

Int'l Peacekeeping Drill Starts in Mongolia

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ULAN BATOR — A training exercise hosted by Mongolia with the aim to improve UN peacekeeping operations has started in a military camp 65 km west of the Mongolian capital, officials said Monday.

About 204 military personnel from Mongolia and 125 others from Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, India, the United States and Canada are participating in the drill known as Khaan Quest 2010.

The event, which runs through Aug. 21, includes UN military staff level courses, platoon level command-headquarters courses, mobile field medical group activities and humanitarian engineering operations, officials said.

Mongolia has been organizing Khaan Quest exercises since 2003 and in 2006 at the request of the U.S. Pacific Command, the exercise was turned into a multinational military one.

A total of some 4,500 military personnel from 30 countries have participated in Khaan Quest exercises since 2003, said Bayarmagnai, brigadier general and vice chairman of the Headquarters of Mongolian Armed forces.

This year's military exercise is the largest training for the Mongolian military personnel before they serve as UN peacekeepers in Lebanon next year, said the general.

Mongolia is now seeking a bigger role in UN peacekeeping missions around the world. Better pay for UN peacekeepers draws many Mongolian soldiers to serve as international blue helmets.

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