GENDER JUSTICE

Opening the “Peace Needs Women, and Women Need Justice” conference on gender justice in post-conflict situations earlier this month in New York, Deputy SG Louise Fréchette spoke of why ensuring justice for women is so vital to underpinning the rule of law and consolidating peace. “We know from our experience of modern conflict that women and girls suffer its impact increasingly and disproportionately. They are usually neither the initiators of conflict nor the wagers of war and peace, but they are specifically targeted, often as a way to humiliate the adversary and break the morale and resistance of whole societies. “Steps to end this culture of impunity had been taken at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Sierra Leone Special Court, and through the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” she said, “but we must build further on that work.” “Four years ago, the Security Council made clear in its landmark, 1325 resolution, that we must address the issue of women, peace and security on several fronts. We must strive to integrate women’s concerns more effectively in peace processes worldwide, and achieve their full, equal and effective participation in those processes.” Resolution 1325 also called for “special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse”. The Deputy SG pointed out how on the ground, the human rights sections of UN peacekeeping missions worldwide investigate the use of gender-based violence as a tool of war against women and girls. As the SG stated in his recent report on the rule of law and transitional justice in the first UN Missions, resolution 1325 is intended to promote gender justice, including justice sector institutions, civil society, donors and the UN. Clearly, much has been achieved, but there is still a long way to go if we are to promote successfully the concept that “peace needs women, and women need justice.”

Number of Peacekeeping Missions on the Rise – SG

The number and scope of UN peace operations are approaching what may become their highest levels ever, improving prospects for conflict resolution, but also stretching the capacities of the system, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported to the General Assembly on 7 September 2004. The increased demand for UN peace operations has increased in recent years, including those in complex and fragile environments, to address the specific needs of women. The number of women in UN peacekeeping operations is now higher than ever, and women are being increasingly deployed to peacekeeping missions.

The Deputy SG pointed out that women are often specifically targeted in armed conflict, often as a way to humiliate the adversary and break the morale and resistance of whole societies. He also noted that women and girls suffer the impact of armed conflict disproportionately, and that they are often specifically targeted. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that women and girls are able to participate equally in peace processes.

Commitments Prerequisite for Expansion

While welcoming the increased demand for UN missions as a signal of new opportunities for peace, the Secretary-General noted that commitments of political, financial, material and human resources are necessary, and that a clear exit strategy is vital for each operation. The United Nations is seeking support for peacekeeping from developing and developed countries alike, the Secretary-General stressed. While it may be possible to find troops, he noted that critical gaps in specialized military capabilities, peacebuilding and conflict resolution assistance, field medical facilities, and police and border security are sources of considerable concern. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring that women and girls are able to participate equally in peace processes.

The Secretary-General also pointed to the need for steady, ongoing work with local institutions to promote sustainable development and good governance, and to consolidate the rule of law. Respect for the rule of law brings together several key elements of the Millennium Declaration and is a core activity of the Organisation’s efforts in the field, especially in post-conflict situations”, the Secretary-General says in his report, an annual assessment of follow-up on the goals agreed at the September 2000 Millennium Summit in New York. UN activities in this area cited by the Secretary-General include tribunals to address war crimes, technical assistance to justice institutions and facilitation of national consultations on justice reform.
The Slovak President of the National Council, H.E. Pavol Hrušovský, and a 20-member delegation paid an official visit to Cyprus from 16-18 September 2004. During his stay, Mr. Hrušovský visited UNFICYP, inspecting a welcoming Guard of Honour on his arrival at Headquarters on 16 September 2004. He was greeted by Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz, Chief of Mission, who later escorted the Slovak delegation to the Old Nicosia Airport (above left).

The next day, Mr. Hrušovský paid a visit to the UNFICYP Slovak camp in Pyla (above).

Mess’s Mass Mug-Out

14 members of the International Mess were “mugged out” on 24 September, and Maj. Mick Bottomley a few days earlier. Although all look (reasonably) happy at the prospect of returning home, they were all sad to leave the UNFICYP family.

For many reasons of performance, professionalism and personality, they will not be easily forgotten!


Slovenians in Dherinia

Located in Dherinia is Sector 4’s 2nd Platoon, which controls the buffer zone area from Ayios Nikolaos Church (at the far east of the Sovereign Base Area) to the easternmost part of the island where UN OP-146, or “Baywatch” as it is known inside UNFICYP, is located. This area of responsibility includes the ghost town of Városha, where two of the Platoon’s five OPs are placed.

The headquarters of 2nd Platoon is at OP-142. At this OP, as well as “Baywatch”, Slovak soldiers stand guard 24 hours a day to observe the buffer zone. Baywatch is of particular concern in the summer, since it is the vantage point from which a watch is kept over the Maritime Security Line (MSL), the buffer zone extension line stretching three kilometres out into the sea.

Violations are a regular feature in the summer season when vessels frequently cross the MSL. The main offenders are fishing boats, always casting their nets in search of a “better catch”. The Slovak soldiers address the situation by using a megaphone or siren to warn the offenders to return to their side of the MSL.

Besides the regular Baywatch duties, soldiers at this post are part of the Force Reserve platoon which deals with demonstrations and any violations committed during the hunting season. With temperatures often reaching 45°C in the summer months, it is a real luxury for the soldiers to refresh and relax in the same enticing waters during off-duty hours.

Near the platoon is an UNCIVPOL station staffed by civilian police from Australia, India and Ireland. The Slovak soldiers have an excellent relationship with their colleagues here. Reports are filed to the police officers on issues linked to civilians who commit offences within the buffer zone. In addition, UNCIVPOL assists platoon members in escorting civilian offenders out of their area of control.

Living and working so close together, a good relationship has developed between the soldiers and police officers. Free time is often spent together, particularly in sporting activities. It is also an excellent opportunity for platoon members to improve on their command of the English language!

Most Slovaks join UNFICYP for the chance to travel and gain experience in a multi-national environment. We have certainly not been disappointed!
Three Medal Parades have taken place since the last issue. Hundreds of UNFICYP peacekeepers were decorated with the United Nations medal.

The first, Sector 4, took place in the spectacular surrounds of the ancient amphitheatre at Salamis, not far from Famagusta, on 27 August. As the sun set, Slovak and Hungarian peacekeepers formed up in the amphitheatre, ready to receive their decorations from the Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Hebert Figoli, CO Sector 4, Lt. Col. Martin Baëko, the Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary H.E. János Kisfalvi, the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic H.E. Dr. Ján Varšo, and other civilian and military authorities.

A warm reception for all medal recipients and guests followed at a local tavern, lasting well into the following morning.

A week later, on 2 September, it was Sector 1’s turn. Soldiers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay assembled at San Martin Camp for the presentation of the United Nations medal. UN Flight and contingent members from the MFR and FMPU were also honoured.

Chief of Mission, Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz, Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Hebert Figoli, the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, Mr. John Swift, the Cuban Ambassador to Cyprus, Mr. Pablo Rodríguez Vidal, the British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Phillip Barton, Military Attachés, as well as civilian and military UNFICYP and local authorities, families and friends, turned out for the occasion. Medals were presented by the Chief of Mission, the Force Commander and senior civilian and military officials.

Following speeches by Lt. Col. Gustavo Jorge Luis Motta, the Force Commander and the Chief of Mission, the band played a selection of military airs before the troops, followed by the band, marched off.

The reception that followed was notable, as ever, for that special Latin flair – a wonderful array of South American food, including a unique display of flag-cake confectionary and, of course, a stirring display of Argentinian dances.

On 16 September, Sector 2 put its best foot forward with a precision display at its medal parade at the Ledra Palace. Some 95 members of 40th Regiment Royal Artillery (The Lowland Gunners) were presented with their UN medals by the Chief of Mission, the Force Commander and the British High Commissioner, Mr. Lynn Parker. The Waterloo Band of the King’s Division provided the music for the parade and the ensuing Sunset Ceremony, whilst the Regiment’s own Pipes and Drums led the marching troops off the parade square. The bands combined to entertain the spectators with a moving rendition of “Highland Cathedral”.

After the parade, guests were invited to a reception hosted by the Commander of the British Contingent, Col. Ian Sinclair, in the Ledra grounds. A quartet from the Waterloo Band provided entertainment during the evening, and the reception culminated with more pipe music and a fireworks display.
Asinou Church, View from the south west

Asinou Church: the Donor fresco above the window arch of the nave's south entrance, where Magister Nikiforos is shown offering the church to Christ in the presence of His Mother and angels. The smugness of the latter is a notable feature of the French influence brought in by the Frankish period, which shows the fusion between Byzantine tradition and the Latin influences brought in by the Frankish conquerors who arrived in Cyprus in 1192 A.D.

On the right side of this door is Christ the almoner, while in the image to his right is the Virgin Mary the Merciful. A very rare painting appears above Christ the Almoner, showing a hunting scene of moufflons and dogs. Hunting was indeed a favourite pastime of the upper classes in both the Byzantine and Frankish periods, and the appearance of a dog in a Byzantine painting is quite unique. The south apse bears the large fresco of St. George.

The main theme of the narthex is the Last Judgement, where Christ Pantocrator (Master of All Things) dominates, surrounded by 10 medallions of half-length figures of the Martyrs. Separated by the Mother of God in the east and a six-winged seraphim in the west, also in medallions. On the four triangular dome supports are the full-length figures of the Apostles, in groups of three, ready to judge the 12 tribes of Israel.

The northern archway is covered with paintings of the Blessed depicted in four groups of three figures, the Holy, and the Martyrs. The southern archway of the narthex is covered by paintings of the Damned.

The workshops of the great master painters of the Pastures) are praised on every side of the bed. The miraculous fresco of the Raising of Lazarus, below an arch in a semi-dome, is considered one of the finest of its kind. The body of the Mother of God lies in bed, while an unemotional Christ stands holding the innocent soul of His Mother in the form of a swaddled babe, surrounded by angels in Byzantine art. St. John bends over the body, St. Paul weeps over the feet. St. Peter is opposite him, and the rest of the mourning Apostles are propped on either side of the bed.

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Peacekeeping Veterans Return to Scenes of the Past

Danes: 24/8

A group of Danish veterans who served with UNFICYP at various times in the period between 1974 and DANCON’s departure in 1993, visited Camp Roca on 24 August.

The former peacekeepers had been stationed at Xeros, Skouriotissa, and Nicosia (Ledra Palace).

The veterans, whose ages ranged from 45 to 80 years, were received along with their families by Maj. Rubén Rodríguez (Camp Commandant), Maj. Héctor Gamba, SCATT, the Argentinian military band, and personnel from the camp.

Maj. Gamba briefed the visitors about ARGCON’s activities, and then the group was given a camp tour by Lt. Santiago Lamas.

One of the main reasons for the visit was so that the veterans could place a wreath in memory of F.S. A.A. Blondell, a Danish veteran who died in the line of duty. Maj. Gamba briefed the visitors about the events that led to Blondell’s death. The ceremony then took place in front of it to honour their dead comrade. As the military band performed the “Last Post”, everyone present was deeply moved.

Later that same day, personnel from Alpha Company transported the wreath to the actual place of the accident located near UN OP 08.

Irish: 14/9

A group of Irish UN veterans arrived in Cyprus for a brief visit to UNFICYP. On 14 September, four past members of the Irish Defence Forces (two former UNFICYP members and two ONUC [United Nations Operation in the Congo] veterans), accompanied by their wives, paid a visit to HQ UNFICYP following a Green Line tour.

On arrival, they were greeted by UNFICYP Spokesman Brian Kelly and given a short briefing. Later they were hosted in the UNICIPOL club by COMIRCON, Lt. Col. Paul Quirke.

The visitors were from No. 1 Post, the Irish UN Veterans Association, which comprises not only military members but also civilian staff who have served in UN missions. The leader of the group was Mr. Michael Canning.

Swedes: 1/9

On the morning of 1 September, 21 Swedish veterans, accompanied by members of their family, arrived in Camp Štefánik in Famagusta.

Lt. Col. Martin Baekko welcomed the group to the Officers’ Mess, and then Maj. Ladislav Koblós, Senior Operations Officer Sector 4, gave them a briefing on role of the present Sector.

A gift was then presented by the group to Sector 4 of a Swedish flag as a reminder of the days when SWEDCON was part of UNFICYP.

The Adjutant, Maj. František Olšák, then escorted the group on a tour of the camp where the visitors took many photographs to remind them of their sentimental journey into the past.

Hungarians Win the Cup!

The UNFICYP Driving Competition, held on 12 August, provided a good opportunity for UNFICYP soldiers to demonstrate their driving skills along the line and in the HQ area. On this occasion, a Hungarian team made a concerted effort and won the cup for a year.

W3 János Mitykó and SSGt. Zoltán Nagy were a good choice to represent the Hungarians. Of the 12 stands in the competition, they won first place on four, finishing in second place on another four.

Both are attached to 1 Coy’s Transport Section. János and Zoltán come from different brigades in Hungary and had never met before their arrival in Cyprus. However, they have both participated several times in similar events back home, either as organiser or competitor.

Despite their extensive experience, however, the terrain caused some unexpected difficulties. Cross-country driving was their favourite stand, where a combination of common sense, patience and gravity proved more useful than speed. They particularly enjoyed the “fault-finding” test, especially since they were faultless. Congratulations and good luck to the new Hungarian troops – hopefully they will find a successor team capable of retaining the cup for the Contingent.

Acellent Driving!

WO1 Ramon Orlando Ledesma

Nobdy can argue about the simple fact that men and women are different. In the old times, a woman’s role was primarily associated with family and motherhood.

Not today, when women are as likely to be fully engaged in politics, business, academia, diplomacy, and yes, the military.

For example, one task previously unheard of for a woman, but a crucial one in Sector 1, is driving the water truck along the dangerous hills located in the west side of the buffer zone.

This difficult task has been assigned to Axel Flavia Núñez Olivieri, a Corporal in the Argentinian Army. This able and fearless driver handles her 10,000 litre capacity truck with skilled ease, surprising not only UN OP personnel but also OPFOR guards, farmers and other UN personnel she encounters.

“Here comes the 837” is a shout often heard at the OPs, signalling time for a small reception offering tea, juice, sandwiches and fruit salad (prepared just the way she likes it!!!). This is usually followed by a display of family pictures, jokes and some good-natured teasing! In short, everyone wants to show Axel their gratitude in every way possible! She is undoubtedly one person “they look forward to seeing” in the buffer zone.

Once she returns home, she will resume her “usual” duties, as a tank driver!!

Checking for mines - the hard way!
Visits to UNFICYP

During the month, UNFICYP had the pleasure of hosting several visitors to the mission.

**30 August – Maj. Gen. Graeme Lamb, CMG DSO OBE, General Officer Commanding, 3rd (UK) Division**

**3 September – Mr. Yuri V. Fedotov (left), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation with the CM (right) and COS (right)**

**8 September – Gen. Roland Ertl, Chief of Defence Staff of the Austrian Armed Forces**

**15 September – Brig. C. Chapman, Commander 19th Mechanised Brigade, UK**

**20 September – Maj. Gen. Heikki Holma, Chief of the International Division of the Finnish Defence Staff**

**24 September – Maj. Gen. Peter Pearson CBE, Commander British Forces Cyprus with the CM (left) and COS (right)**

**27 September – Maj. Gen. Jorge Alberto Chevallier, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Argentina**

**29 September – H.E. Mr. Hamzah Hanzah, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic**

Far from Home

**Father:** Hello! My dear son, how are you?

**Son:** Where are you Daddy? I miss you very much. Mamma says that you have gone very far away to a foreign land.

**Father:** Yes, my son, I am very far away.

**Son:** Why don’t you come home?

**Father:** I will come my son, I love you and I will come. 

**Son:** Ankít’s (friend) father also went very far away. His Mummy told him that he will not come back again.

**Father:** But, I will come back, I promise.

**Son:** I know that those who go so far away, never come back, will you come back?

**Father (weeping):** Yes, my dear I will come back.

**Son:** Ankít told me that his father has become a star in the sky. Have you become a star?

**Father:** No, my son I am still your father. I have not become a star.

**Son (crying):** If you have become a star in the sky, can you make me also a tiny star and keep near you. I love you Daddy and I want to be near you.

**Father:** I will come back, I will.

**Son:** Every time you talk on the phone and say that you will come back soon, but you don’t come back. You said you will come back on the 25th but you did not come. I know those who die never come back.

**Father:** I am very much alive my son and I will come back (weeping).

**Son:** Daddy, Mummy always says that if you study hard and come first in the class, your daddy will come back with lots of toys and gifts. Daddy, I do not watch TV, I have stopped playing video-games as well. I want to come first in the class. I am doing all my homework every day on my own. Will you come back now?

**Father:** Yes, my son I will come back. If you study hard you will become a great and successful man.

**Son:** Mummy also says the same every time. Study hard. But if I become a big and successful man, I will also have to go very, very far away. But Dad I do not want to go far away from you.

**Father:** I will explain to you everything when I come back after finishing my duty (mission) here.

**Son:** Daddy, when you had a duty here in Bhopal, why did you go very far away?

**Father:** So that I can save some more money for you and bring more toys, good clothes and everything you need.

**Son:** But I need you, I do not need toys, a new bike, clothes and comic books. I will never ask for candies, ice-cream and chocolates. Bhaje (elder brother) says that he will also not ask for anything. Will you please come back now?

**Father (weeping):** I am always with you my son, near whenever you remember me, I will be near you. 

**Son:** Daddy, Every Sunday we go to the Gurudwara (sikh temple) and Mummy always asks us to close our eyes and pray to God so that you come back home safe and healthy. Mamma says that God hears our prayers. Daddy, when he can hear our prayers, then you must have heard my “Hello!” which I said in between the prayers. Did you hear that?

**Father:** I hear your sweet Hello.

**Son:** Yes, my son I heard your sweet Hello.

**Father:** Bye, Daddy. Now I have to go because my friends have come to play. Bye-bye.

**Son:** (This is a real conversation between a father and his six-year-old son)

Swatinder Singh Lally
Inspector & Contingent Commander

HUNGARIAN CHEFS ARE IN Demand!

hungarian parties are well-known for their traditional food. Many of you, I hope, will have had the opportunity to sample this fare at one of our parties. The most important ingredient for a good meal is a good chef. Huncon is very proud of its chef, MSgt. Gábor Turcsik, whose culinary skills are outstanding. He was an essential ingredient at all our parties, tirelessly working in the background. He will be sorely missed, and not only at mealtime.

“Like most people, I enjoy making others happy. I do this through my cooking. It is a pleasure for me to do it for my mates.” Not only did he cook for us, but he was also a regular in the Hungarian Ambassador’s kitchen. Once the Ambassador tasted his cooking, he didn’t have much choice.

Gábor began his career as a civilian after finishing technical school, working in various restaurants as a sous-chef. During that time he acquired solid experience while sharpening his seasoning skills, that vital ingredient in the making of any good chef.

Besides cooking, Gábor is an exercise enthusiast especially when it comes to running, which he does well enough to command our respect. His tour went by quickly, and he is anxiously awaited at the 5th “Alba Regia” Command Support Battalion in Székesfehérvár. Like all good chefs, he is much in demand!
Karpas School Reopens

On 13 September, the headmaster’s bell chimed at the Rizokarpaso Greek Cypriot secondary school marking the beginning of the term – after a long gap of 29 years. The secondary school would enable children from the primary school to continue their study in Rizokarpaso itself. In fact, a primary school pupil moved up and 11 others returned from the south to resume secondary schooling at their native village.

Some 15 teachers would teach pupils at the seventh, eighth and ninth grades with subjects ranging from physics to music. Only a handful would take residence. Others would commute from the south since they would be teaching only one or two days in a week. UNFICYP’s good offices played a vital role in enabling the school. CCAO Kannan noted on the opening day that “UNFICYP was happy that it was of some assistance”.

Audley and Ali Put Their Weight Behind UN

Heavyweight boxer Audley Harrison compared preparing for a fight to serving on the front line during his recent visit to the UN in Nicosia.

The 32-year-old, who shot to fame four years ago after winning Britain’s first Olympic gold in boxing for 32 years, was speaking to a packed crowd during his Combined Services Entertainment (CSE) trip to meet the soldiers.

A-Force, as he is known in boxing circles, told eager fans, that although he chooses to fight, he still needs some of the qualities that make the Armed Forces what they are.

He said: “You guys do a great job and it really is a privilege to be here and meet you all and when I am preparing for a big match-up, I have to cope with similar feelings to those you experience when you are on front line.”

It was not too high for the season and the light breeze on the Venetian Walls. The temperature, an acceptable 28°C, was not too high for the season and the light breeze on the island. The temperature, an acceptable 28°C, was not too high for the season and the light breeze on the island.

Helicopter Training

In keeping with their SOP training duties, UN Flight staff ran familiarization classes for all UNFICYP personnel in helicopter safety procedures during the months of June and July.

Running the courses were 1/Lt Maximilian Ravera, WOI José Arroyo, S/Sgt. Diego Gérez, Sgt. Pablo Miño and Sgt. Claudio Dávila.

The objective was to ensure that UNFICYP personnel are fully familiar with safety aspects of helicopter operations, especially with regard to boarding and exiting the aircraft and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC-CASEVAC) procedures.

Classes consisted of basic safety rules and procedures for helicopter air operations, including knowledge about safe distance, helicrash training, passenger training, safety points, dangers areas of the helicopters, conduct of passengers during the flight, emergency procedures and basic marshalling.

UN Flight staff will continue its familiarization classes for all personnel involved in helicopter air operations.

A Condor’s Journey

As a member of the Argentinian Task Force 23, and finding himself so close to the Troodos mountains, WOI Oscar Alberto Grandolfo started commenting: “I’ll come and visit you soon”. None of his comrades took him seriously, even though he was an experienced mountaineer.

Then one night while chatting with them, he made the announceement “I am going”. At the time everyone offered to join him – 16 in total – even though none of them believed he was being serious.

On 10 July at 04.00 hours, Oscar was ready to set off on his expedition. This experienced mountaineer and skier was determined to walk to Mount Olympus (1,953 metres) and back to Camp San Martin. The day and time had arrived, but none of his comrades appeared.

He waited for 30 minutes and then, as silently as the dawn, he began his journey alone. His “odyssey” went on for 13 hours, walking 68 km as temperatures rose, in some places up to 43°C.

He felt he was back home in his natural environment, breathing in the mountain air, watching the birds fly, listening to the ringing of the church bells from the nearby villages.

He completed the entire trek! He finally fulfilled his dream!