

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

10 May 2013

Excellency,

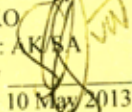
I am writing at a difficult time for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and for your personnel serving with the Mission on the Golan.

I learned with concern that your Government is contemplating the withdrawal of its personnel from UNDOF, in the light of the ongoing hostage crisis. I share your concerns about the safety of the troops and want to assure you that rigorous mitigating measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of UNDOF personnel. At the same time, the posture and activities of the Force will continue to be adapted as the situation evolves.

The Philippines personnel represent an anchor of the operations of the Mission. They are doing an excellent job under extremely challenging circumstances, and I am proud of their role in preserving a fragile peace between Syria and Israel. I am writing today to urge you to maintain this critical contribution to UNDOF.

The work of UNDOF in support of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Syria and Israel has been fundamental in avoiding conflict between those two countries for the past forty years. I realize that egregious and direct threats to the integrity of UNDOF personnel, such as those we have been facing since March 2013, cause troop contributors justifiable concern and potentially reconsideration of their contributions. Such risks, unfortunately, are inherent to all peacekeeping operations which operate to enhance fragile security conditions. Your troops have faced these risks with outstanding professionalism.

His Excellency
Mr. Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Manila

SG to Pres of Philippines
Drafter: DPKO
Proofread by: AK/SA
Approved by: 
Date: 10 May 2013

Recognizing once again the courage and competence of the Philippines troops in UNDOF, I urge you to maintain this commitment to UNDOF, and support our efforts to de-escalate the crisis in the region.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ki" and last name "Ban" being more prominent than the middle name "Moon".

BAN Ki-moon