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US Recognition to Golan Heights as Israel's Territory

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U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that the **US may recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.**

- The **U.S. will be the first country** to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan and marks a dramatic shift in U.S. policy.
- The **Golan Heights were captured by Israel from Syria in the 1967** conflict and **annexed in 1981 — a move not recognized internationally.**

US Stand & Israel's Response

- The U.S. has said that **Israel could not give up the Golan Heights as doing so would endanger Israel's very existence.**
- Israel has welcomed the US stand.

Other countries Response

- The **Syrian government said the Golan was an "indivisible" part of Syrian territory** and recovering it "via all means guaranteed by international law is still a priority".
- **Russia, Iran, and Turkey have condemned the US statement as illegal and unacceptable** and said that the decisions will lead to a crisis in the region.

Impact of Withdrawal

- The formal recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan **doesn't change anything on the ground. Israel already has a considerable military presence in the region.**
- It is **not immediately clear how the U.N. peacekeeping force in the Golan might be affected** by the U.S. move.

Golan Heights



The Golan Heights is a **rocky plateau with an area of 1,800km² on the border between Israel and Syria** in south-western Syria.

Dispute

- **Israel occupied the Golan Heights, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Six-Day War.** An armistice line was established and the region came under Israeli military control.
- **Syria tried to retake the Golan Heights during the 1973 Middle East war.** Syria was defeated in its attempt.
- Both countries **signed an armistice in 1974 and a UN observer force has been in place** on the ceasefire line since 1974.
- **In 1981, Israel permanently acquired the territory of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem** in moves never recognized by most countries.
- The international community regards as disputed territory occupied by Israel whose status should be determined by negotiations between Israel and Syria.
- Attempts by the international community to bring Israel and Syria for negotiations have failed.

International Recognition of Golan Heights

- The **European Union** said its position on the status of the Golan Heights was unchanged and it did not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the area.
- The **Arab League**, which suspended Syria in 2011 after the start of its civil war has said the move is “completely beyond international law”.
- **Egypt**, which made peace with Israel in 1979, said it still considers the Golan as occupied Syrian territory.
- **India** has also not recognized Golan heights as Israel territory and has called for the return of Golan Heights to Syria.

Importance of Golan Heights

- The Golan Heights **give Israel an excellent point for monitoring Syrian movements.** The topography provides a natural buffer against any military adventure from Syria.
- The area is also a **key source of water for an arid region. Rainwater from the Golan's catchment feeds into the Jordan River.** The area provides a third of Israel's water supply.
- The **land is fertile, and the volcanic soil is used to cultivate vineyards and orchards and raise cattle.** The Golan is also home to Israel's only ski resort.