

BLUE BERET

Summer 2025

MAGAZINE



UNFICYP Force
Photographer
honoured in UN
Exhibition

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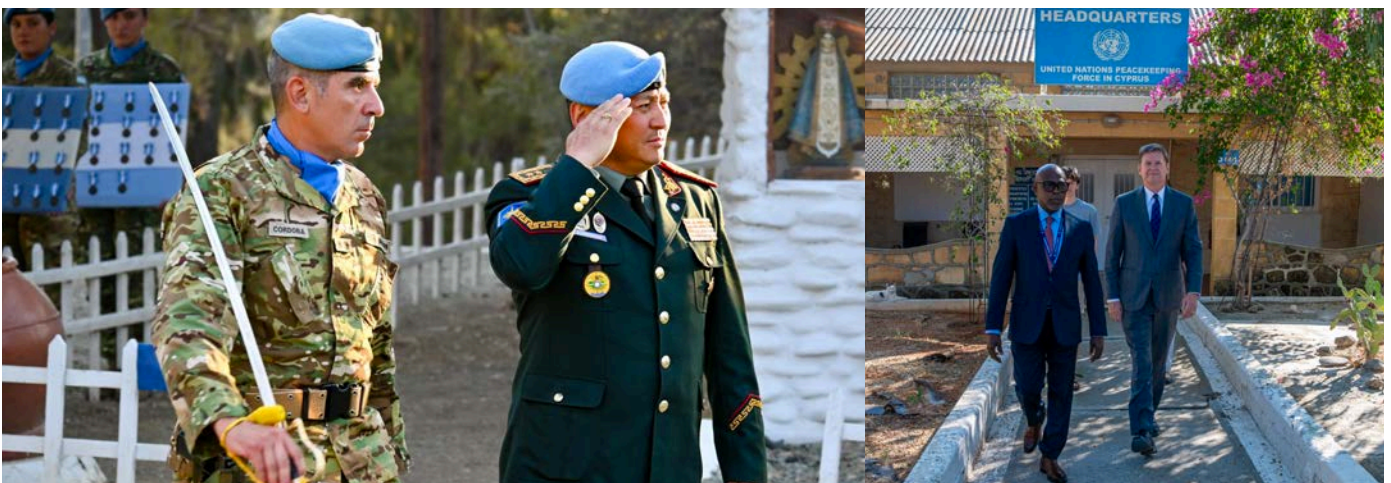
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Editor's note

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that we launch the summer edition of the *Blue Beret* magazine. In this issue, we cover the Mission's highlights from June to August of this year.

We bid farewell to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, who concluded his almost 4-year tenure on the island. This edition also highlights the visits of UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri, and the Mission's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya across the buffer zone.

You will find several stories on the work of our military and police colleagues, detailing how the Mission marked important UN dates and observances. We are also pleased to include pictures from our most recent medal parades. We are proud of our Civil Affairs Section's commitment. The team continues to engage with a diverse range of civil society groups from both communities on the island and is promoting several in-person activities. These initiatives strongly focus on the UN's commitment to the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas.

Since the beginning of 2025, we have also incorporated coverage of events organized by the UN Good Offices Mission in Cyprus to showcase their work on the island, ranging from engagements with the technical committees to high-level meetings in New York.

In the following pages, read about how UNFICYP continues to implement its mandate inside the UN buffer zone, and much more.

Enjoy reading!

On the cover

UNFICYP Force Photographer honoured in UN Exhibition

Peter Sulgan, UNFICYP's Force Photographer, has been selected for a significant United Nations exhibition. His work was featured as part of the UN Special Day at Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, where an international jury chose 80 photographs from a global pool of submissions for display. The exhibition highlighted the powerful visual storytelling that emerges from UN missions around the world, with Sulgan's imagery representing UNFICYP's efforts.

While the physical display in Osaka showcased the selected images, the photographers' names and the full context of their work will be featured in an upcoming online exhibit. This permanent digital gallery is scheduled to launch on 24 October to mark UN Day, ensuring that the contributions of visual storytellers like Peter receive lasting recognition. This initiative comes as part of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations and celebrates the vital role of photography in communicating the UN's mission and fosters appreciation for the personnel who capture these compelling moments.

BLUE BERET

Summer 2025

Editorial team

Editor

Thaiza Castilho

Art Director

Ersin Öztoycan

Military Public Information Officer

Maj Ayesha Shaukat Khan

Force Photographer

Msgt. Peter Sulgan

Jaydan Pozo

Kira Stocker

And collaborators

Submissions from all members of the military, police and civilian components are welcome.



The *Blue Beret* is UNFICYP's in-house journal. Views expressed are of the authors concerned and do not necessarily conform with official policy.



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Published by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.



‘The UN is here to do the right things’: SRSG Stewart bids farewell but keeps the faith

In early August, he stepped down as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Looking back at his tenure in Cyprus, Stewart likened UNFICYP’s daily work to stamping out sparks before they ignite.

“There are all sorts of activities happening in the buffer zone every day, each with the potential to escalate,” he said. “Our job is to prevent those sparks from bursting into flames. When I report to the Security Council that things are calm, it means we have been successful.” Our job is to prevent sparks from bursting into flames. When I report to the Security Council that things are calm, it means we have been successful.

The numbers bear out his point: in more than half a century of UN peacekeeping on the island, not a single shot has been fired between the two militaries.

“Some people ask why the peacekeeping mission is still needed, given that it’s been peaceful for 50 years...the answer is simple – it’s peaceful because the mission has been doing its job. Without it, the deep mistrust between the sides could easily spiral into confrontation.” For life after the UN, Stewart is clear: he has no plans to return in any advisory or consulting role. “For me, retirement means retirement,” he said with a smile. “I want to do all the things I’ve been postponing for my whole career – live in a house I own, spend time with my teenage son who is going to high school...that is the life that I have in mind.”

As he steps away from the UN, Stewart says that idealism remains intact: “What better thing can you devote your life and your career to than bringing peace in the world, supporting human rights, and helping countries develop and build the foundations for peace.”



MILITARY

United Nations Peacekeepers in Cyprus



This Section

Force Commander welcomes UK Foreign Secretary to the UN buffer zone

USG Christian Saunders visits UNFICYP

UNFICYP awards medals to peacekeepers

Peacekeepers join training in Sector 2

On 11 July, UNFICYP peacekeepers from the UK stationed in Sector 2 facilitated a Military Observer Liaison Officer workshop, held at Ledra Palace Hotel. 38 peacekeepers from military and UNPOL components based across the buffer zone received a detailed familiarisation of Sector 2 Area of Operation and analysed ongoing issues in the sector, exchanging knowledge and best practices.

Slovaks blood donation drive



On 9 and 10 July, UNFICYP peacekeepers from Slovakia donated blood at local health facilities in Nicosia and Famagusta, respectively. Their generosity helps save lives and embodies the spirit of solidarity. We are proud of them for supporting the communities we serve.



On 13 June, UNFICYP held a flag-raising ceremony for Ecuador at the United Nations Protected Area. SRSG Colin Stewart, accompanied by the Mission's senior management, welcomed two Ecuadorian peacekeepers, who will serve in Sector 1, which covers approximately 90 kilometres from Kokkina village on the western coast of Cyprus to the village of Mammari, west of Nicosia.



Force Commander welcomes UK Foreign Secretary to the UN buffer zone

On 4 July, UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri, together with the Mission's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, welcomed the UK Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, to the buffer zone in sector 2, to meet some of our British peacekeepers.

Their responsibility is to patrol and monitor activity around 30 kilometres along the area, beginning in Mammari village to the village of Kaimakli to the east of Nicosia.

USG Christian Saunders visits UNFICYP

From 21 to 23 July, Christian Saunders, the Under-Secretary-General and Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, visited Cyprus.

During his visit, together with UNFICYP's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, they went to Sectors 1 and 2 and were briefed by peacekeepers.

Together with UNFICYP's Head of Mission, Colin Stewart, Saunders held a town hall meeting with the Mission's military, UNPOL and UN staff to speak about his experience on ways to better tackle the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse.



UNFICYP awards medals to peacekeepers

On 25 July, SRSG Colin Stewart, together with UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri, and the Mission's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, awarded medals to 183 peacekeepers from Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Ecuador, who are based in sector 1, for their service for peace on the island.



On 4 August, top United Nations official in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, together with UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri, awarded medals to 43 peacekeepers from Argentina, Austria, Ghana, India, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom for their service for peace on the island.





Photo: Kira Stocker

Team spirit in action: Building peace through sports

On 23 July, UNFICYP held its Sports Day at the Sports Pitch, bringing together military, police, and civilian personnel from across the Mission.

More than a friendly competition, the event was a celebration of diversity, camaraderie, and the enduring spirit of peacekeeping. Participants from a wide array of nationalities took part in a full day of activities, including football, volleyball, table tennis, tug of war, swimming, and the uniquely challenging Adventure Quest, a hybrid team event that tested both physical ability and collective problem-solving. The day's atmosphere was electric, filled with cheering teammates, laughter, and spirited competition.

"Sport possesses a unique power to unite people toward a common goal, transcending nationality, religion, culture, gender, and ethnicity," remarked UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri: "The event fostered unity between the military and civilian components, contributing directly to our collective efforts for peace on the island."

The Adventure Quest, a hybrid of problem-solving, physical endurance, and creative thinking, proved to be a favourite. Organiser Diana Bridger highlighted its impact: "It's always amazing to witness the camaraderie of the various teams, especially those like UNPOL, who hail from different countries but have formed a terrific bond. I was particularly proud of UNPOL winning the Quest and placing third overall."

Major Ayesha Shaukat Khan, who participated in the Adventure Quest and tug of war, reflected: "Sports Day was a powerful reminder that the essence of peacekeeping lies not only in operational coordination but in the relationships we build cross cultures, ranks, and roles. These events demonstrate how teamwork, mutual respect, and shared purpose strengthen mission cohesion".

Major Jenny Long, who joined Adventure Quest and swimming, shared: "Sport is a great activity to bring people together

across departments I wouldn't normally work with. Adventure Quest was the highlight of my day because it allowed everyone, regardless of sporting ability, to contribute. It was nice to get out of the office and take part in something bigger than one department, everyone cheered for the winners, no matter what nation they came from."

For WO2 James McKenna, the day reinforced the human side of peacekeeping: "These events contribute to cultural exchange, mutual respect and a sense of achievement for all. It gave me a great sense of team spirit and revealed the strength of character across a multinational setting."

UNPOL Training Officer Louise Long underlined how team sports reflect operational realities: "UNPOL officers come from different nations and police traditions. Participating in team sports fosters trust, communication, and team spirit, all qualities for successful cooperation of our daily duties."

The day concluded with an award ceremony led by the Force Commander, who congratulated the Argentinian military team from Sector 1 for winning, but he reminded all participants that the true victory lies in the unity built along the way.

At its core, Sports Day was not merely a competition, it was mission readiness in action.



Photo: Kira Stocker

UN POLICE

United Nations Police in Cyprus



This Section

**UN Police Adviser Faisal
Shahkar visits UNFICYP**

**Irish students visit Ledra
Palace and meet UNPOL
officers serving in UNFICYP**

UN peacekeepers facilitate annual Kokkina/Erenköy crossing

On 8 August, in a demonstration of commitment to peace and confidence-building, UNFICYP successfully facilitated the annual crossing of Kokkina/Erenköy. The event, which allows for movement across the buffer zone, saw close collaboration between the Mission's UNPOL and Civil Affairs components. Their coordinated efforts ensured the safe and orderly passage of civilians. Kokkina/Erenköy is a coastal enclave in the north-west of the island, and the annual crossing is a significant event. The smooth facilitation of such crossings is a key pillar of UNFICYP's mandate to prevent tensions and foster conditions conducive to lasting peace.

The successful crossing highlights how practical cooperation can pave the way for dialogue and reconciliation, offering a moment of hope for the people of Cyprus.



UN Police Adviser Faisal Shahkar visits UNFICYP

In the last week of July, UNFICYP welcomed a high-level visit from Faisal Shahkar, the United Nations Police Adviser, for an intensive three-day assessment of the Mission's police operations. The visit underscored the UN's commitment to supporting the vital work of its police components in maintaining stability and building confidence across the island. Shahkar's visit provided a first-hand look at the challenging and nuanced environment in which UNPOL officers operate. His itinerary included visits to all sector headquarters, patrols along the Green Line, and meetings with police officers from the diverse contingents that make up the UNFICYP's police component.

A first-hand look at operations on the ground

The visit commenced with a comprehensive briefing at the UNFICYP headquarters. Shahkar was updated on the current security situation, the ongoing challenges of monitoring the ceasefire lines, and the critical role UNPOL plays in liaising with both the Cypriot police in the south and the police in the north.

Throughout his visit, the UN Police Adviser travelled to each of UNFICYP's sectors, witnessing the daily patrols and observation post duties that form the backbone of the mission's mandate. He visited areas within the buffer zone, where UNPOL explained the intricacies of de-escalating tensions, investigating unauthorized constructions, and facilitating civilian crossings through designated crossing points.

"This mission is a testament to the power of presence and dialogue," Shahkar remarked during a stop at a historically sensitive area near Ledra Palace. "The work our UNPOL officers do here, every single day, is not just about maintaining a military status quo. It is about building trust, inch by inch, between the communities. Their vigilance and professionalism are the bedrock of stability."





Engaging with a multinational component

A central pillar of Shahkar's visit was direct engagement with the men and women serving under the UN flag. He held meetings with police officers from various national contingents. He emphasized the importance of the diverse skills and perspectives that each contingent brings to UNFICYP, creating a cohesive and effective multinational police component.

"The diversity within UNPOL is our greatest strength," he stated during a meeting at the Mission headquarters. "You bring different experiences, but you are united by a common purpose: the service of peace. Your ability to work as one team is what makes this mission a success."

A focus on women in peacekeeping

In a significant segment of his visit, the UN Police Adviser held a special meeting with women police officers serving in UNFICYP. This dialogue focused on their specific contributions, career development within peacekeeping, and the unique role women play in community-oriented policing and enhancing the mission's overall effectiveness. Shahkar praised their dedication and highlighted the UN's ongoing commitment to increasing the participation of women in all ranks and roles within UN police components. He stressed that their involvement is crucial not only for operational effectiveness but also for inspiring future generations of peacekeepers and for better serving the needs of the local populations.

"Women police officers are indispensable to modern peacekeeping," he told. "You bring essential skills that are critical to protection activities and to building trust within communities. Your presence makes our missions more legitimate, more approachable, and ultimately, more successful. You are leaders and role models."

“ You bring different experiences, but you are united by a common purpose: the service of peace. ”



Reaffirming support and looking ahead

The visit concluded with a series of high-level debriefings with the UNFICYP leadership, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the Force Commander. Shahkar reiterated the full support of the Office of the UN Police Adviser in New York for UNFICYP's efforts.



A taste of home and peacekeeping: Irish students visit UNFICYP

On 10 September, Ledra Palace Hotel, a historic symbol of peace in the heart of Cyprus's buffer zone, recently played host to a special meeting between generations of Irish peace advocates. A group of 23 students from Ireland were given a unique insight into the work of UNFICYP, with a particular focus on the contributions of their compatriots.

The visit provided a powerful, real-world connection to international peacekeeping for the students. They had the opportunity to meet and interact with Irish police officers serving with the Mission's UNPOL component, as well as peacekeepers from Northern Ireland. This encounter highlighted the tangible role that Irish women and men play in maintaining stability and fostering reconciliation on the island.

The group had the opportunity to learn about the mission's day-to-day operations and the importance of the UN's presence on the island. The students learned firsthand about the challenges and rewards of peacekeeping, from patrols in the buffer zone to building trust between communities.

For the students, the meeting was more than an educational briefing; it was a powerful demonstration of service and diplomacy. Speaking with officers from both Ireland and Northern Ireland, working side-by-side under the UN flag, served as a living example of cooperation and shared purpose.

The visit underscored the enduring Irish commitment to UN peacekeeping. It was a day that connected young Irish citizens with their nation's proud tradition of international service, inspiring them with the work being done by their fellow countrymen and women far from home.



CIVIL AFFAIRS

Bringing communities together



This Section

UNFICYP hosts discussion on water scarcity in Cyprus

Peace Begins when we build bridges

Cypriot women forging stronger bonds

Cypriots from across the divide discuss bicommunal investments

On 16 June, UNFICYP, in collaboration with the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre, successfully hosted an insightful event on bicommunal economic cooperation and joint investments at the Ledra Palace Hotel.

The event featured the presentation of the research study, "Promoting Bicommunal Investments: Facilitating Cooperation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots", conducted by Prof. Dr. Mustafa Besim and Dr. Andreas Charalambous, with support from the International Communities Organisation.

Around 80 attendees, including business leaders and civil society representatives engaged in a lively discussion on how economic collaboration can build trust, foster reconciliation, and contribute to long-term peacebuilding efforts in Cyprus. The dialogue emphasized the potential of joint investments and cross-community economic initiatives to create shared prosperity and strengthen ties between the two communities. Participants exchanged ideas on practical steps to advance cooperation, highlighting the importance of institutional support, policy frameworks, and grassroots engagement. The event underscored the power of economic partnerships in peacebuilding and set the stage for further discussions on enhancing bicommunal collaboration.



UNFICYP hosts discussion on water scarcity in Cyprus

On June 2, 50 participants gathered in Ledra Palace Hotel for a conversation with environmental experts on water scarcity affecting the island. This event, held as part of several activities organized to mark World Environment Day, brought together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot experts to share insights and foster collaboration in addressing the water crisis.

Water scarcity poses significant challenges to various sectors in Cyprus, including agriculture, tourism, and biodiversity. The Mediterranean region, already facing severe environmental pressures, is exacerbated by climate change. "Water is a shared resource that transcends divisions.

Collaboration between communities and scientists is essential to ensure its sustainable management," stated Assistant Professor Dr. Bertuğ Akıntug, emphasizing the need for joint efforts.

The event served as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, bringing together Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to think of future initiatives that can address the water scarcity crisis in Cyprus. As the discussions concluded, the participants echoed a unified message: sustainable water management is essential for both communities and the preservation of Cyprus's rich biodiversity.

As the Mediterranean region continues to confront environmental challenges, the collaboration between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots stands as a positive step toward a sustainable future.

UNFICYP puts partnerships at the heart of its work to achieve sustainable peace. Our Civil Affairs Section is responsible for facilitating activities that promote harmony and conditions for future reconciliation. The section works to promote intercommunal dialogue such as this discussion, in efforts to encourage collaboration between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as a vital step towards sustainable peace.

“Water is a shared resource that transcends divisions.”





Peace Begins when we build bridges

On 18 June, UNFICYP, in partnership with Center for Social Innovation and CyprusInno, brought together social enterprises, local producers and artisans from across the divide to by passers in Ledra Street/Lokmaci crossing to promote Cypriot traditional handcrafted products. Visitors had a chance to experience a vibrant atmosphere with stand ups, artistic and cultural performances that celebrate the diversity of Nicosia. Organized together with Mr. Charalambos Prountzos and Mr. Mehmet Harmanci, the event helped bridge the divide into a space of creativity and collaboration.



Turning 'waste' into wonder

On 28 June, UNFICYP teamed up with the Lefke Gençlik Derneği and Kykloikodromio for an inspiring upcycling workshop where participants from both communities on the island transformed used materials into tote bags, toys, and coasters! The event wasn't just about crafting; it strengthened community bonds while promoting eco-friendly habits and an opportunity to turn "waste" into wonder.



Life Again project closes with Cypriot women forging stronger bonds

On July 1, UNFICYP stood with ZOE Vs War Violence Foundation to celebrate the powerful finale of the Life Again workshops. Participants from both communities in Cyprus came together for 10 weeks to honor their journey of overcoming trauma, breaking cycles of conflict, and forging stronger bonds. The closing ceremony was more than just a celebration event; it was proof that understanding and resilience can help rewrite the present and future.



Digital fashion for peace

On 21 and 27 June, UNFICYP hosted exciting and educational workshops that brought together parents, children, local producers and designers from Cyprus to Ledra Palace Hotel. They had the opportunity to explore their creativity, learn about technology and environmental sustainability in a morning filled with interaction among the communities. The young creators will meet again next weekend to finalize their reinvented clothes. The series of workshops are organized by MasterKids Education and Mathisis with support from Arcaðia.

CYPRUS TALKS

Highlights from the UN Good Offices Mission



This Section

**UN Secretary-General
convenes high-level meeting
on Cyprus**

**Updates on the Technical
Committees on Cultural
Heritage and the Environment**

**Amplifying youth voices:
Establishment of the Technical
Committee on Youth**

María Ángela Holguín meets Cypriot leaders

From 6 to 8 July, the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Cyprus María Ángela Holguín held meetings with the two Cypriot leaders and other interlocutors.





UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy María Ángela Holguín visits Cyprus

The UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Cyprus, María Ángela Holguín, visited the island from 7-9 July 2025 in order to meet with Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, the Greek Cypriot leader and with Mr. Ersin Tatar, the Turkish Cypriot leader. In addition, she held joint meetings with the Greek Cypriot Negotiator Menelaos Menelaou and Turkish Cypriot Special Representative Gunes Onar. Meetings were held with representatives of the Technical Committees, accompanied by UN Good Offices Mission staff, and while on the island the Personal Envoy also visited the buffer zone in sector 1, in the area of Lefke/Lefka.

Before her departure, Holguín gave interviews to media outlets on both sides of the island. The visit was made in advance of the informal meeting in a broader format in New York that took place later in the month of July.

In her remarks after seeing the two leaders on the island, she said that she had returned to the island in preparation for the meeting in New York and she was hopeful that there would be advances on the measures that were decided in March 2025. She said that "all this effort that the UN is doing is just for the prosperity of the island, for the people to

have a better life".

While on the island, she stated to media that "At the end of the day, this is what truly matters: improving the lives of people through the implementation of the agreed measures. This is the best way to convince people that dialogue between the leaders can lead to tangible positive results for all. This is a prerequisite to achieve the most difficult task: bridging the gap prevailing in the position of the two sides in order to ultimately secure a lasting settlement to the Cyprus issue. If the leaders realise that a solution is best for the good of all the people, they will find a way. Listening carefully to the views and aspirations of the youth on both sides regarding the future of Cyprus could be key in this regard." In a separate interview, she noted that "the Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation remains the framework adopted by the United Nations Security Council. However, one of the consequences of the failure in Crans-Montana is that the BFF is no longer a common reference point for both sides. Four years after the informal 5+1 meeting of 2021, the positions of the two sides remain very far apart. This reality must be taken into account ... "

The Secretary-General announced in early May the appointment of María Angela Holguín Cuéllar of Colombia as his Personal Envoy on Cyprus, who was tasked to reengage with the parties in order to work on next steps on the Cyprus issue and to advise him. Holguín completed a previous assignment as Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on Cyprus from January to July 2024.

“

All this effort that the UN is doing is just for the prosperity of the island, for the people to have a better life.

”



UN Secretary-General convenes high-level meeting on Cyprus

An informal meeting in a broader format was hosted by Secretary-General António Guterres on 16 and 17 July 2025, with his Personal Envoy Holguín in attendance along with the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo. The meeting, which had been agreed in the previous meeting in the same format in March 2025 in Geneva, was attended by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders as well as representatives from the 3 Guarantor Powers, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece and Türkiye and the Minister of State for Europe of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Despite the continuing differences in positions regarding the Cyprus issue, the two leaders reviewed the progress on the six initiatives they agreed in March to build trust. Out of these six initiatives, four have been achieved: 1) the creation of a technical committee on youth; 2) initiatives on the environment and climate change, including the impact on mining areas; 3) the restoration of cemeteries; and 4) an agreement on demining will be closed once the final technical details are established. The Secretary-General announced that discussions will continue on the remaining two: the opening of four crossing points; and solar energy in the buffer zone. In addition, they came to a common understanding on a set of four new initiatives to build trust: 1) a consultative body for civil society engagement; 2) an exchange of cultural artifacts; 3) an initiative on air quality monitoring; and 4) addressing microplastic pollution.

“ The initiatives agreed today have the potential to have a real and significant positive impact on peoples’ lives across the island. ”

The Secretary-General said that “it is critical to implement these initiatives – all of them – as soon as possible for the benefit of all Cypriots.” Finally, it was agreed that the Secretary-General would host the two leaders together in a meeting on the sidelines of the General Assembly high-level week in September and it was also decided that the next meeting in this format would be held before the end of the year.

In his statement after the meeting, the Secretary-General said that “as with the six initiatives agreed in March, the initiatives agreed today have the potential to have a real and significant positive impact on peoples’ lives across the island. They are not merely symbolic gestures, but issues that require cooperation. There’s a long road ahead. And it is important to think about what the future can mean – for all Cypriots. But these steps clearly demonstrate a commitment to continuing a dialogue on the way forward and working on initiatives that benefit all Cypriots.”



Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage

During the period, there were a number of events marking the completion of conservation works by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage of important cultural heritage sites on the island, under the auspices of the UN's Good Offices Mission in Cyprus, in partnership with the UN Development Programme. These included the Mosque in Avdimou/Evdim, the Church of St. George of the Latins in Famagusta and the Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca. On 24 June, community members gathered to mark the completion of conservation works at the Mosque in Avdimou/Evdim. Their presence and heartfelt reflections demonstrated the deep connection between the site and the community - not just as a place of worship, but as a part of their shared history and memory. The conservation efforts, undertaken by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and supported by the EU, UNDP and the UN's Good Offices Mission in Cyprus, focused on preserving key architectural and structural elements.

On 2 July, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, with financial support from the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage (ALIPH), with co-funding from the European Union, and in partnership with UNDP and under the auspices of OSASG-Cyprus, celebrated the completion of the conservation of two important cultural heritage sites in Cyprus: the Church of St. George of the Latins in Famagusta and the Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca. The Tuzla Mosque, located in the historic Tuzla neighbourhood of Larnaca, was originally constructed as a medieval church atop a basilica foundation and later converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period. The Church of St. George of the Latins, among the oldest surviving Gothic monuments in Famagusta, dates to the late 13th or early 14th century. Severely damaged during the 1570 siege of Famagusta, the church has endured as a significant historical landmark. Conservation works at both sites commenced in September 2024 and were completed in June 2025. The collaboration marks the successful completion of conservation efforts that contribute to the preservation of the island's rich and diverse cultural heritage and build trust between the two communities. This summer saw conservation works completed by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage at the Church of Ayia Photini/Photou and the Holy Water Cave of Agiasma in Larnaca, and also at the Panagia Kanakaria Church, located in the Karpas Peninsula.



Photos: UNDP/Artemis Evlogimenou

Technical Committee on Environment

Young environmental caretakers participating in the Technical Committee on Environment's Environmental Caretakers Project came together for key trust-building experiences – including in the Troodos mountains, the shores of the Karpas, Pedieos Linear Park and the Karşıyaka/Vasileia forest.

The Technical Committee on Environment designed and launched its Environmental Caretakers project to raise awareness among young people across the island of the island's natural environmental treasures and to offer opportunities to collaborate bi-communally to protect them. As part of the project, members of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities have travelled together to various locations to discover and learn.

On 14 June in the Troodos mountains, participants hiked through rich biodiversity, guided by Terra Cypria. They explored the unique ecosystems of the mountains, discussed environmental challenges faced by the island and learned how to use the Environmental Caretakers Digital App to take action in their communities.

In the Karpas, the journey continued with a hands-on conservation activity led by Taskent Nature Park where participants

learned how to identify and protect sea turtle nests.

On 17 July, a group from both sides came together to walk through the Pedieos Linear Park, discovering the rich biodiversity nestled in the heart of Nicosia. Participants made interactive stops to observe native species, discuss urban greening and biodiversity, and even compare pavement temperatures in the sun and shade – to understand the vital role of green spaces in an urban environment.

On 26 July, nature lovers gathered in the Karşıyaka/Vasileia forest for the 'Exploring Nature After Dark' event. Using light traps, participants observed a variety of moths—from tiny, delicate species to larger, beautifully patterned ones—while learning about their vital role in biodiversity and how they serve as indicators of environmental health.

Two environmental organisations, Terra Cypria in the south and Tashkent Nature Park (Taşkent Doğa Parkı) in the north, are implementing the project jointly in their respective areas. UNDP administers and oversees the project, which the European Commission funds. The UN's Good Offices Mission for Cyprus facilitates the 13 technical committees, of which this is one.



Photos: UNDP/Koray Üstüner



Amplifying youth voices: Establishment of the Technical Committee on Youth

The Technical Committee on Youth is the thirteenth committee established under the framework of the peace process, aimed at fostering cooperation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots through tangible and collaborative initiatives. The decision by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders to create the first new committee in over a decade was made during the informal broader meeting held in Geneva in March 2025, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Notably, the Committee was established as the United Nations is marking the 10th anniversary of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, highlighting a growing recognition of the importance of integrating, amplifying, and empowering youth voices in all spheres of life, including peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and reconciliation.

On 5 May 2025, the inaugural meeting of the Committee took place at the Ledra Palace Hotel. Since then, six additional meetings have been held, facilitated by the UN Good Offices Mission in cooperation with UNFICYP.

On 11 July, the Committee hosted its first public event, a networking gathering designed to introduce the Committee to the broader youth community across the island and to gather their views on the most pressing challenges and opportunities they face. The event brought together over 120 participants, many of whom were engaging with members of the other community for the first time. The networking was structured around five thematic tables, reflecting the Committee's identified priorities: Environment and sustainability, entrepreneurship, health, wellbeing, and sport, art, music, culture and technology and social media. Looking ahead, the Committee is expected to begin developing targeted activities and projects in the coming months. These initiatives aim to foster inclusive dialogue, youth participation, and collaborative efforts that reflect the diverse perspectives and shared aspirations of young people across the island. Collaboration with other Technical Committees may also be explored as part of this process.





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UNFICYP Headquarters

PO Box 25644; Area Code: 1311
Nicosia, Cyprus

Tel: 2261-4634/4416/4408

unficy-p-public-information-office@un.org