded the

area for several days and established additional checkpoints in the vicinity of Khan Arnabeh.

7. In the most significant confrontations during the period, on 12 September, between 500 and 700 members of the armed opposition attacked and took control of three Syrian armed forces positions located along the Bravo line in the south of the area of operation. The Syrian armed forces brought in four tanks and additional personnel as reinforcements. During the fighting, United Nations personnel observed, for the first time, armed members of the opposition firing an anti-tank missile. During the course of the fighting, armed members of the opposition disabled two of the four Syrian armed forces tanks, using heavier weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades, in their possession. The exchange of fire also occurred close to United Nations observation post 54. The UNDOF Force Commander immediately engaged with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and IDF. He emphasized to the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate that it was important for the Syrian armed forces to stop the artillery and tank firing immediately. He also requested IDF not to retaliate against the rounds that had landed on the Alpha side (see para. 4) and to use utmost restraint in order to prevent a further escalation of the situation. IDF did not retaliate. Further clashes between the Syrian armed forces and the armed members of the opposition occurred in the same general area on subsequent days. On 16 September, during day-long fighting, two Syrian armed forces tanks, an armoured personnel carrier and three trucks with mounted anti-aircraft guns entered the area of separation. The Force Commander requested the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate to ensure the immediate withdrawal of the tanks and armoured personnel carriers. The following day, the Syrian armed forces withdrew the military equipment, except for a tank, which they abandoned. Armed members of the opposition subsequently stripped the tank of its machine gun. Two armed members of the opposition were observed wearing United Nations protective equipment. Throughout the incident, the Force Commander maintained contact with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and IDF. As a result of the fighting, some 3,000 persons and their belongings left the village of Al Rafid, moving south. In addition, on 12 September, UNDOF observed a vehicle stolen from the Force being driven by armed members of the opposition in the vicinity of United Nations position 85. On 16 September, two armed members of the opposition were observed in the vicinity of Al Rafid wearing protective equipment with United Nations markings.

8. From 1 to 4 October, heavy clashes and exchanges of gunfire took place between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition along the main road between Camp Faouar and Camp Ziouani and the adjoining areas to the south, comprising the area south of Khan Arnabeh, Al Baath and Al Samdaniyah, in addition to Umm Batinah. On 3 October, the Syrian armed forces stationed an armoured personnel carrier immediately in front of United Nations position 25 and fired at buildings from where armed elements were firing at a nearby Syrian armed forces position. The following day, the Syrian armed forces positioned three tanks close to United Nations observation post 56 and fired towards Al Samdaniyah in the area of separation. The Force Commander immediately contacted the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate, requesting him to convey to the Syrian armed forces the need to stop the firing close to the United Nations position and withdraw the tanks from the area of separation. The firing stopped shortly thereafter and, within an hour, the tanks were moved outside the area of separation. UNDOF reinforced its presence in the

vicinity of United Nations position 62 and observation post 56 during the period of heavy fighting.

9. On 1 October, UNDOF personnel travelling in a United Nations vehicle through Khan Arnabeh along the main road in the area of separation were caught in crossfire between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition. UNDOF could not confirm the origin of the firing. No United Nations personnel were injured, but the vehicle sustained some damage. Later the same day, another United Nations vehicle carrying UNDOF personnel in the vicinity of Khan Arnabeh was hit in the windshield by a bullet. The United Nations driver sustained slight facial injuries from glass fragments. On 3 October, several stray bullets hit United Nations positions 32 and 25. During the night of 4 October, United Nations personnel at position 68 fired a warning shot at an intruder who had pointed his weapon at them. Subsequently, they fired two additional shots at the intruder, who fled from the position, leaving behind an AK-47 rifle.

10. On several occasions during periods of heavy clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition and exchanges of fire close to United Nations positions, United Nations personnel were forced to seek shelter in their positions. During an intense firefight on 19 September close to position 25, a stray bullet hit the guard room of the position. On 21 October, during an exchange of fire in the vicinity of position 68, five indirect rounds landed between 30 and 50 m east of the position. Stray rounds and shrapnel caused damage to the accommodation, office and communications buildings, in addition to communications equipment. No injuries were sustained by United Nations personnel. UNDOF lodged a protest regarding the incidents with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and requested him to ensure that the Syrian troops were informed of and understood the need to respect the safety of United Nations positions.

11. At the end of October, the Syrian armed forces conducted a two-day operation in the area of Mazra'at Bayt Jinn, Bayt Jinn and Harfa, in the north-east of the area of limitation. United Nations personnel heard several strikes from aircraft, followed by artillery fire. On 30 October, UNDOF observed some 100 heavy explosions and impacts in that area, in addition to dozens of bursts of heavy machine gun fire and artillery fire. Three casualties resulting from the firing, including two women, were brought to and treated at Camp Faouar.

12. In making its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and to see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed by the Disengagement Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line. UNDOF continued to observe and report instances of transborder movements of unidentified individuals between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in the northern part of the area of separation.

13. The Syrian security forces continued to maintain checkpoints that they established inside the area of separation when they began military operations in the area. With armed opposition groups dominant in parts of the area of separation, the Syrian armed forces have withdrawn from checkpoints in some areas and reinforced their presence in others. In addition, Syrian armed forces personnel maintained checkpoints at the eastern entrances to the area of separation, straddling the Bravo line, to control and restrict traffic. The checkpoints have often interfered with the freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan. Restrictions on the movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan in the areas of separation and limitation have increased as a result of the clashes between the Syrian armed forces

and armed members of the opposition. The situation has resulted in the frequent closure of the UNDOF main supply road, thus hampering the movements of UNDOF between Camp Faouar on the Bravo side and Camp Ziouani on the Alpha side. UNDOF frequently resorted to the use of bypass roads, which are not accessible at night. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate advised UNDOF that, for security reasons, all United Nations personnel should avoid areas where there were clashes and that UNDOF should not carry out night-time patrols. Observer Group Golan members continued to encounter a number of restrictions of movement on the Alpha side when entering and exiting United Nations observation posts 52 and 73, located to the east of the Israeli technical fence.

14. During the morning of 15 October, the Syrian armed forces fired towards an UNDOF armoured vehicle that was carrying five personnel and travelling through the village of Al Samdaniyah. None of the five peacekeepers was injured, but the vehicle sustained serious damage. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that the Syrian armed forces had fired towards the vehicle in the belief that it was used by members of the opposition because the area in which the vehicle was moving was controlled by the opposition. He said that an investigation into the incident would be carried out. On 5 November, Syrian armed forces on a hilltop position fired towards an UNDOF convoy travelling in the vicinity of Jaba in the area of limitation. Some 20 rounds of anti-aircraft fire landed about 20 m ahead of the lead vehicle. None of the United Nations personnel was injured. UNDOF lodged a protest regarding the incident with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate, who assured UNDOF that a high-level inquiry into the incident would be conducted.

15. During the reporting period, United Nations personnel encountered increased restrictions of movement and heightened risk owing to the placement of improvised explosive devices alongside roads in the area of separation. Since 17 July, UNDOF has observed the presence of a roadblock consisting of several layers of stones with four anti-tank mines placed among the rocks, approximately 500 m south of United Nations position 60. An improvised explosive device has been in place on an access road to United Nations observation post 56 since 1 August. On three separate occasions, new improvised explosive devices were placed in the vicinity of United Nations positions and later removed.

16. On 1 November, an UNDOF supply convoy comprising three vehicles that was heading towards the Mount Hermon base was intercepted and stopped by a group of armed persons in the vicinity of the village of Mughur al-Mir in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. Four members of the armed group fired around 20 bullets, 2 of which hit the lead vehicle. The remaining members of the armed group, some 20 persons, were hiding among the trees beside the road. The lead vehicle continued and reached a Syrian armed forces checkpoint. The armed persons detained the remaining two United Nations trucks, carrying four UNDOF personnel, and subsequently moved them to Mazra'at Bayt Jinn. In response to the incident, UNDOF dispatched the Force reserve company. On approaching the location, in response to small arms fire, it returned fire and subsequently returned to Mughur al-Mir. The United Nations peacekeepers, along with their personal weapons and belongings that had been taken by the armed persons, were released safely after being detained for around an hour. The two United Nations trucks were also released. On 28 November, an UNDOF convoy travelling to United Nations position 68 was fired upon by armed members of the opposition in the vicinity of

Ruwayhinah in the area of limitation. During the incident, a United Nations peacekeeper was injured and an UNDOF vehicle sustained some damage.

17. During the reporting period, armed members of the opposition further expanded and consolidated areas under their influence in the northern and southern parts of the area of separation, resulting in the Syrian armed forces redeploying to areas closer to the main road crossing the area of separation between the towns of Khan Arnabeh and Al Quneitra. The armed members of the opposition enhanced their presence in close proximity to United Nations positions, restricting the freedom of movement of UNDOF and its ability to operate unimpeded. The presence of armed opposition groups in the general area of Bayt Jinn and Mazra'at Bayt Jinn in the north continued to affect the ability of UNDOF to sustain its personnel in the Mount Hermon positions because UNDOF convoys continued to be caught in crossfire. On 4 November, 10 rounds of small arms fire hit cargo containers in an UNDOF-escorted convoy that was using a bypass route from Damascus to Camp Faouar outside the area of operation. There was no damage to United Nations property.

18. UNDOF has protested at the presence of Syrian armed forces and equipment in the area of separation, the firing into and inside the area of separation and the firing towards United Nations personnel and facilities. The Force Commander reiterated to the Syrian authorities the obligation of the armed forces to halt military operations in the area of separation and to cease firing from the area of limitation, stressing the importance of abiding by the terms of the Disengagement Agreement and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. Senior United Nations officials have conveyed similar messages to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

19. Within this challenging operational environment, UNDOF supervised the area of separation by manning static positions and conducting around-the-clock observation to ensure that the military forces of both parties were excluded from it. UNDOF, through Observer Group Golan, continues to establish temporary observation posts in several locations along the ceasefire line on the Alpha side between two and four times per week, so as to increase the Force's situational awareness of the area of separation, in particular in the south where United Nations positions and observation posts have been vacated temporarily owing to the security situation. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied Observer Group Golan inspection teams. Inspections and mobile operations in the area of limitation on the Bravo side remain suspended because of the security situation. As in the past, the Force faced restrictions on freedom of movement and its inspection teams were denied access to some positions on the Alpha side.

20. UNDOF continued to adapt its operational posture to the ongoing IDF training activities and new military construction in the area of limitation on the Alpha side, Syrian civilian developments in proximity to the ceasefire line in the area of separation and military activities by the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in its area of operation. IDF continued to enhance the technical fence to prevent crossings from the area of separation. Both sides maintained their defensive positions in the respective areas of limitation. Israeli customs officials

continued to operate periodically at the IDF post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

21. On numerous occasions throughout the reporting period, United Nations personnel observed armed and unarmed persons digging out and removing large numbers of landmines in the vicinity of the IDF technical fence and from around United Nations position 85. Once, IDF fired warning shots at persons close to the technical fence who then withdrew, but returned later that same day. IDF fired again, wounding one person. On some occasions, the persons briefly crossed the ceasefire line while collecting mines. In addition, armed persons were observed removing mines in the vicinity of the village of Braika, from the area of three Syrian armed forces positions that the armed opposition had taken control of in mid-September, as well as from west of Al Muallaqah along the Bravo line.

22. In the vicinity of the ceasefire line in the area of separation, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the long-term presence of the mines and the deterioration of their detonation systems, the threat is now higher than in previous years. With enhanced mine clearing and detection capacity, UNDOF continued to carry out operational mine clearance, disposing of 12 anti-tank mines and 120 kg of explosive materials collected from improvised explosive devices.

23. The limitations imposed by the security situation on the Bravo side notwithstanding, UNDOF continued its efforts to liaise with local authorities and engage with the local population to explain the Force's mandate and activities. This remained important in the light of the security situation in the UNDOF area of operation and as part of the effort to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground.

24. On 30 October, UNDOF, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, facilitated the crossing of 22 students through the Alpha and Bravo gates. UNDOF continued to provide emergency medical treatment to civilians on a strictly humanitarian basis. During periods of intensive shelling by the Syrian armed forces of villages in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, local inhabitants fled, taking shelter in the vicinity of United Nations positions 69, 80 and 85 and observation post 54. The number of internally displaced persons around United Nations positions peaked in mid-September during the fighting in Al Rafid, when some 250 persons established temporary shelters in the vicinity of United Nations position 85 and observation post 54. They returned home after approximately one week, when the fighting had subsided. At the time of reporting, between 10 and 20 persons remain in the vicinity of position 85.

25. As at 23 November, UNDOF comprised 1,227 troops, including 43 women, from Fiji (509), the Philippines (333), India (193), Ireland (118), Nepal (72) and the Netherlands (2). On 13 September, Brigadier General Hari Bahadur Basnet (Nepal) assumed the position of Deputy Force Commander. The Irish contingent, forming the Force reserve company, deployed to UNDOF in two groups on 21 and 28 September, with 26 and 89 personnel, respectively. On 25 September, 63 members of the Nepalese contingent, who had contributed to the Force headquarters company on an interim basis, were repatriated. In addition, 83 military observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), including two women, assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks. On 17 October, the UNDOF international staff member who had been abducted by unidentified

armed persons on 17 February was handed over to UNDOF by the Syrian authorities. On 4 November, an UNDOF national staff member was killed by mortar shrapnel on the outskirts of Damascus.

26. Given the evolving security situation in the UNDOF area of operation, the Force further adjusted its operations with a view to ensuring its ability to implement its mandate safely and securely. UNDOF continued to concentrate on static activities in an effort to reduce the exposure of personnel to danger, while focusing on enhanced situational analysis, reporting and liaising with the parties to prevent situations from escalating. Only essential operational and administrative movements are currently carried out. The operational adjustments also involved a temporary shift in the focus of the activities of a number of Observer Group Golan military observers from patrolling and inspection to static observation, liaison and situation analysis. Restrictions placed by some Member States on the activities of UNTSO military observers on the Bravo side continue to significantly hamper the implementation of the UNDOF mandate.

27. Further to Security Council resolution [2108 \(2013\)](#) and following the engagement of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat with the parties regarding essential self-defence requirements for the Force, the Syrian authorities facilitated the entry of the Force reserve company, equipped with armoured personnel carriers with higher-calibre and mounted automatic machine guns. In an effort to maximize troop strength, the UNDOF troop strength will reach some 1,250 personnel, within the parameters set forth in the Protocol to the Disengagement Agreement.

28. In addition, most of the recommendations set forth in the military capability study have been implemented. UNDOF continues to adopt and update mitigation measures on the basis of a comprehensive risk assessment carried out by the Force with the support of the Secretariat. Measures introduced earlier remain in place, including the reinforcement by UNDOF peacekeepers of observation posts manned by Observer Group Golan observers in specific locations, regular rehearsals of evacuation exercises, improved perimeter control of the Force headquarters and provision of personal protective equipment to all military and civilian personnel, including the necessary training. The enhancement of the medical facility in Camp Faouar has been completed and additional medical personnel have been deployed. UNDOF also continued to refurbish, upgrade and maintain its equipment and infrastructure. In addition, in efforts to enhance the safety and security of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan personnel, preparations are under way to improve the Force's capability to counter improvised explosive devices. In that regard, an expert reconnaissance team from Ireland visited UNDOF in October. The security situation has rendered it necessary for UNDOF to continue to use, with the cooperation of the relevant authorities, alternative ports of entry and departure for Force personnel.

29. UNDOF continues to improve the security and safety of United Nations personnel and property. Since early October, all movements of staff on the Bravo side are being carried out in formed convoys using armoured vehicles. Logistics movements are provided with armed escorts. A number of UNDOF national staff continue to work from home because they are unable to report for work regularly as a result of the security situation. Some national staff living in Damascus report for work on a rotational basis, while others work in the UNDOF office in Damascus. Only essential international staff work in Camp Faouar. The offices of non-essential

staff have been relocated to Camp Ziouani, which also serves as the alternate headquarters of the Force.

III. Financial aspects

30. By its resolution [67/278](#), the General Assembly appropriated \$48 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. Subsequently, and pursuant to Security Council resolution [2108 \(2013\)](#), I submitted a revised budget for UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 ([A/68/505](#)), which is currently under consideration by the Assembly. Should the Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 44 of the present report with regard to the extension of the mandate of UNDOF, the cost of maintaining the Force during the extension period will be limited to the resources approved by the Assembly.

31. As at 20 November 2013, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNDOF amounted to \$16.5 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to \$3,196.4 million.

32. As at 20 November 2013, amounts owed to contributors for troop costs totalled \$2.8 million. Reimbursements for troop costs and for equipment and self-sustainment have been made for the period up to 31 August 2013 and 30 June 2013, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution [338 \(1973\)](#)

33. The Security Council, when deciding in its resolution [2108 \(2013\)](#) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2013, called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution [338 \(1973\)](#) and requested me to report, at the end of the period, on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution [338 \(1973\)](#), was dealt with in my report on the situation in the Middle East ([A/67/342](#)), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [66/18](#) on Jerusalem and [66/19](#) on the Syrian Golan.

34. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict is further reducing the prospects for their resumption and progress towards peace between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the crisis and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution [338 \(1973\)](#) and other relevant resolutions.

V. Observations

35. I remain deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and its potential implications for the stability of the region. The situation has continued to significantly affect the UNDOF area of operation. The ongoing military activities in

the area of separation continue to have the potential to heighten tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and to jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries, in addition to heightening the risk to United Nations personnel.

36. The security developments in the UNDOF area of operation underline the volatility of the situation. The use of heavier weapons by both the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in the continuing Syrian conflict, including the use of air power by government forces in the area of limitation on the Bravo side in close proximity to the area of separation, is a troubling development. I reiterate that all military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the long-held ceasefire and the local civilian population, in addition to United Nations personnel on the ground. They undermine the Disengagement Agreement and the efforts of UNDOF to implement its mandate. I call upon all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operation. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF.

37. The presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment in the area of separation, in addition to the firing from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line, are grave violations of the Disengagement Agreement. The IDF retaliatory fire across the ceasefire line is also a serious violation of the Agreement. Any Israeli military action inside the Syrian Arab Republic puts the ceasefire at risk. I call upon Israel to exercise maximum restraint to prevent an escalation of the situation. The commitment to the Agreement must be upheld by both parties in order to maintain relative stability on the Golan. I call upon all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians and ensure respect for the safety and security of UNDOF personnel, in addition to freedom of movement for the Force throughout its area of operation. For its part, the United Nations will spare no effort in ensuring that the long-held ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

38. I am also deeply concerned by the incidents involving United Nations personnel on the ground. The mandate of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring the stability of the region. It must be recalled that UNDOF was established by the Security Council with the agreement of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and that its mandate was prescribed by the Disengagement Agreement and the Protocol thereto. UNDOF is mandated to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, to see that it is scrupulously observed and to supervise the Agreement and the Protocol thereto with regard to the areas of separation and limitation.

39. Any hostile act against United Nations personnel on the ground, including restricting their movement and threatening their physical safety, the direct and indirect firing at United Nations personnel and facilities by the Syrian armed forces or armed members of the opposition, the theft of United Nations weapons and ammunition, vehicles and other assets, and the looting and destruction of United Nations facilities, is unacceptable. The presence and increased use by armed members of the opposition of improvised explosive devices in the UNDOF area of operation, and in particular close to and on access routes to United Nations positions, merit particular concern. Such devices put United Nations personnel on the ground at risk and impede the freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan. The safety and security of UNDOF personnel and Observer Group

Golan military observers, essential to enabling UNDOF to continue to implement its mandate, must be preserved.

40. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side rests with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. I note the assistance provided by the Syrian authorities in the safe return to UNDOF of the United Nations international staff member who had been abducted by unidentified persons earlier in 2013. The assistance provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in facilitating the entry of additional UNDOF troops and military equipment supported the Force's efforts to ensure that it continues implementing its mandate safely and securely. I welcome this support and call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to continue it. It is imperative that respect for the privileges and immunities of UNDOF and its freedom of movement be ensured. Armed members of the opposition operating in the UNDOF area of operation must be apprised of the mandate of the Force and immediately cease any actions that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. I am deeply concerned by reports of threatening behaviour by some armed members of the opposition against United Nations personnel on the ground. It remains critical that countries with influence strongly convey to the armed opposition groups in the UNDOF area of operation the need to halt all activities that endanger United Nations peacekeepers on the ground, including firing at and detaining peacekeepers, in addition to using United Nations-marked assets and equipment, and to accord United Nations personnel the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely.

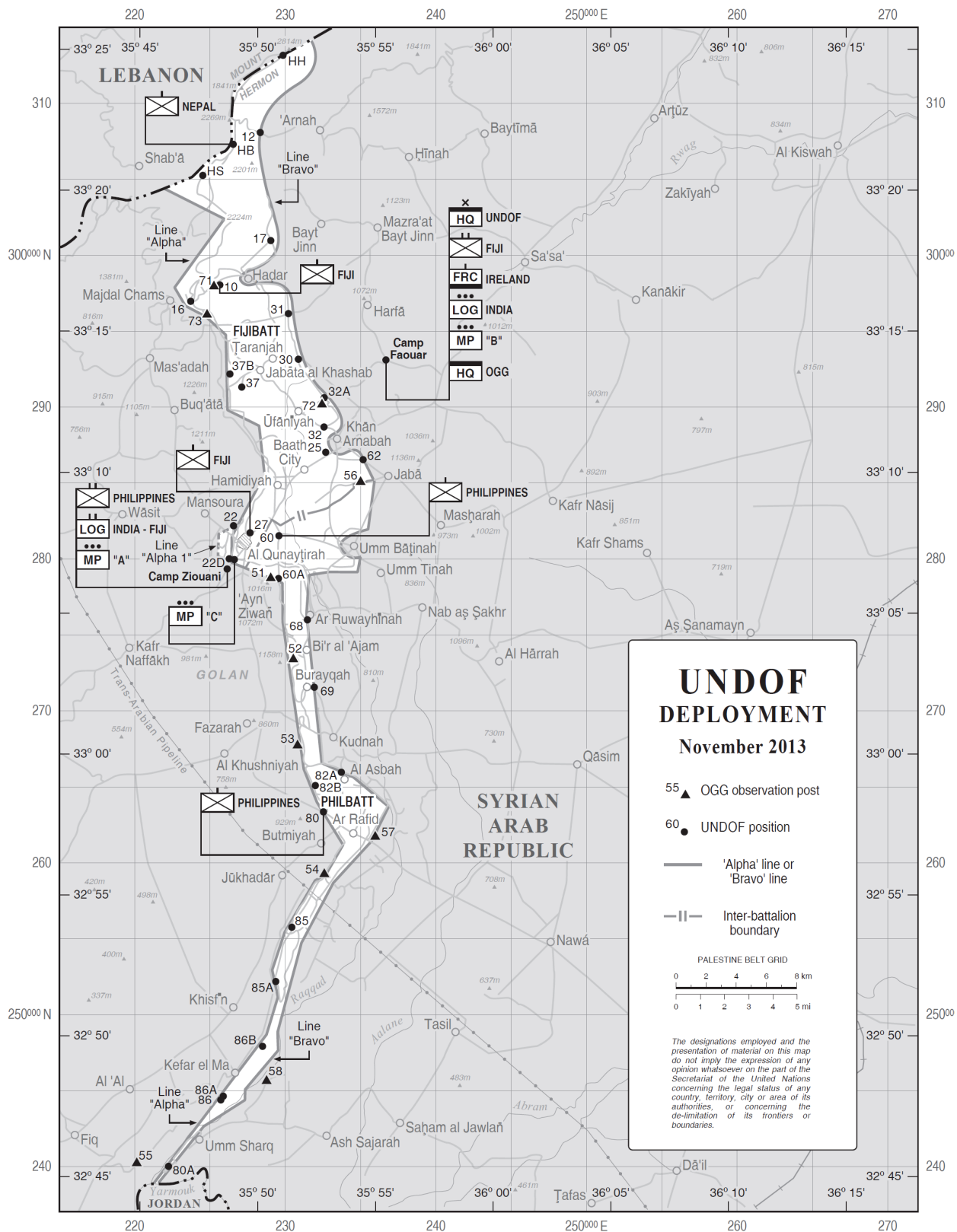
41. It is equally critical that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate freely and securely within its area of operation and to carry out its important mandate. It is essential that UNDOF continue to have at its disposal all the means and resources that it needs to carry out its mandate safely and securely. It is vital that UNDOF retain the confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries. I am grateful to the Governments of Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal, the Netherlands and the Philippines for their contributions to UNDOF and for staying the course under challenging circumstances. In addition, I am grateful to the Member States contributing military observers to UNTSO. I welcome the removal of restrictions on the activities of UNTSO military observers serving on the Golan by some Member States. In view of the measures that UNDOF continues to adopt to ensure the safety and security of personnel, I encourage other Member States to consider doing the same. The continued credible presence of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring stability on the Golan and in the region.

42. Given the volatile security situation in its area of operation, the Force regularly reviews and adjusts as necessary its posture and operations and implements necessary mitigation measures. The process to enhance the self-defence capabilities of UNDOF, including increasing the strength of the Force to about 1,250 personnel and improving its self-defence equipment, within the parameters of the Protocol to the Disengagement Agreement, continues. The Force is putting in place measures to enhance its capability to counter the increased danger posed by improvised explosive devices. In addition, UNDOF continuously reviews and updates its contingency plans. The support of the parties and the Security Council is critical as UNDOF continues to adapt to a continuously evolving situation.

43. The current security situation has continued to disrupt UNDOF support and logistical activities on an almost daily basis, complicating significantly the ability of the Force to carry out its mandated tasks effectively. It is essential that the parties continue to provide all the support necessary to ensure appropriate conditions for United Nations personnel on the ground and cooperate fully in facilitating the Force's support and logistical activities.

44. Under the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued credible presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2014. The Governments of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have given their assent to the proposed extension.

45. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, and the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership, who continue to perform with efficiency and commitment and under challenging circumstances the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I have full confidence that UNDOF will continue to make its best efforts to carry out its mission. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those providing UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.



Map No. 2916 Rev. 82E UNITED NATIONS
November 2013

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section