



GOLAN

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STRENGTH THROUGH STABILITY

STORIES OF SERVICE ON THE GOLAN

FOREWORD FROM THE HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER



Major General Anita Asmah
HOM & FC, UNDOF

For over five decades, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force has played an essential role in maintaining stability on the Golan. While the operational environment has evolved over time, the importance of our mandate and the commitment of the peacekeepers entrusted with implementing it have remained constant.

The theme of this edition, “Strength through Stability: Stories of Service in the Golan”, reflects a fundamental truth about peacekeeping. Stability is not a passive condition. It is the product of sustained effort, professional discipline, cooperation, and a sustained commitment to the principles and purpose of the United Nations.

The articles featured in this edition offer a valuable perspective on how that commitment is translated into action every day. They showcase the work of our military contingents, civilian personnel, and UNTSO colleagues who collectively contribute to the implementation of the mandate entrusted to UNDOF by the United Nations Security Council. They also highlight the partnerships that support our effectiveness, including cooperation with humanitarian organizations, local stakeholders, and members of the wider United Nations family operating within our Area of Responsibility.

What emerges from these pages is a clear picture of a mission that continues to adapt, collaborate, and deliver in a complex and dynamic environment. Whether through operational initiatives, logistical support, humanitarian coordination, engineering projects, community engagement, or leadership outreach, the contributions portrayed here demonstrate the breadth and depth of UNDOF’s work across the mission area.

This edition also serves as a reminder that successful peacekeeping depends on more than the fulfilment of mandated tasks alone. It relies on trust, professionalism, and the ability of diverse teams to work together towards a common objective. The multinational character of UNDOF remains one of its greatest strengths. Personnel from different countries, cultures, and professional backgrounds continue to serve side by side, united by a shared commitment to maintaining stability and supporting conditions conducive to peace.

Recent developments across the region have underscored the enduring relevance of UNDOF’s presence. In times of uncertainty, the value of impartial observation, credible reporting, liaison, and confidence-building becomes even more apparent. The mission’s continued ability to carry out these responsibilities is a direct reflection of the dedication and professionalism of its personnel. The stories presented in this journal provide only a snapshot of the collective efforts across the mission each day. Behind every achievement highlighted in these pages are countless acts of service, coordination, cooperation, collaboration and perseverance that contribute to the continued success of UNDOF in the effective implementation of its mandate whilst ensuring the safety and security of all.

I commend all contributors to this edition and extend my sincere appreciation to every member of the mission. Your professionalism, commitment, and service continue to strengthen UNDOF and reinforce its role as a trusted and stabilising presence on the Golan. You embody the motto “One Mission, One Team, One Goal”.

One Mission. One Team. One Goal.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR READERS

This edition of the Golan Journal is dedicated to the theme **“Strength Through Stability: Stories of Service on the Golan”**. Stability is not simply the absence of conflict, it is the foundation upon which trust, cooperation, and progress are built. Through these pages, we honor the strength that emerges from the daily service of UNDOF personnel, whose perseverance and professionalism safeguard peace in this vital region.

Within this issue, you will discover accounts of operational achievements that reinforce our mandate, initiatives that deepen engagement with local communities, and reflections on the evolving role of peacekeeping in today’s world. We highlight voices from across our contingents: seasoned veterans and first-time peacekeepers alike, whose diverse experiences embody the solidarity and resilience that define our mission.

The challenges we face are complex, yet they are met with unwavering determination and teamwork. Each story shared here is a testament to the collective spirit that sustains stability on the Golan, reminding us that peace is not a static goal but a living commitment renewed every day.

As you read, reflect, and engage with these stories of service, we invite you to join us in reaffirming the values of peace, security, and cooperation. Together, we continue this journey: stronger through stability, united in purpose.

One Mission. One Team. One Goal.

COMMANDANT DONNACHA REILLY
EDITOR IN CHIEF

CAPTAIN SUDEEP RAJ GIRI
DEPUTY EDITOR





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DEPUTY FORCE COMMANDER - GOLAN THE UNDOF JOURNAL

Welcome to Edition 164 of Golan the UNDOF Journal and my last as your Deputy Force Commander.

My tenure as the Deputy Force Commander of UNDOF has been personally and professionally rewarding. It has been an honour to serve alongside peacekeepers from many nations. From the snowcapped peak of Mt Hermon/Jabal al Sheikh to the dusty depths of Wadi al Ruqqad, I am convinced that together we have made a difference.



The changes in the operational context over the last 14 months provided opportunity, motivation and impetus for our peacekeepers to adapt, evolve and improve how we delivered against our mandate for both parties to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. The job is unfinished and there remains plenty for the mission to do to support the achievement of just and durable peace.

I thank all members of the UN family who assist UNDOF in many ways, every day. Without your commitment we could not deliver our mandate.

I especially thank all those who I have served alongside here on the Golan: military staff and contingents, UN international and local staff, contractors and our attached UNTSO Observer Group Golan. Without your support, perseverance and good humour every single day, we could not use our best efforts to maintain the ceasefire.

It has been a privilege to serve you as your Deputy Force Commander.

One Mission. One Team. One Goal.

CHIEF OF STAFF'S MESSAGE

As I am preparing to conclude my tenure as Chief of Staff (COS) of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), I find myself reflecting not just on the work accomplished, but on a year that has been both professionally rewarding and personally enriching. Serving on the Golan Heights has provided a unique opportunity to witness the important role UN peacekeeping plays in maintaining stability in a complex and often unpredictable environment. The experience has deepened my appreciation for the dedication of those who work every day to support peace and security in the region.



"STRENGTH THROUGH STABILITY IS NOT JUST A THEME—IT IS A LEGACY."

UNDOF was established in 1974 with a clear mandate: to supervise the disengagement of forces and maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. More than five decades later, the mission continues to stand as a symbol of international commitment to peace. The theme "Strength Through Stability" reflects not only UNDOF's mission but also the reality of daily life for the men and women who serve here. Stability does not happen on its own, it is maintained through constant vigilance, coordination and commitment by military, civilian, and support personnel working together toward a common goal.

Over the past year, I have witnessed firsthand the dedication and professionalism of our peacekeepers, military, military observers and civilian staff. Whether conducting patrols in the Area of Separation, monitoring developments on the ground, managing logistics or ensuring the smooth functioning of mission operations, every individual contributes to the success of UNDOF. Their ability to perform under demanding circumstances, often away from their families and in challenging conditions, is a testament to their commitment to service.

One of the greatest lessons I will take away from this experience is that stability is not something that simply exists; it is something that must be built and sustained every single day. Behind every patrol conducted in the Area of Separation, every observation post maintained, every convoy coordinated, and every operational decision made, there are individuals working tirelessly to ensure that peace is preserved and incidents do not escalate.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this mission has been working with colleagues from many different countries and cultures. UNDOF's diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Bringing together people with different backgrounds and experiences creates opportunities for learning, innovation, and mutual understanding. Throughout the year, I have seen how this diversity strengthens teamwork and reinforces the values that unite us as United Nations personnel.

CHIEF OF STAFF'S MESSAGE

The Golan Heights is a place where calm and uncertainty often exist side by side. While the landscape may appear peaceful, the operational environment requires constant attention and preparedness. Our work is often measured not by visible events but by the absence of escalation. Through continuous monitoring, engagement and reporting, UNDOF helps maintain conditions that support stability and confidence between the parties, making a meaningful contribution to regional peace.

As Chief of Staff (COS), my responsibility has been to support the Force Commander (FC) in ensuring that the mission remains coordinated, responsive and effective. This role required balancing long-term planning with the realities of daily operations, addressing emerging challenges, supporting personnel welfare, and fostering cooperation across all mission components. It has been a demanding role, but one made easier by the professionalism and dedication of colleagues across the mission.

Looking back, I am proud of what we have achieved together. Despite operational challenges and a constantly evolving environment, UNDOF has continued to deliver on its mandate with credibility and professionalism. We have strengthened our operational capabilities, internal coordination, enhanced our communication with stakeholders, improved operational effectiveness and maintained a strong focus on supporting our personnel while carrying out the mission's core responsibilities.

As I prepare to depart at the end of this month, I carry with me a deep sense of gratitude. Gratitude for the opportunity to serve alongside such dedicated colleagues, for the friendships developed throughout the mission, and for the lessons learned during this unique assignment. Most importantly, I am grateful for the commitment and resilience of the entire UNDOF family, whose efforts continue to make a difference every day.

The story of UNDOF is ultimately a story of people, individuals who quietly and professionally carry out their duties in support of peace and stability. It is a story that continues long after any one person's tenure ends. As the Golan Journal shares these experiences, may they remind us of all that "Strength Through Stability" is not just a theme, it is a legacy and I am proud to have been a part of it.



ONE MISSION.ONE TEAM.ONE GOAL

OFFICE FOR THE PEACEKEEPING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP(OPSP), COS, OMA VISIT TO UNDOF FROM 07-10TH MAY 2026

United Nations Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership (OPSP) Director along with Chief of Staff from Office of Military Affairs visited UNDOF over 07th MAY-10th MAY 2026, to familiarize themselves with the operational activities and challenges of the mission. This was an important opportunity for UNDOF to showcase its proficiency and operational readiness.



Figure 3: The delegation also toured key operational sites on Mount Hermon, where they received detailed briefings from NEPCON and observed field operations.



Figure 1: The Delegation visited INDCON to familiarize themselves with the contingent's roles and responsibilities and exchange views with officers.



Figure 4: The delegation also toured key operational sites along with UNP and OP where UNTSO colleagues provided briefing to the delegates.



Figure 2: The Delegation receives an operational briefing from the KAZCON Commanding Officer, showcasing the contingent's significant roles, functions, and achievements in support of the mission mandate.



Figure 5: OPSP Visit UNP 60.

UNITE AWARE TRAINING TEAM VISIT TO UNDOF FROM 09-14TH FEB 2026

The Unite Aware (UA) training team for situational awareness program of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) UN HQ visited UNDOF from 09 to 14 February 2026. The delegation visited the UNDOF AOR to provide training on various aspects of UA applications to include SAGE, UA Patrol Plans and UA Maps, enabling smooth launch and implementation of these digital platforms in UNDOF.



Figures 6-12: Unite Aware (UA) Training Team provided briefings, engaged with peacekeepers during visits to different UNPs, and provided training on various aspects of UA applications.

GLIMPSES OF DIFFERENT OTHER VISITS TO UNDOF FROM JAN-JUN 2026



Figure above: Delegates from the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), UN OCHA and RC office visited UNDOF to familiarize themselves with the mission's overall situation and challenges.



Figures above: During a visit by Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, UNDOF peacekeepers facilitated meetings with community representatives and regional security officials in Jabata al-Khashab, Trunja, and New Hamidiya, aimed at strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding at the local level.

THE THIRD KAZAKHSTAN PEACEKEEPING NATIONAL CONTINGENT COMMENCES DUTIES WITHIN THE UNDOF MISSION

On May 18, 2026, the Third Kazakhstan Peacekeeping National Contingent arrived in the area of operations as part of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The contingent's primary mission is to serve as the Force Commander's reserve and to carry out duties at Observation Posts 32 and 37.



Since its deployment, the contingent has successfully performed a wide range of peacekeeping tasks aimed at maintaining stability and security within its area of responsibility. One of its key responsibilities is monitoring the disengagement of the parties. Kazakhstan's peacekeepers conduct regular patrols throughout the area of separation, establish mobile checkpoints, and continuously monitor the security situation in designated sectors.

A significant aspect of the contingent's activities involves engagement with local communities and representatives of the parties. The peacekeepers have conducted negotiations with key leaders of the Bravo side and established effective cooperation with representatives of the Alpha side. These efforts contribute to building mutual trust and creating favorable conditions for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

In addition, the personnel carry out humanitarian engineering tasks. Peacekeepers conduct engineering assessments and improvement works around nearby water reservoirs that pose potential risks to the local population. The engineer-sapper team is responsible for the detection, clearance, and disposal of unexploded ordnance, as well as the removal of explosive remnants of war from affected areas.

The high level of training, professionalism, and dedication demonstrated by Kazakhstan's peacekeepers enables them to effectively accomplish their mission and make a significant contribution to regional security and the preservation of peace.



**ARTICLE BY: -
LT COL YEVGENIY MUKHATAYEV
S1 KAZ FRC**

MINDSET AND MUTUAL RESPECT: TWIN PILLARS OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Effective UN peacekeeping in complex conflict environments depends not only on mandates and capabilities, but on mindset and conduct. Mutual respect and a stability-oriented mindset together form the ethical and operational foundation of successful peacekeeping, reinforcing internal cohesion, external legitimacy, and the conditions necessary for durable peace.

Firstly, mutual respect within multinational staff structures enhances operational cohesion and decision-making. The UN headquarters brings together officers from different cultures, doctrines, and professional backgrounds. When staff officers respect one another's perspectives and expertise, planning benefits from broader analysis, improved coordination, and reduced internal friction. Conversely, dismissive attitudes based on nationality, gender, or rank culture erode trust and fragment teamwork, directly undermining mission performance.

"Mutual respect is not an abstract value—it is an operational necessity."

Similarly, a stability-oriented mindset ensures that military conduct remains aligned with the United Nations' political and humanitarian objectives. Unlike conventional warfighting, peacekeeping success is not defined by defeating an adversary but by restraint, de-escalation, and legitimacy. Mutual respect reinforces this approach by guiding professional conduct toward the judicious use of force, culturally sensitive engagement, and impartial interaction with local stakeholders, thereby strengthening civilian confidence and sustaining host-state cooperation.

However, Critics argue that adversarial military thinking and superiority complex over peers are helpful to deter parties of conflict and strict adherence to the chain of command. The history of UN peacekeeping and experience show that dominance-driven approaches often escalate violence, damage credibility, and weaken consent. Mutual respect and stability-focused thinking mitigate these risks without compromising security.

Finally, DPO and DOS should place solid emphasis on sustained training and responsible leadership that embed mutual respect alongside stability-oriented thinking, with particular emphasis on peacekeepers from countries with limited prior experience in UN peacekeeping operations. Hence, I strongly claim that Peacekeeping effectiveness ultimately depends not only on what peacekeepers do but on how they think and treat others, making mutual respect an operational necessity, not an abstract value.



**ARTICLE BY: -
MAJOR JITENDRA KATTEL
MA COS**

FIVE NATIONS, ONE WATCH: A DAY AS A DUTY OFFICER

At the heart of the UNDOF mission, the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) operates around the clock, serving as the central hub for operational awareness and coordination. Early each morning, following the daily briefing, the Duty Officer assumes responsibilities as Shift Supervisor, ensuring a clear and continuously updated understanding of all activities within the Area of Responsibility.

The day begins with a structured and detailed handover. Information is gradually consolidated from multiple sources, including patrol movements, observation post reports and updates from contingents. This data is carefully analyzed and integrated into a shared operational picture. Behind each output, such as the Daily Situation Report (DSR), lies a continuous process of monitoring, verification and coordination that supports informed decision-making at both mission level and at United Nations Headquarters.

Beyond procedures and reporting lines, the JOC is defined by teamwork and coordination. Close collaboration with UNTSO and constant communication with contingents are essential to ensure that information flows accurately and without delay, contributing directly to the safety and security of both civilians and deployed personnel.

Operational tempo can change instantly. When an operational exercise is proceeding, the workload increases significantly, requiring simultaneous attention to multiple information streams as a Duty Officer. In response, additional Duty Officers promptly joined to provide support, enabling an effective and coordinated effort. Through adversities, the principle of mutual support demonstrates readiness and teamwork which are essential in maintaining operational effectiveness.

The team, comprising of officers from Ireland, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal and Uruguay fully demonstrate multinational cooperation substantiating exceptional mission performance. Despite diverse backgrounds and working techniques, a strong sense of trust and professional cohesion enhances team efficiency through shared challenges and extensive operational hours.

Within the JOC, stability is not abstract. It is achieved through continuous coordination, disciplined reporting and collective commitment. Each message processed, each decision supported and each coordinated action contributes to maintaining a calm and supporting peace in the Golan Heights.



**ARTICLE BY: -
CAPT MARIA NOEL PAZ
JOC DO**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER IN UNDOF

UNDOF operates in one of the world's most sensitive security environments, monitoring the ceasefire and disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria. Although its mandate is primarily military and observational, mission effectiveness is increasingly influenced by the trust and cooperation of local communities. Community engagement has therefore evolved from a supporting activity into an operational necessity. Through regular interaction with village leaders, religious figures and local residents, peacekeepers enhance situational awareness, improve force protection and strengthen mission credibility. Since April 2025, troop-contributing countries have adopted a more structured approach to outreach, institutionalizing engagement with key community leaders and creating a deliberate framework for dialogue and cooperation.

Community engagement within UNDOF centers on leader-focused outreach involving village elders, religious authorities and other influential stakeholders who shape local opinion. Because the area includes Druze, Sunni and other communities with distinct traditions and social structures, cultural awareness is essential. Engagement efforts emphasize clear communication regarding UNDOF's mandate, responsibilities and limitations to align expectations with operational realities. Limited civil-military cooperation activities are occasionally conducted to demonstrate goodwill; however, they are carefully balanced to avoid dependency or perceptions of favoritism. Language barriers, restricted communication tools and frequent troop rotations remain important factors influencing the scope and continuity of engagement.



Sustained engagement has produced significant operational benefits. Consistent and respectful interaction has strengthened UNDOF's credibility among local communities and encouraged the sharing of timely and reliable information. This improved flow of information enhances situational awareness, supports early warning and contributes directly to force protection. Balanced engagement across different communities also reinforces the perception of UNDOF as an impartial actor. A notable example occurred in Bayt Jinn after the confrontation between the Israel Defense Forces and local residents on 27 November 2025, which resulted in fatalities, injuries and extensive property damage. Continued dialogue with community leaders helped reduce tensions, rebuild confidence and create conditions that enabled UN personnel and agencies to safely operate in the area.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER IN UNDOF

Despite these achievements, community engagement remains challenging. Trust is often conditional and shaped by historical grievances, insecurity and skepticism toward external actors. Some communities question UNDOF's ability to influence security developments, creating frustration and unrealistic expectations. Local populations may also seek employment, contracts or financial assistance beyond the mission's mandate.

Additional difficulties arise from social rivalries, cultural differences and language barriers. Engagement with one group is frequently scrutinized by others, requiring careful balance to avoid perceptions of bias. Security tensions can discourage local leaders from interacting openly with UN personnel. Frequent rotations of troop-contributing country personnel further disrupt continuity and require newly deployed peacekeepers to rebuild relationships from the beginning.

To address these challenges, UNDOF personnel emphasize professional relationship-building, transparent communication and cultural sensitivity. Equitable implementation of community activities helps maintain impartiality, while discreet information-sharing mechanisms protect local sources and sustain trust. Proactive dialogue and deconfliction measures also reduce misunderstandings and strengthen cooperation.

Looking ahead, community engagement should be further institutionalized through effective handover systems, engagement records and cultural briefings for incoming contingents. Greater integration of engagement into operational planning, threat assessments and force protection measures will maximize its value as a security and early-warning tool. The continued use of language assistants is equally important in bridging communication gaps and facilitating meaningful dialogue between UNDOF and local communities.



Community engagement is no longer a supplementary activity within UNDOF; it is a strategic enabler of mission success. By fostering trust, improving situational awareness and reinforcing neutrality, engagement enhances both operational effectiveness and force protection. Although challenges related to expectations, perceptions and continuity remain, a structured and culturally informed approach enables UNDOF to maintain credibility and strengthen its role as a stabilizing presence. In increasingly complex peacekeeping environments, community engagement remains a vital force multiplier for achieving sustainable mission outcomes.

**ARTICLE BY:
CAPT MADHUSUDAN BASNET
NEPCON**

STRENGTH THROUGH SERVICE: UNDOF'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND HEALTH

Strength is built through resilience and hard work. As UNDOF continues its primary objective of maintaining peace and stability in the region, it has steadily expanded its role in building trust among the people of Syria. By winning the hearts and minds of local communities, UNDOF has worked to understand the spirit of a population that has endured immense hardship and suffering. A clear example of this mutual trust and cooperation is the medical camps that have been conducted since 2025.

Since assuming responsibility for medical services in 2019, the Level 1+ Hospital has faced numerous challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing regional conflicts. Despite these difficulties, the Level 1+ Hospital has remained steadfast—standing as solid as the Himalayas—and consistently proven its resilience and reliability. While the Level 1+ medical teams continue to uphold their primary mission objectives, including adherence to the 10-1-2 timeline concept and efficient CASEVAC and MEDEVAC operations, they have also expanded their outreach to serve surrounding communities.

With the vision of the Head of Mission (HOM) and Force Commander (FC), UNDOF stepped into a new phase at the end of 2025 by extending medical services beyond its traditional mandate to reach local communities. These medical camps have gone beyond physical treatment, providing comfort, compassion, and much-needed hope to people, many of whom lack access even to basic healthcare.

The initiative began modestly in December 2025 with awareness programs on female health and dental hygiene in Anaba Al Faouar. It soon expanded to direct medical services delivered by doctors and paramedics in various locations.



Continuing this steadfast commitment, the Level 1+ 7th team resumed medical services immediately after rotation, reaching Saida village, where care was provided to 156 patients.



The WHO's thematic perspective on health and peace highlights that access to healthcare is a fundamental condition for achieving lasting peace and security. In this context, these medical camps serve as a cornerstone for promoting stability and fostering goodwill in the region. These achievements would not have been possible without the strong support of leadership and the collaborative efforts of various contingents, including NEPCON, UMIC, KAZCON, FIJI Battalion, HQ JOC, the Liaison Branch, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

Ultimately, it is the collective dedication, camaraderie, and unwavering commitment of every individual involved that enables the medical team to rise to every challenge. Together, they continue to uphold the mission's guiding principle: **"One Mission, One Team, One Goal."**



**ARTICLE BY: -
T/LT COL MOHIT THAPA MAGAR
SMO, LEVEL 1 + VII HOSPITAL**

TELEMEDICINE: STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE FOR UNDOF PERSONNEL

For personnel serving with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), access to timely healthcare is not always straightforward. The mission operates in a complex and volatile environment where security restrictions, difficult terrain, and unexploded ordnance often limit movement. During winter months, heavy snowfall and poor visibility can further isolate remote positions, making medical evacuation both challenging and unpredictable.

Within these operational constraints, telemedicine has become an essential tool for supporting the health and well-being of UNDOF personnel. By enabling real-time communication between medical officers in the field and off-site specialists, telemedicine allows critical medical decisions to be made even when patient transfer is delayed or not immediately possible.

At remote UNDOF locations, teleconsultations have supported the management of trauma cases, including injuries sustained during vehicle accidents on icy roads. Through virtual specialist guidance, medical officers have been able to stabilize patients and initiate appropriate treatment while awaiting evacuation clearance. Tele-radiology, when implemented can assist in the interpretation of X-rays for suspected fractures, reducing unnecessary movement and enhancing patient safety.

Beyond emergency care, telemedicine has proven valuable during periods of heightened operational restriction by supporting the management of chronic conditions, follow-up care, and acute medical issues. It can also contribute to reducing operational and financial burdens by limiting avoidable referrals to higher-level medical facilities, as timely and effective specialist opinions can be obtained remotely, including through partner institutions Shree Birendra Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal.

In a demanding operational setting, telemedicine continues to play a quiet yet vital role—ensuring continuity of care, supporting informed clinical decision-making, and helping UNDOF personnel receive quality healthcare wherever duty takes them.



**ARTICLE BY: -
T/LT COL DR RAJESH PRATAP SHAH
FORMER SMO
LEVEL ONE + VI HOSPITAL**

HEALING BEYOND BOUNDARIES: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CARE - A FEMALE MEDICAL OFFICER'S PERSPECTIVE IN UNDOF

Serving as a Female Medical Officer at the Level 1+ Hospital of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) offers a unique vantage point—not only to deliver healthcare in a complex operational environment but also to contribute meaningfully to community trust and women's empowerment. In a mission where operational effectiveness and human connection go hand in hand, the role of medical services extends far beyond clinical responsibilities.

Medical Support as a Force Multiplier in Achieving the Mandate

The Level 1+ Hospital plays a vital role in enabling UNDOF to achieve its mandate by ensuring the health, readiness and resilience of peacekeepers. Comprehensive medical support enhances morale and operational capability, allowing personnel to perform their duties effectively despite environmental and security challenges. The presence of dedicated and skilled medical staff reassures contingents and strengthens mission sustainability.



Building Trust Through Compassionate Care for the Local Population

Providing medical care to the local population has become a cornerstone of trust building within the Area of Operation. From a female medical officer's perspective, this engagement carries additional significance. Many local women, who may otherwise hesitate to seek medical attention due to cultural or social constraints, feel more comfortable approaching female healthcare providers.

This has led to increased access to care, early diagnosis of health issues and a growing sense of trust and confidence among women in the community.

Through respectful and empathetic interactions, the hospital has become more than a healthcare facility, it is viewed as a safe and supportive space. This trust not only enhances UNDOF's image but also fosters a deeper connection between peacekeepers and the communities they serve.

Empowering Women through Health Awareness and Outreach

Medical camps and health awareness sessions have had a transformative impact, particularly for women residing in the UNDOF Area of Operation. Initiatives such as cervical cancer awareness programs, maternal health guidance and general wellness sessions have encouraged women to prioritize their health and seek timely medical support. These programs also serve as platforms for dialogue, enabling women to voice their concerns and gain knowledge in a culturally sensitive environment.

As a female officer leading or participating in such initiatives have witnessed a gradual yet powerful shift local women becoming more confident, informed and proactive about their health. This empowerment extends beyond healthcare, influencing their role within families and communities and reinforcing the message that their well-being matters.



HEALING BEYOND BOUNDARIES: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CARE - A FEMALE MEDICAL OFFICER'S PERSPECTIVE IN UNDOF

Strength in Multinational Collaboration and Leadership

Working in a multinational environment has further strengthened professional capabilities and intercultural understanding. As a female medical officer, contributing alongside colleagues from diverse backgrounds highlights the importance of inclusivity and equal participation in peacekeeping operations. Beyond clinical duties, involvement in local community training sessions, coordination meetings and health education programs demonstrate leadership and the ability to bridge cultural and operational gaps.

Such collaboration not only enhances mission effectiveness but also sets an example of gender inclusivity and mutual respect and values that resonate strongly within both the mission and the local community.

Confidence in Operating under Adverse Conditions

Despite the harsh climatic conditions of the Golan ranging from snowfall and intense cold to extreme heat and occasional security uncertainties, peacekeepers continue to operate with confidence. This confidence is reinforced by the reliability of the medical support system. Knowing that immediate and professional care is available allows personnel, including female peacekeepers, to perform their duties without hesitation.



Delivering Impact Despite Limitations

Operating with limited medical resources and manpower remains a challenge; however, the Level 1+ Hospital continues to deliver effective and efficient healthcare services. Through dedication, adaptability and teamwork, the medical staff ensure that both peacekeepers and civilians receive essential care. This commitment reflects not only professional excellence but also a deep sense of purpose serving humanity under the United Nations flag.



- THE EXPERIENCE OF SERVING AS A FEMALE MEDICAL OFFICER IN UNDOF UNDERSCORES THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF INTEGRATING HEALTHCARE WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT. THE LEVEL 1+ HOSPITAL STANDS AS A PILLAR OF SUPPORT ENHANCING MISSION EFFECTIVENESS, BUILDING TRUST AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY WOMEN.
- BY FOSTERING CONFIDENCE AMONG LOCAL WOMEN, PROMOTING HEALTH AWARENESS AND DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP IN A MULTINATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, FEMALE MEDICAL OFFICERS AND STAFF CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO BOTH OPERATIONAL SUCCESS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS. IN DOING SO, THEY EMBODY THE TRUE SPIRIT OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING WHERE SERVICE, COMPASSION AND EMPOWERMENT COME TOGETHER TO BUILD LASTING PEACE.

**ARTICLE BY: -
T/LT DR. RAMILA BHASINK
MEDICAL OFFICER
NEPALI ARMY**

FROM THE HIMALAYAS TO THE GOLAN HEIGHTS: NEPALESE MEDICAL SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF PEACEKEEPING

Serving in a United Nations mission has always been a matter of pride for Nepalese peacekeepers. For me, coming from a country of serene mountains, being deployed in the Golan Heights feels both distant and deeply meaningful. Even far from home, the sense of duty and belonging remains strong, especially when serving alongside fellow Nepalese troops.

In UNDOF, Level 1 plus medical facility is more than just a workplace, it is often the first place people turn to in times of need. Every day brings new challenges, from treating common illnesses to responding to emergencies. In such moments, teamwork becomes essential. We depend on each other, not only as professionals but as a family working toward one purpose: caring for those who serve.

The Nepalese medical team has earned wide recognition for delivering consistent, patient-centered care. Their role extends beyond routine clinical responsibilities. Through Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities, the team has actively engaged with local communities in Syria. Joint medical camps, conducted with participation from Level 1 Plus hospital members, have provided basic healthcare services to civilians, fostering goodwill and strengthening trust between peacekeepers and the community.



Figure 2: One Medical Camp



Figure 1: One Medical Camp- serving humanitarian acts to more than 190 civilians



Figure 3: Pharmacy briefing to Force Commander Major General Anita Asmah.

As a pharmacist in the Level 1 Plus facility, I ensure the availability and safe use of essential medicines. Alongside this, my role as Chief Logistic Officer allows me to support the system behind care delivery. Together, these responsibilities give me a complete sense of contribution. This being my first UN mission, it has been a journey of growth and learning. Wearing the Nepali uniform with UN cap here fills me with pride, knowing we continue to serve with dedication, compassion, and heart.

**ARTICLE BY: -
T/CAPT SUPRIYA JHA
PHARMACIST
NEPALI ARMY**

WOMEN MILITARY NURSES AS ENABLERS OF PEACEKEEPING SUCCESS

The role of military nursing has undergone significant evolution, firmly rooted in the pioneering efforts of Florence Nightingale. Her wartime contributions revolutionized medical care delivery in military contexts, inspiring generations of nurses worldwide. Today, female military nurses serve not only as healthcare providers but also as integral components of peacekeeping missions, embodying professionalism, compassion, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to service.

In the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), female nurses from various contingents, including twelve from Nepal, play a crucial role in the Level 1+ hospital. Their involvement extends beyond traditional nursing duties; they actively contribute to the operational readiness of peacekeeping forces by providing medical care to injured peacekeepers, local civilians, and humanitarian workers. Within the Syrian community, female healthcare providers foster trust and communication, particularly among women and children, thus strengthening the relationship between peacekeepers and the local population.

Military nurses are always prepared to respond to emergencies, whether due to disease outbreaks, natural disasters, or armed conflicts. To enhance their effectiveness, they regularly engage in training sessions covering essential life-saving techniques, such as CPR, first aid, CASEVAC, and MEDEVAC drills. Additionally, UNDOF conducts medical camps in various Syrian villages, where nurses not only provide health education but also create an environment in which community members feel comfortable discussing their health concerns. These efforts significantly boost UNDOF's relationship with the Syrian people.

To enhance the humanitarian service of UNDOF, military nurses deliver care at the primary trauma center in Camp Faour and at various positions serving civilians. Wearing blue UN helmets, body armor, and military uniforms adorned with medic insignia and UN patches, they are equipped with medical backpacks and accompany peacekeeping patrols. Beyond their medical responsibilities, these nurses also manage medical teams, participate in planning and reporting, and coordinate with both military and civilian staff. In the Level 1+ hospital, female nurses assume diverse roles, including adjutant officer, bunker marshal, training officer, and fire marshal.

As we continue our mission as UNDOF nurses, let us remain dedicated to our calling. Each life we touch, each wound we heal, and every moment of care we provide brings the world one step closer to peace. The pride we feel in serving as UNDOF nurses is a testament to our commitment to this vital work.



**ARTICLE BY: -
T/CAPT MAUSAMI BHETWAL
HEAD NURSE, LEVEL 1 +
NEPALI ARMY**

BRIDGING HEARTS AND COMMUNITIES: INDCON'S HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH

Against the backdrop of the rolling hills near the Golan Heights, the Indian Contingent (INDCON) serving with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) continues to demonstrate that peacekeeping extends beyond observation posts and patrols—it begins with dialogue. Through the introduction of Key Leadership Engagements (KLE), INDCON has taken a structured approach to engaging village elders and community leaders, strengthening mutual understanding and trust in UNDOF's area of operations.

During a recent engagement, an INDCON KLE team set aside routine activities to share tea with local residents in a village courtyard. Supported by experienced interpreters, community elders spoke openly about challenges related to healthcare access and sustainable livelihoods. INDCON officers listened attentively, offering clear explanations of the UN mandate and UNDOF's role, while underscoring the Mission's commitment to impartiality, cooperation, and respect for local perspectives.

These early conversations have translated into modest yet meaningful humanitarian initiatives. Working alongside local volunteers, INDCON has facilitated basic medical camps to provide routine health checkups to community members. Such activities, while limited in scope, reflect a shared responsibility for community well-being. The contingent has also marked major cultural and religious festivals by distributing sweets in coordination with local communities, simple gestures that foster goodwill and bring moments of joy, particularly for children.

Interpreters remain integral to these engagements, ensuring accuracy, empathy, and continuity in communication. Through sustained outreach, cultural sensitivity, and people-centered engagement, INDCON is helping bridge the distance between peacekeepers and communities—reinforcing that the UN's blue flag represents partnership, presence, and a shared commitment to peace.



ARTICLE BY: -

**MAJ KARTIKEY CHAMOLI, SM
(INDIA)
SIGNAL OFFICER**

WOMEN BUILDING TRUST: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND MEDICAL OUTREACH IN KHAN ARNABAH

On 24 June 2026, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), conducted a Joint Medical Outreach in Khan Arnabah which focused on the provision of essential healthcare services substantiating mutual cooperation with the local community through trust.

The initiative was led by the Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Anita Asmah, collectively with female peacekeepers namely from Nepal, Uruguay, Fiji, India, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Australia, Finland and Ghana that are part of UNDOF and UNTSO missions. Their sincere involvement highlighted the vital role(s) women play in peacekeeping when dialogues are fostered, shaping confidence, and further creating an atmosphere whereby women and children are comfortably secure when engaging with the peacekeepers and content with the United Nations overall mission perspective. Through close coordination with local community leaders, the overwhelming support was essential in convincing women and children to be part of the Joint Medical Outreach. This collaborative approach reflected UNDOF's dedication in acknowledging local customs; additionally, promoting inclusive community engagement based on mutual trust and understanding.



Furthermore, the devoted medical teams provided general medical consultations, health education with dental and pharmaceutical services. Close to 200 individuals—including women, children, and men formally received medical and healthcare guidance throughout the outreach. While the presence of female peacekeepers had a predominantly meaningful impact, that specifically focused on strengthening trust among women and children. The success of the medical collaboration was equally dependent on the commitment and professionalism of the male counterparts. Their contribution was instrumental in ensuring the outreach reached all segments of the community; concurrently convincing local men present to undergo standard medical check-up during the visit. With togetherness, the true strength of peacekeeping lies in teamwork, through committed women and men, overwhelmed with matching skills and experiences enabling critical service(s) to communities in dire need of basic assistance.

Beyond the medical assistance provided, the most meaningful outcome of the day was the humanity component shared with the community. The outreach reminded us that creating a positive impact does not always require grand gestures; however, small acts of kindness, respect, and compassion can impact people's lives. One of the most memorable moments came at the end of the activity, when several children approached us. Despite the language barrier—they spoke Arabic and we spoke English—they found a way to express what truly mattered. Smiling, they formed a heart with their hands and simply said, "I love you." We smiled back, returned the heart gesture with our hands, and replied with one word they understood: "Shukran" ("Thank you"). That simple exchange transcended language reflected the appreciation and recognition between the peacekeepers and the community.

Together with the heartfelt gratitude expressed by many of the women encountered during the medical outreach, a sense of devotion lingered in our hearts regarding selfless service. Such human connections consolidate the true meaning of peacekeeping. Finally, every kind gesture, conversations, and continuing efforts to support communities firmly improve trust and strengthen bonds essential to the mission's mandate with enduring peace.

**ARTICLE BY:
CAPT MARIA NOEL PAZ
JOC DO**

WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN UNDOF

On April 16, already deployed to UNDOF with the UMIC contingent, I went out on patrol with the Operations Officer and the interpreter to respond to a sensitive report: the disappearance of 30 sheep in the town of Marraiah. To some, it might seem like a minor incident; for the community, it was a direct loss of livelihood. For me, it was also a concrete opportunity to contribute as a woman in a peace operation.

In Syria, cultural norms can limit direct interaction between men and women. That day it was clear: there was information that women in the community could provide, but it is not always possible for the male members of a patrol to speak with them. My presence made it possible to build that bridge with respect and professionalism—I listened to their accounts and gathered details we otherwise would not have obtained as easily. It also sent a message: Syrian women could be heard by an equal, and they could rely on UMIC to report incidents.

Beyond the immediate outcome, the impact was clear: the community felt heard and understood that our presence is intended to protect, observe, and report. In an environment like this, trust is as important a resource as any patrol; helping to build it—especially with women who are often left out of the conversation—renewed my sense of purpose in UNDOF.

The mission reaffirmed why I chose to be here: being a woman in a peace operation is not a minor detail—it is an operational capability. Where there are cultural barriers, my presence opens doors; where there are doubts, attentive listening builds trust; where the environment changes, preparation strengthens the team. I returned with the certainty that a well-conducted conversation can prevent tensions, protect civilians, and bring us closer to UNDOF's purpose.

**ARTICLE BY: -
CORPORAL 2ND CLASS MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ
UMIC**

INDCON: SUPPORT, LOGISTICS AND INNOVATION

During the 11th Rotation, INDCON Log Coy played a key role in maintaining infrastructure resilience across Camp Faouar and UN positions. The Engineering Platoon contributed to ensure uninterrupted essential services through first-line maintenance in carpentry, plumbing, electrical systems, air-conditioning repair, masonry and welding.

A significant achievement was the renovation of the South Gate QRT Room within seven days, alongside critical repairs to the Y Junction Gate, perimeter lighting, drainage systems, and HESCO bastions. These tasks were accomplished using innovative and cost-effective methods, maximizing efficiency despite resource constraints.

Following manpower reductions, the platoon assumed additional coordination responsibilities, demonstrating flexibility and commitment to sustaining mission infrastructure.



Logistics operations during this period were defined by adaptability in a volatile environment. The Israel route remained the primary source of ration and fuel, while Lebanon supported supply of LPG. Between February and March, disruptions to Lebanese routes due to the security situation required rapid adjustment. The Heavy Transport Platoon shifted operations to the Israel route and successfully conducted 26 resupply missions, ensuring uninterrupted delivery of fuel, rations and essential equipment. Simultaneously, maintenance teams ensured the operational readiness of vehicles and equipment despite increased demand, sustaining mobility across sectors and reinforcing mission capability.

The INDCON Signal Platoon enhanced communication efficiency through practical digital initiatives. The optimization of the UNDOF telephone directory improved accessibility and coordination across units. Additionally, a comprehensive mapping of communication networks and user devices enabled faster troubleshooting, improved system reliability, and reduced downtime. These efforts strengthened communication systems, ensuring responsiveness under operational conditions.

Through integrated efforts in engineering, logistics and ICT, INDCON Log Coy (11 Rotation) maintained operational effectiveness despite constraints. Their adaptability, innovation, and professionalism ensured sustained mission readiness, reinforcing the vital role of support elements in UNDOF operations.



**ARTICLE BY: -
MAJ MANJEET YADAV
INDCON
PL CDR SUP & HVY TPT PL**

UMIC: SUPPORT, LOGISTICS, AND INNOVATION

Within the framework of peacekeeping operations conducted by UMIC, logistics acquires a crucial strategic importance. In an environment characterized by operational complexity, instability, and humanitarian challenges, the ability to sustain deployed forces efficiently and adaptably is fundamental to mission success.

UMIC personnel stationed at forward operating bases rehabilitated several essential infrastructures, which not only allow us to guarantee the protection of personnel but also facilitate interaction with local communities. The previous contingent improved public space, seeking to provide the population with a safe area for recreation and community interaction, with the aim of offering a suitable place for leisure and social integration. Several projects in different locations are currently under study for implementation and are awaiting authorization.

Logistical planning in this type of mission involves efficient management of supply routes, which are often vulnerable, as well as multinational coordination. This allows for maximizing the availability of vehicles and equipment, according to the type of supply, reducing risks and ensuring the mobility of deployed units.

The implementation of secure communication systems, real-time information management platforms, and analytical tools contributes to greater situation awareness and more effective decision-making.

Linking infrastructure, logistics, and digital transformation allows for the consolidation of a robust and flexible operational presence, capable of responding to both security requirements and humanitarian needs. For UMIC personnel, where peacekeeping operations demand a balance between firmness and cooperation, these pillars stand as decisive factors for mission success and the contribution to regional stability.

**ARTICLE BY: -
FIRST LIEUTENANT MARCELO GÓMEZ
UMIC**

LIFE IN THE CAMP

Life in the camp of the Uruguay Mechanized Infantry Company (UMIC), deployed in the Golan Heights, is characterized by a balance between operational demand and the well-being of the personnel. In this environment, wellness and recreation activities play a fundamental role in maintaining cohesion and esprit de corps. Football, volleyball and tennis championships are organized, as well as integration instances such as karaoke and recreational games, which allow generating spaces for relaxation and strengthening the bonds between comrades.



In terms of health and fitness, staff regularly participate in activities aimed at maintaining operational fitness. These include gym routines, calisthenics circuits and aerobic training, complemented by practices such as recreational boxing. Physical training contributes both to performance and to the regulation of stress and to the maintenance of a positive attitude towards the demands of the mission.



In order to reflect the daily experience, brief interviews were conducted addressing the routine, challenges and personal impact of the mission. Among the questions asked are: How does your day begin? What is the most demanding? What recreational activity do you enjoy the most? and What do you miss most about your home?

The testimonies reflect the human side of the mission. An officer said: "My day starts early, with guards or patrols. The most demanding thing is to stay focused, but training and camaraderie help sustain morale." Another noted, "I learned to adapt and value teamwork. Sports activities are key to maintaining focus."

In short, life in the camp is marked not only by the fulfillment of duty, but also by the personal development, camaraderie and resilience of the deployed personnel, essential elements for the success of the mission.



**ARTICLE BY: -
SECOND LIEUTENANT CESAR VILLALBA
UMIC**

"STRENGTH THROUGH STABILITY: A HISTORY OF SERVICE IN THE GOLAN"

Since our arrival in the Area of Operations, we have observed that across its 1,400 km² there is a highly diverse geography, including vast flatlands, hills, and a large canyon to the south that leaves anyone astonished upon seeing it for the first time.

Our Soldiers travel many kilometers to traverse these territories, conduct reconnaissance, learn about the area, and interact with the local population in order to understand them and what is happening in their villages.

Among our operations, the most relevant have been visits to local leaders, strengthening ties between UMIC and the Syrian population. On several occasions, we have also been accompanied by our colleagues from OGG. Together, we have managed to resolve various issues arising in the Area of Separation, mainly between the IDF and Syrian civilians.

Our patrols are mostly conducted within the Area of Separation, where we will make our best efforts to maintain the ceasefire, as well as monitor the military movements of both parties, so that the inhabitants of the area can have the opportunity to live in a peaceful environment.

Another of the technical activities within our Area of Responsibility is the detection of mines, UXOs, or malfunctions of different types of ordnance. These are removed from populated areas, stored in a safe location, and ultimately destroyed. This work is extremely important for the local population, as it ensures safe spaces for their physical security, livestock grazing, and agricultural activities.

Finally, we reaffirm UMIC's commitment to the mission entrusted to us by UNDOF, always striving to demonstrate that the Uruguayan Soldier is dedicated to the cause, providing support not only to the local population but also to fellow colleagues and friends from the various contingents of the mission.



**ARTICLE BY: -
CAPT ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ
UMIC-OPS OFFICER**

STRENGTH IN SERVICE: FIJIBATT 12'S JOURNEY ON THE GOLAN

FIJIBATT 12 commenced its deployment under the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on 17 July 2025, marking the beginning of its steadfast commitment to peace and stability in the Golan Heights. From the outset, the battalion embodied readiness and professionalism, navigating a complex and demanding operational environment with discipline and resolve.

A defining milestone in its integration was the Commanding Officer's Parade on 29 August 2025. This ceremony formally introduced FIJIBATT 12 into the UNDOF framework, reinforcing cohesion and the high standards expected of peacekeepers. It stood as a visible affirmation of the battalion's preparedness to contribute meaningfully to mission objectives.

Recognition of FIJIBATT 12's dedication soon followed. On 2 April 2026, several personnel received the Force Commander's Commendation for exemplary performance, alongside the Bravo Side Medal Parade, where eligible members were awarded the United Nations Peacekeeping Medal. Continued acknowledgment came on 26 May 2026 during the Alpha Side Medal Parade, further honoring those who had completed the requirements for the UN medal.

In June, selected personnel were presented with the Deputy Force Commander's Coin, highlighting exceptional contributions to mission success. These milestones collectively reflect the battalion's sustained professionalism, resilience, and unwavering dedication to maintaining stability under UNDOF's mandate.



**ARTICLE BY: -
LIEUTENANT J. SUKA
FIJI BATT**



UNDOF

UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT
OBSERVER FORCE



OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

JANUARY – JUNE 2026



4,330

PATROLS
CONDUCTED



OPERATIONAL BREAKDOWN



560

FOOT PATROLS



200

NIGHT OPERATIONS



166

TOPs CONDUCTED



69

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



446

MEDICAL OUTREACH
PATIENTS TREATED



549

UXO/ERW
CLEARED

OPERATIONAL IMPACT



MEDICAL
ASSISTANCE

446

patients treated



COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

69

local engagement
activities



MINE ACTION
SUPPORT

549

UXO/ERW
items cleared

“

During the reporting period from January to June 2026, UNDOF personnel conducted 4,330 operational patrols across the Area of Separation and surrounding areas. Operations included 560 foot patrols, 200 night operations, and 166 Temporary Observation Posts. UNDOF also maintained strong engagement with local communities through 69 outreach activities, provided medical assistance to 446 patients, and supported a safer environment through the clearance of 549 UXO/ERW hazards.



PHOTOS FROM RECENT UNDOF MEDAL PARADES



PHOTOS FROM RECENT UNDOF EVENTS



PHOTOS FROM RECENT UNDOF EVENTS



