

7 March 2013

The Philippine Government strongly condemns the illegal detention of twenty-one (21) Filipino peacekeepers under the United Nations (UN) command in the Golan Heights.

“The apprehension and illegal detention of the Filipino peacekeepers are gross violations of international law,” said Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. del Rosario.

The Filipino peacekeepers are operating under the UN flag. Accordingly, these Filipinos are international personnel clothed with immunity and mantle of protection similar to diplomatic agents and personnel. These rights are inviolable and their transgression is punishable under international law.

Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel provides that “if United Nations or associated personnel are captured or detained in the course of the performance of their duties and their identification has been established, they shall not be subjected to interrogation and they shall be promptly released and returned to United Nations or other appropriate authorities. Pending their release such personnel shall be treated in accordance with universally recognized standards of human rights and the principles and spirit of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.”

The Philippines is working very closely with the United Nations, United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), France and Germany for the early and safe release of the Filipino peacekeepers. END