

BLUE BERET

A year of hard work and hope

With the resumption of the Cyprus talks, demining activity, humanitarian support and manning the buffer zone, 2015 has been a busy year for UNFICYP.

The month of May saw the resumption of negotiations towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem, with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders holding several meetings over the course of the year under the auspices of the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus, Mr. Espen Barth Eide. The leaders remain positive about the progress on the negotiations and a number of senior Foreign Ministers visiting Cyprus, including Germany's Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Russia's Sergey Lavrov, the UK's Philip Hammond, the US's John Kerry and China's Wang Yi, pledged their countries' support to the process.

May also saw the arrival in Cyprus of a Cambodian demining team, deployed with UNCFCYP through intermission cooperation with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The team conducted demining operations in Mammari and Lefka, as well as a technical assessment of Deryneia; the team left the island in November.

In one of the most high-profile visits to the island this year, the United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, British actor Daniel Craig travelled to Cyprus in October to raise awareness about the demining work and needs on the island.

Gender was an important part of the mission's activities in 2015, the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, peace & Security and the 20th anniversary of the landmark Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. As part of Women's Film Week at the Goethe-Institut in Nicosia, UNFICYP organized an Open Discussion to talk about "Women Leading Change." Other gender-related activities over the year included an article in the Cyprus Mail on the importance of Women's Day by SRSB Bittenheim, a reception in March under the theme, What is Equality hosted by SASG Eide, and, as part of activities to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, a panel discussion in December on Sexual Violence against Women in Cyprus.

This year saw a number of donations to the Committee on Missing Persons, including from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, Ireland, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States of America. In a historic development, Turkey formally agreed in November to provide the CMP excavation teams with access to 30 suspected burial sites in military areas in the north of Cyprus.

Looking ahead, 2016 holds the promise of further progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable settlement to the Cyprus problem. UNFICYP remains as dedicated as ever to supporting the Cypriot people in their efforts to achieve peace and prosperity.



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