

Terrorists Seize 43 UN Peacekeepers in Syria



United Nations, August 29 (RHC)-- A UN spokesman says an “armed group” is holding 43 UN peacekeepers in the Syrian part of the Golan Heights while another 81 are trapped. The UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) personnel were detained near Quneitra during fighting between Syrian government forces and foreign-backed militants.

The incident comes a day after militants, believed to be affiliated with the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front, took control of a crossing into the part of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel.

UNDOF currently has 1,223 troops from India, Fiji, Nepal, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Philippines. The office of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said: “The United Nations is making every effort to secure the release of the detained peacekeepers and to restore the full freedom of movement of the force throughout its area of operation.”

Al-Qaeda-linked militants are operating against the Syrian government forces and stray mortar rounds have hit the Golan Heights on several occasions.

The Golan Heights has been under the Israeli occupation since the 1960s. Israel captured the Golan Heights during the Six-Day War of 1967.

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