



UNFICYP

A Force for Peace

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, UNFICYP, is one of the longest-running UN Peacekeeping missions. Established by the Security Council, through resolution 186 (1964), the mission was mandated to prevent the recurrence of fighting between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island, contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions.

The mission's responsibilities expanded in 1974, following a coup d'état by elements favouring union with Greece and a subsequent military intervention by Türkiye, whose troops established control over the northern part of the island.

Since a de facto ceasefire in August 1974, UNFICYP maintained a buffer zone between the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot forces in the north and the Greek and Greek Cypriot forces in the south. The ceasefire lines extend over 180 kilometers across the island. In the absence of a formal ceasefire agreement, UNFICYP's 850-plus troops and 60-plus police officers deal with hundreds of incidents each year.

UNFICYP through its mandate on humanitarian assistance, delivers humanitarian aid to Greek Cypriots and a small Maronite community living in the northern part of the island and it assists Turkish Cypriots living in the southern part of the island.

UNFICYP manages civilian activity in the buffer zone. To this end, it facilitates farming and bicomunal activities where safe, and assists both communities on matters related to the supply of electricity and water across the lines.

UNFICYP's work is based on four components that work together closely: the military, UN Police (UNPOL), the Civil Affairs Section, and Mission support, which supports all activities. The Mission counts with almost 1100 personnel. Since 1964, 187 United Nations personnel have lost their lives while serving in UNFICYP.

Attempts to solve the Cyprus conflict and reunify the island have so far been unsuccessful. Among other things, this led to the opening of several crossing points across the buffer zone, including across Ledra Street in old Nicosia on 3 April 2008. UNFICYP works closely with the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, towards a common objective of supporting a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

UNFICYP is led by Colin Stewart, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, who also serves as the Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus. UNFICYP's mandate is renewed by the Security Council on a yearly basis.

UNFICYP leadership



Khassim Diagne
Special Representative of
the Secretary-General in
Cyprus
Head of UNFICYP



Major General Erdenebat
Batsuuri
Force Commander



Aderemi Adekoya
Senior Adviser



Joel Cohen
Chief Mission Support

4 March 1964

"The United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 186 (1964), recommending the establishment of UNFICYP."

22 December 1967

"Security Council adopts resolution 244 (1967), which recognizes the enlargement of UNFICYP's mandate to include supervision of disarmament and arrangements to safeguard internal security."



MILITARY



Sector One

Sector One covers a distance of approximately 90 kilometres from Kokkina village on the western coast of Cyprus to the village of Mammari, west of Nicosia.

It has been the responsibility of the Argentinean Contingent since 16 October 1993. The contingent rotates more or less completely every six months. The Military Observer Liaison Officers who liaise daily with military counterparts on the two sides within this region remain in mission for 12-month periods.

Sector One headquarters and Command Company are located in San Martin Camp, which is near Skouriotissa village. Support Company finds its home at Roca Camp, near Xeros in the north. The twoline companies are deployed along four permanently manned patrol bases while also conducts mobile patrols from San Martin and Roca camps.

Sector Two

Sector Two is the responsibility of the British contingent since 1993 when the Canadian Forces withdrew its major unit from UNFICYP. The responsibility of the unit is to patrol and monitor military activity over 30 kilometres along the buffer zone, beginning at the east end of Mammari village and ending at the village of Kaimakli to the east of Nicosia.

The Sector's headquarters is located at Wolseley Barracks, inside the buffer zone. Ledra Palace Hotel, where Sector Two troops are stationed, has been home to UNFICYP peacekeepers since 1974. One company-size unit is located on the ceasefire lines and patrols the buffer zone in this area.

Sector Four

Sector Four became a multinational contingent in 1995 when the Armed Forces of Hungary sent its first troops to the island. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovakia have contributed to UNFICYP Sector Four since 2001, when Slovakia assumed command of the Sector from the Austrian contingent. In 2004, Sector Four was strengthened by peacekeepers from Croatia. In 2010, with a contingent of peacekeepers from Serbia and in 2013 with a contingent of military personnel from Ukraine.

On 1 September 2018, following Security Council resolution 2398 (2018), endorsing the Strategic Review of UNFICYP, Slovakia became the only Troop Contributing Country in Sector Four. The total number of deployable Slovakian peacekeepers to UNFICYP has gradually risen to 241 personnel, including 190 in Sector Four.

The Sector Four headquarters is located in Camp General Stefanik in Famagusta. Additionally, there are numbers of patrol bases and observation posts within its area of responsibility of the eastern section of the buffer zone.

Sector 3 ceased to exist when Canada withdrew from UNFICYP in 1993 and Sectors 2 and 4 took over the territory.

Troop Contributing Countries	
Argentina	260
Chile	6
Brazil	2
Total	268

Troop Contributing Country	
United Kingdom and Northern Ireland	257

Troop Contributing Country	
Slovakia	239

Additional Troop Contributing Countries	
Austria	3
Bangladesh	1
Canada	1
Ghana	1
Hungary	11
India	1
Mongolia	3
Pakistan	3
Russian Federation	4
Serbia	8

* Figures as of January 2025.



DEMINING



Landmines in Cyprus: The facts

As of 2024, it is estimated that more than 7,000 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines still remain in the ground across the island of Cyprus, affecting two million square meters of land. During the events of 1963/64 and 1974 minefields were laid within and outside the buffer zone by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. Landmines do not become inactive with age. If anything, they can become more unstable over time.

Since July 2016, UNMAS became an integral component of UNFICYP, providing dedicated expertise in mine action planning and coordination, demining capacity, quality assurance oversight, and data management for mine action information.

The objectives of UNMAS operations are: to reduce the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war, to contribute to confidence building measures; to facilitate a return to normal living conditions; and to ensure safer freedom of movement for communities, UNFICYP and United Nations partners. UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons to ensure safe access to areas it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for explosive ordnance disposal call out tasks.



United Nations demining projects

Between 2004 and 2011

27,000

Landmines cleared from the buffer zone

UNFICYP initiatives

In 2014, UNFICYP became concerned that wet weather had washed mines from outside the buffer zone into new areas inside the buffer zone. UNFICYP undertook two surveys of Suspected Mine Hazard Areas – one near Mammari and the other near Dherynia – to ensure that these sites could be given the all-clear.

UNFICYP carried out these surveys with the assistance of the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon and their 21-member specialist demining team from Cambodia, finding and destroying one anti-tank mine near Mammari. In May 2015, a similar operation was conducted in Mammari by a Cambodian demining team through inter-mission cooperation with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; they cleared two anti-tank mines, four anti-tank mine components, and one anti-personnel mine fuse.

The Cambodian team went on to clear 1,847 m² around Lefka-Aplici, and also conducted a technical survey of Derynea as part of confidence-building measures to open up new crossing points, as agreed by the leaders on 28 May 2015.

In 2019, eighteen mine sites (9 from north and 9 from south) were removed from UNMAS monitoring database and the areas are now considered mine free.



OTHER KEY UNITS

Military Observer Liaison Officers

UNFICYP currently has about 28 Military Observer Liaison Officers and Sector Civilian and Military Liaison Officers serving across all three sectors. Military Observer Liaison Officers are involved at all levels across the Force in daily negotiations and liaison functions with both opposing forces. The Military Observer Liaison Officers form the backbone of UNFICYP's engagements with the opposing forces, be it at regimental level in the sectors or at the highest levels in the Headquarters in the pursuance of conflict resolution, improved communications and confidence building.

Sector Civilian and Military Liaison Officers are part of the Sector Civil Affairs Teams, whose main role is support the Civil Affairs Section to provide humanitarian aid to communities, facilitate a return to normal conditions in the buffer zone, as far as possible, and support all bi-communal events.

The Mobile Force Reserve

Formed in 1997, the Mobile Force Reserve is UNFICYP's primary reserve and provides the Force Commander with a flexible and well-equipped force, able to respond to any situation that may arise in the buffer zone. The Mobile Force Reserve is staffed with 65 peacekeepers from the United Kingdom and is held at high-readiness and trained in a variety of tasks from public order to incident response. It is able to provide support to sectors and other elements of UNFICYP, including routine tasks such as patrolling. Based in the UN Protected Area, at the old Nicosia international airport, the Reserve conducts security patrols and provides a 24/7 ambulance capability.

UN Flight Unit



UN Flight Unit has three helicopters, with two in operation at all times. The unit is based at UNFICYP headquarters and is staffed with 35 personnel from the Argentinean Air Force as an integral part of the Argentinian contingent. Using Hughes 500 and Bell 212 helicopters, the unit conducts patrols along the buffer zone and provides logistical support for UNFICYP operations and emergency assistance such as medical evacuations, as required. In addition, with the latest incorporation of specialized personnel in the fight against fire, the unit can also provide a quick response in case of any fire emergency within the United Nations Protected Area or outside, if necessary.

UN Force Protection Unit

The Force Protection Unit comprises of two distinct elements: the Force Military Police Unit and the UN Protected Area Security Platoon. Commanded by the Force Provost Marshal, the Force is a multi-national and multi-functional unit, with representation from across the military component and an island-wide remit for all policing matters involving UNFICYP personnel and property. The Unit's primary responsibilities include enforcing the Head of Mission's force protection measures, conducting initial investigations into alleged cases of misconduct and criminal activity by UN personnel, to provide investigative assistance to incidents occurring within the buffer zone when UN personnel and property are involved, and supporting perimeter security of the UN Protected Area. The Force Protection Unit's principal tenet is to deter through proactive policing and security measures in order to preserve the operational effectiveness of the force and safeguard its personnel.



Force Engineers



Engineering support to UNFICYP is provided by the Engineering and Facilities Management under the structure of the Service Delivery Pillar and consists of the Engineering and Facilities Management Workshop, the Force Engineer Office, the Force Engineers HQ Platoon (provided by Slovakia), and engineering elements from each sector. External support agencies include the Public Works Department and the Electrical Mechanical Services provided by the Republic of Cyprus. Engineers are an essential part of UNFICYP's work, with the main role aimed to construct, maintain and repair facilities, including camps, observation posts and patrol bases under the UN responsibility. Furthermore, they provide maintenance of the patrol tracks and helicopter landing sites across the buffer zone.

* As of January 2025.



UNPOL



The United Nations Police (UNPOL) has been part of UNFICYP since 14 April 1964. The principal mandated task of UNPOL in UNFICYP is to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order within the buffer zone, but its mandate is not limited to the buffer zone. As derived from the mission’s mandate, UNPOL’s mandate aims “to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions”.

To perform its role in mandate delivery, UNPOL adopts a multi-dimensional strategy. It monitors and regulates civilian activities and helps in building trust between both communities by facilitating and supporting interaction between them. UNPOL also supports other components in their respective functions.

The UNPOL component is headed by UNFICYP’s Senior Police Advisor and is comprised of 69 police officers from 16 countries and one civilian support staff. UNPOL officers are based in UNFICYP Headquarters and at seven locations across the island, in or near, the buffer zone.

In accordance with the mandate, UNPOL has no executive powers. It must rely on cooperation from CYPOL (Cypriot Police) and the TCP (Turkish Cypriot Police) to fulfill the police role. UNPOL assists the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in the implementation of measures towards achieving a comprehensive peace agreement, through the facilitation of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal matters, established in 2008 to launch and promote the cooperation between the local law enforcement agencies.

UNPOL services include:

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- Support and maintenance of public order in the buffer zone.
- Support and monitoring of demonstrations in the buffer zone.
- Support resolution of disputes between the two communities in the buffer zone.
- Support access of civilians and regulation of civilian activities in the buffer zone.
- Assist police services on both sides upon request, with the investigation of criminal offences committed by non-UN personnel.
- Assist to establish mechanisms and enhance existing initiatives where necessary for increasing joint efforts on criminal matters.

Police Contributing Countries

Bangladesh	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5
Brazil	1
China	3
Finland	5
Hungary	1
Indonesia	1
Ireland	15
Italy	4
Jordan	7
Montenegro	5
Nepal	5
Russian Federation	6
Serbia	4
Slovakia	5
Total	68
(out of an authorised 69)	

Figures as of January 2025. Members of UNPOL are generally deployed for 12-month periods.



CIVIL AFFAIRS



The Civil Affairs Section of UNFICYP was established in 1998 to reflect the increasingly civilian nature of the issues confronting the mission. In addition to the lengthy and extensive contribution, since 2014, UNFICYP increased its ability to contribute to the facilitation of activities that promote trust between the two communities.

The mission convenes and gathers Cypriot civil society organizations with a clear understanding that the Civil Affairs contribution helps to build bridges for communication and to breakdown barriers of mistrust or misunderstanding.

A sample of activities that sustain interaction and collaboration across the island include support for dialogue between women or youth, innovation and entrepreneurship, environment and culture of peace trainings, and the preservation of common cultural heritage.

These actions are generated both internally by the mission as well as externally from ad hoc applications of intercommunal formal or informal groups, individuals or organizations, as well as through the Cypriot Technical Committees. Civil Affairs' leverage in local community liaison put it in a prime position to facilitate confidence, trust and peace- building across the island, both within and outside the buffer zone.

Where possible, UNFICYP facilitates civilian use of the buffer zone for peaceful purposes, such as agricultural work, maintenance of public utilities and communications, and the construction of residential buildings. This management of the buffer zone for civilian purposes is performed by Civilian Activity Integrated Offices at UNFICYP headquarters and in the three Sectors through a buffer zone permit system. Over the years, Civil Affairs has contributed to allow for normal civilian life and activity in areas of the buffer zone that are deemed unlikely to increase tensions between communities.

Today, the Section is an integrated component headed by a civilian Chief of Civil Affairs and comprising of 20 civilians, eight UNPOL and eight military members, out of which seven civilians, two UNPOL and two military members are based in Nicosia, at UNFICYP headquarters.

UNFICYP's civil affairs work also includes the delivery of humanitarian assistance; after the events of 1974 and the resulting displacement of large numbers of the population, UNFICYP was mandated to provide humanitarian assistance to the population across the island (Security Council resolutions 359 and 365 and General Assembly resolution 3212, all of 1974).

Function

Since 1998, the structure and functions of the Section have grown and evolved considerably into three main areas of activity: civil, humanitarian and community relations.

Civil

Day-to-day interlocutor with authorities on both sides on issues affecting civilian population.

Interface of the mission with local civilian authorities.

Manages civilian use of the buffer zone for agriculture and some housing and commercial uses.

Humanitarian

Provides assistance to Turkish Cypriots in south and Greek Cypriots and Maronites in north.

Delivers humanitarian supplies and ensures social welfare, educational, medical needs are being met.

Community relations

Encourages inter-communal dialogue for the purpose of confidence building and trust.

Promotes preservation of common cultural heritage.

Facilitates technical level cooperation.

Facilitates access to religious sites on both sides (upon formal request of organizers).



GENDER AFFAIRS



Women's participation in peace and security is crucial to achieving sustainable solutions to conflict, and to preventing new conflicts from emerging. In 2000, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; the landmark resolution recognizes the impact of conflict on women and calls on member states to ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspective in all areas of peace building.

Through our Gender Affairs Officer, and with guidance and support from the Gender Unit of the Departments of Peace Operations and Operational Support, UNFICYP facilitates discussions, activities and advocacy aimed at increasing women's participation in the Cyprus peace process and more broadly, supports efforts to boost gender equality and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in intercommunal trust building efforts and other areas of the Mission's work. The Gender Affairs Officer also supports efforts to ensure a gender responsive approach in all areas of the Mission's work, allowing the concerns, perspectives and experiences of men and women to inform the mission's approach in all of its work. Further, the Gender Affairs Office support the implementation of the UN's Gender Parity objectives, geared towards increasing the full and meaningful participation of women in Peace Operations and support an enabling environment that is influenced by women and men equality.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

UNFICYP is committed to ensuring the highest standards of conduct, professionalism and accountability of all its peacekeeping personnel deployed in Cyprus. UNFICYP personnel and UN contractual workers must treat the local population with respect and dignity at all times. Implicit in this is the requirement to protect civilians, in particular vulnerable groups such as women and children. Sexual exploitation and Sexual Abuse (SEA) are acts of unacceptable behavior and prohibited conduct for all UN personnel.

Where do I report sexual exploitation and abuse involving UN personnel?

Where do I report SEA involving UN personnel?

Any cases or suspicions of SEA involving UN personnel should be reported to:

Mail address: Conduct and Discipline and SEA Team, UNFICYP Headquarters, P.O. Box 25644, 1311 Nicosia, Cyprus

E-mail: unficy-cd@un.org OR unifil-cdu@un.org

Online: <https://oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing>

It is strictly prohibited for all UNFICYP personnel to engage in:

Any act of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, or any other form of sexually humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.

Any type of sexual activities with children (persons under the age of 18 years). Mistaken belief as to the age of a person is not a defence.

Use of children or adults to procure sexual services for others.

Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex with prostitutes or others.

Visit to brothels or an establishment where prostitution and sexual exploitation takes place.

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