



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative,

Security Council briefing

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force - UNDOF

New York, 27 March 2019

Mr President,

We would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Peacebuilding, Ms Rosemary DiCarlo.

Mr President,

The Belgian position concerning the Golan Heights remains unchanged.

In accordance with the relevant resolutions of this Council, and in particular resolutions 242 and 497, we do not recognise Israel's sovereignty over the territories it has occupied since June 1967, including the Golan Heights, and we do not consider them part of the territory of the State of Israel.

The acquisition of territory by force is illegal under international law. Any declaration of a unilateral border change is contrary to an international order based on rules and the Charter of the United Nations.

We reiterate our deep concern regarding the wider consequences of recognising the illegal annexation, particularly in the region.

Mr President,

Let me come back to UNDOF. We commend the quality of the Secretary-General's report and support its observations and recommendations. UNDOF plays an indispensable role in preserving regional stability.

The parties have an obligation to comply with the terms of the agreement on the disengagement of forces. According to this agreement, there should be no other military presence in the separation zone except UNDOF.

We are concerned by the ceasefire violations, which only increase tensions and further undermine stability in a part of the world where it is already sorely lacking. We therefore call on the parties to the conflict and UNDOF to establish better communication in order to create more trust and prevent any deterioration of the situation. The parties must exercise the utmost restraint at all times.

We share the Secretary-General's deep concern about the significant threat posed by the presence of unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and mines to United Nations personnel in the Force's zone of operations, particularly in the southern part of the separation zone. It is essential that the parties support all UNDOF's efforts in this regard, to ensure that the mission has the security it needs to carry out its work.

Mr President,

The Security Council has a key role to play as the ultimate guarantor of compliance by all States with their international obligations regarding the maintenance of international security and peace. With this in mind, we cannot accept situations where the law is imposed by force and assault. It is this Council's responsibility to oppose unilateral acts that undermine not only the international legal order, but also any prospect of peace.