

Messaging for the International Day of UN Peacekeepers -- 2015

- General Assembly resolution 57/129 (2002) designated 29 May as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.
- This year's Peacekeepers Day falls during the significant 70th anniversary of the United Nations (UN70) and this year's commemorations will be dedicated to the theme: 'UN70 and UN Peacekeeping: Past, Present, and Future'.

Basic messaging will include:

1. Past: Peacekeeping has changed and evolved since its first deployment in 1948. Traditional interstate monitoring and observation peacekeeping operations dominated the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Several failures of the 1990s (Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda) led to a fundamental review of peacekeeping which were outlined in the Report by the Panel on UN Peace Operations of 2000 (Brahimi Report).
 2. Present: Today's diverse and complex multidimensional peace operations emphasize a demand driven approach that maximizes the peacekeeping partnership and employs specialized capabilities while promoting the highest standards of performance in our military, police and civilian personnel.
 3. Future: Tomorrow's peacekeepers will have to operate in remote and dangerous environments while confronting transnational and asymmetric threats in an era of likely fiscal austerity. Success in this context will require a new approach that leverages innovation and modern technology to ensure that 21st century blue helmets are truly fit for purpose.
- Over the course of eight decades, UN Peacekeeping has proven itself to be a legitimate, reliable and effective tool in facilitating the transition from conflict to peace.
 - UN peacekeepers have long enjoyed a unique legitimacy thanks to the universality of United Nations membership. Among its greatest strengths, peacekeeping fosters burden sharing -- a division of labour that spreads risks and opportunities across countries both large and small as well as from the developed and developing worlds.
 - The UN has established 71 peacekeeping operations during its history -- in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The number of people who have been UN peacekeepers -- more than 1 million -- far surpasses the number of staff that have served the UN in all other capacities.
 - UN peacekeepers have achieved much -- helping countries gain independence, supporting historic elections, disarming hundreds of thousands of ex-combatants, helping establish the rule of law, promoting and protecting human rights, and creating conditions for refugees and displaced persons to return home. We should all be proud of these accomplishments.
 - Today, more than 125,000 military, police and civilian staff serve in 16 peacekeeping operations around the world. This is our largest deployment in history. It must be matched by a stronger international partnership for the peacekeeping enterprise.
 - The Secretary-General recently highlighted elements that are fundamental to the success of UN peacekeeping operations:
 1. Robust contributions: When the Security Council calls on us to deploy peacekeepers, the UN needs to be ready. This means competent, effective and well equipped troops able to deploy rapidly and decisively. It also includes capabilities from developed countries with more technologically advanced militaries.
 2. Peacekeeping deployments cannot succeed by themselves. The blue helmets need the political backing of key local actors, the region, the donors and the international community at large. We will always accompany but not substitute for a political process.
 - Operational environments have changed and are increasingly characterised by asymmetric and transnational threats. These new environments require new capabilities. We cannot do 21st century peacekeeping with 20th century tools.
 - It is a top priority of the organisation to improve efficiency in its operations. This means strengthening quality control mechanisms, launching strategic reviews and assessments, comprehensive audits itself

with a variety of reviews, audits and streamlining exercises designed in order to achieve greater performance standards.

- Peacekeeping is a partnership. It depends on its local, regional and international partnerships. Sustained political and operational engagement, joint planning, information sharing and lessons learned exercises are key to the success of peacekeeping operations.
- To continue rising to the challenges of today and meet those of tomorrow, the Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Independent Panel to make a comprehensive assessment of the state of United Nations peace operations today and the emerging needs of the future. This will be the first major review since the year 2000.
- While the contribution of UN peacekeepers has been great, so has their sacrifice. The vast majority of fatalities that the UN has suffered come from among the ranks of its peacekeepers; tragically more than 3,300 have lost their lives while serving under the UN flag, including 125 last year. And the risks are increasing as peacekeepers are increasingly targeted by improvised explosive devices or complex terrorist attacks.