PRESS RELEASE

Explosion in the vicinity of an UNSMIS convoy near Dar'a

Damascus, Syria – At around 11:20am today an explosion occurred in the vicinity of an UNSMIS convoy soon after it had crossed a military checkpoint on the road approaching the town of Dar'a in southern Syria. The UNSMIS delegation led by Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer Major-General Robert Mood was on its way from Damascus for a visit to Dar'a, under Syrian army escort. Members of national and international media were following the convoy.

Several Syrian soldiers from the rear escort vehicle of the convoy sustained injuries and were taken to the hospital for treatment. There were no casualties among the UNSMIS members.

Major-General Mood stated: "This was a graphic example of what the Syrian people are suffering on a daily basis and underlines the imperative for all forms of violence to stop."

He expressed concern for the soldiers injured in the explosion. "As we speak, members of UNSMIS are in the Dar'a hospital to check on the condition of the injured soldiers. I wish them early recovery."

"We remain focused on the tasks mandated to our Mission under UN Security Council resolution 2043," he added.

As on date, UNSMIS comprises 113 personnel from 38 countries, including 70 Military Observers and 43 Civilian staff members. The Mission currently operates from five bases in different parts of the country, besides Damascus, with eight Military Observers and three Civilian staff members deployed in Homs, and four Military Observers each in Hama, Idleb, Dar'a and Aleppo.

With a total mandated strength of 300 Military Observers and additional Civilian staff members as required, UNSMIS continues to receive new members on a daily basis as the Mission establishes and expands its presence across the country.

"In the next two days, we will cross the 100 mark for Military Observers in the Mission," Major-General Mood said.

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