

BLUE BERET

Special Edition

Spring 2020



Preventing COVID-19

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

PLUS Humanitarian Assistance

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29 May International Day of UN Peacekeepers



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ZERO TOLERANCE
FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE



UNFICYP - SERVING WITH PRIDE

All UNFICYP personnel, volunteers and contractual workers must respect their obligations as set out under the Staff Rules and Regulations, comply with local laws and treat the local population with respect and dignity at all times.

To report misconduct/abuse:

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EDITOR'S NOTE

These are extraordinary times for Cyprus, the region and indeed across the world. We are facing a global health crisis unlike anything we have seen before. The virus is a threat to all humanity regardless of nationality, ethnicity or faith. Working together to defeat the common threat of the Corona virus pandemic has never been more important.

The role of UNFICYP in facilitating close cooperation and coordination between the sides is vital and in this issue of Blue Beret we highlight some of the many ways the mission is adapting to ensure our important work in and around the buffer zone continues.

On the 29th May we look forward to the International Day of UN Peacekeepers - A

day to pay tribute to our uniformed and civilian personnel. As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, this year's theme is "Women in Peacekeeping: A Key To Peace".

Throughout the month of May, we are highlighting the invaluable contributions of women in peacekeeping, particularly in the current COVID19 context.

Finally we include an interview with the Head of Mission, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Cyprus as well as an exciting new initiative we hope to launch soon on environmental peacebuilding with young Cypriot activists from across the island.

BLUE BERET
Spring 2020

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ON THE COVER



We call on those leading the COVID-19 response to:

- ✓ Embed gender dimensions within response plans to ensure that gender perspectives are properly addressed.
- ✓ Provide priority support to women on the frontlines of the response.
- ✓ Ensure an equal voice for women in decision-making in the response.
- ✓ Build gender expertise into response teams.
- ✓ Protect essential health services for women and girls.
- ✓ Prioritize services for prevention and response to gender-based violence in

"Being a Carabinieri I am accustomed to having to adapt quickly to new challenges such as the current COVID-19 emergency. Preventing the spread of the virus to safeguard the communities we serve is my most important priority. We want to be part of the solution not the problem." (Carabinieri Corps Pamela Caracciolo UNPOL Dherynia Station)

Disease outbreaks affect women and men differently, and pandemics make existing inequalities for women and girls and discrimination of other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and those in extreme poverty, worse. This needs to be considered, given the different impacts surrounding detection and access to treatment for women and men. (UNFPA)

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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SRSG Elizabeth Spehar Held UNFICYP's First Virtual Town Hall Meeting

On 15 April 2020 Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP Mission, Elizabeth Spehar held UNFICYP's first Virtual Town Hall meeting with peacekeepers in Cyprus. During the meeting the head of mission briefed staff on the latest global and local developments on the COVID-19 virus. While conveying the importance of maintaining social distancing, the SRSG thanked staff for successfully

adapting to the new working conditions all staff members are facing during this time.

Drawing attention to staff telecommuting, the SRSG stressed that she was pleased to see that over one hundred Peacekeepers military, police and civilian were able to connect to the town hall via Teams. And conveyed her desire to continue to connect with mission staff through virtual Town Hall meetings.



Senior Adviser Aderemi Adekoya

Chief of Staff Colonel Neil Wright





Behind the Scenes : IT Support

Never has the importance of technology been more critical than it is now, during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFICYP's Field Technology Section (FTS) having been working overtime to ensure the mission's work in Cyprus continues uninterrupted during these challenging times. "We had to adapt swiftly as most of our civilian staff and some military and UNPOL are now telecommuting from home or alternate locations away from the office"

"In UN peace operations I have come to expect the unexpected." said David Wilkins, Chief of Field Technology, " Thankfully we have robust contingency plans in place and were able to respond quickly and fully

leverage Cloud based IT systems (Office365) to ensure our peacekeepers could continue their mandated tasks inside the buffer zone and with both sides on the island. I'm proud of the way our personnel have stepped up to meet the challenges we are facing and have adapted almost seamlessly to the new mobile office environment and are able to continue their daily work.

"We have also stepped up measures to prevent potential cyber security threats and continue monitoring our IT and telecommunications systems remotely with virtually no person to person contact needed. Our business continuity plans are also being kept closely under review as the situation evolves."

By David Wilkins





**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

Mother Reunited With Her Baby

Looking for some good news? An UNPOL officer from India helps reunite a Turkish Cypriot mother with her prematurely born baby who remained in a hospital in the south while she had to return to the north of the island after giving birth. Both mother and baby are doing well.



UNFICYP's Humanitarian Assistance Continues

In close coordination with local authorities, Civil Affairs staff and UNPOL Officers deliver several vital humanitarian supplies to local communities.





**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

Peacekeepers at Work in the Buffer Zone

UNFICYP Engineers from Slovakia repairing a bridge in the buffer zone, ensuring UN patrols continue during these challenging times.





Interview with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar



Blue Beret: 2020 is a special year for the UN as it's the 20th anniversary of the landmark UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Could you share your views on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Cyprus?

Elizabeth Spehar: In my years here, I have been privileged to meet and get to know a lot of dynamic Cypriot women activists, many of whom continue to fight for gender rights and for their voices to be heard when it comes to the peace process. Some of them have been at this for decades, and yet, we still have many outstanding challenges. Women's full and meaningful participation in the peace process is still limited and there has been little scope thus far to include women's views and concerns regarding the substance of the issues being negotiated - - that is, to have a gender perspective in the talks.

To advance on both fronts and to pay tribute to these women's commitment, in 2020, we are using the platforms we have as the UN in Cyprus to amplify their concerns, their issues and their opinions. Our aim is to go beyond Nicosia, the capital city, and speak to as many women as we can across the island - women from more rural backgrounds, young women, older women living in small villages. Operationally speaking, our Civil Affairs colleagues and Gender Adviser will continue their efforts to bring together women with common interests and achievements across the divide. For too long, women's voices have not been part of political negotiations - this has to end. Women must have an ample seat at the table and a gender lens must be applied to all chapters of the talks; I am hopeful,

in the event of a resumption of talks, that both sides will action this more fully than ever before.

Blue Beret: You are one of the few women globally to lead a peacekeeping mission. Our readers would appreciate a bird's-eye view of your career graph leading to this point and beyond.

Elizabeth Spehar: Well, in terms of UNFICYP, I'm pleased to note that I am not the first woman to head this particular Mission! I believe that UNFICYP has a lot to be proud of, and its track record of senior female leadership is certainly one area that we can all cheer about. But, yes, there are not that many female heads of peacekeeping missions at the moment and I hope that the tide will soon turn on the matter. I'm often asked this question and, in my experience working with multilateral organizations throughout my career, I've realized that sound political decisions are always those that take into account the needs and aspirations of a society as a whole.

Women constitute at least 50 per cent of any society across the world - how can anyone hope to run an effective government or an effective organization if your representatives or your employees do not reflect this reality? In terms of peace and security, keeping the peace has always been one of the hardest jobs. Women have very specific concerns when it comes to peace and security issues. Therefore, when I was appointed to lead this peacekeeping mission, I knew that, being a woman, a long-standing UN official, a mother, I could bring fresh perspectives to many of our challenges and make a specific, unique difference on the ground. As I mentioned at the

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outset, UNFICYP should be proud of its track record: among other accomplishments, it has some of the highest numbers of women amongst its uniformed and civilian personnel. I firmly believe this makes us able to harness an almost-complete talent pool to be able to do a demanding job to the fullest, every single day. Our Force Commander, Major-General Cheryl Pearce, and our former as well incoming Senior Police Adviser, are all women – I find it invigorating to work with them.

As for a bird's eye view of my career – I think I still have a few good years left in me to fight the good fight (laughs) so I'm going to park this for future conversations. Right now, I'm focused on the important task we all have at hand to work towards a unified, peaceful island for all Cypriots.

Blue Beret: In many of your speeches, you talk about youth and their incredible power to be change agents, galvanizing political progress. Are there any upcoming projects at UNFICYP that aim to harness this potential?

Elizabeth Spehar: In 2018, when the Youth 2030 Agenda was launched by our colleagues in New York, I used our UN Day event at Ledra Palace Hotel to showcase two young Cypriots who spoke about their wish for a peaceful, unified Cyprus and their own commitment to make it happen. It signaled the beginning of an ongoing tradition here at UNFICYP; we believe as a mission, and I believe as a leader, that there can be no shared future without the active engagement, as of now, of young Cypriots. There is power in youth. To harness this potential, this year we aim to select 20 Youth Champions for Peace and the Environment (10 from the Greek Cypriot community and 10 from the Turkish Cypriot community) to form a vibrant network of young activists who will collaborate on environmental campaigns across the divide and contribute to building trust from the bottom up. It's a project that's very dear to my heart and I'm excited to see it slowly come to fruition.

Blue Beret: As a senior leader in UN peace operations, what are some of the key challenges, in your opinion, that every mission faces on the ground?

Elizabeth Spehar: Peace is a collective effort. For sustainable peace to be arrived at there is a need for a number of elements to come together but, above all, there must be the requisite political will. In peace negotiations and/or in peacekeeping contexts, the UN can and often does have a critical role to play but it is never the primary peacemaker. Peace, a sustainable peace, can only be made and upheld by leaders and their people. This, in my considered opinion, is a universal challenge faced by peacekeeping missions across the world: we cannot solve alone the conflict that we have been called upon to address; we can only contribute to the very best of our abilities. I think this is an important fact to underscore, including here in Cyprus, where the ongoing presence of our Blue Berets at times have led people to assume that we have failed because the island is still divided, there is still no peace deal between the two sides. It is for the leaders of both communities here in Cyprus to

make the peace; as the UN we stand ready to assist them in every way possible.

Blue Beret: Do you have a message you'd like to share with Cypriots across the island?

Elizabeth Spehar: Don't give up – that's my message to all Cypriots. There is still hope for enduring peace here. Take the time as individuals to define what peace means to you, what Cyprus means to you. Don't think of peace as something that will be handed to you by your leaders or by external actors. You have an individual responsibility to work toward it, through building trust, building relationships across the divide but also by holding your leadership accountable. You also have the right to hold us accountable, as contributors to this process of seeking and building peace. Above all, help each other to collaborate, cooperate and contribute to the country you want to build. It cannot happen without you. My message, I guess, is that with the power to effect change that every Cypriot has within them, comes also the responsibility to work towards leaving a better Cyprus for future generations. The UN will stand by Cyprus every step of the way.



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MCPL BONDAZ AMELIA DEL ROCIO - Argentina

am part of the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR). The MFR provides support wherever necessary to other military elements of UNFICYP. The MFR is also responsible for the security of the United Nations Protected Area (UNPA) at the Old Nicosia International Airport, where UNFICYP Headquarters are situated.



2ND LT ANIKO PETRO - Hungary

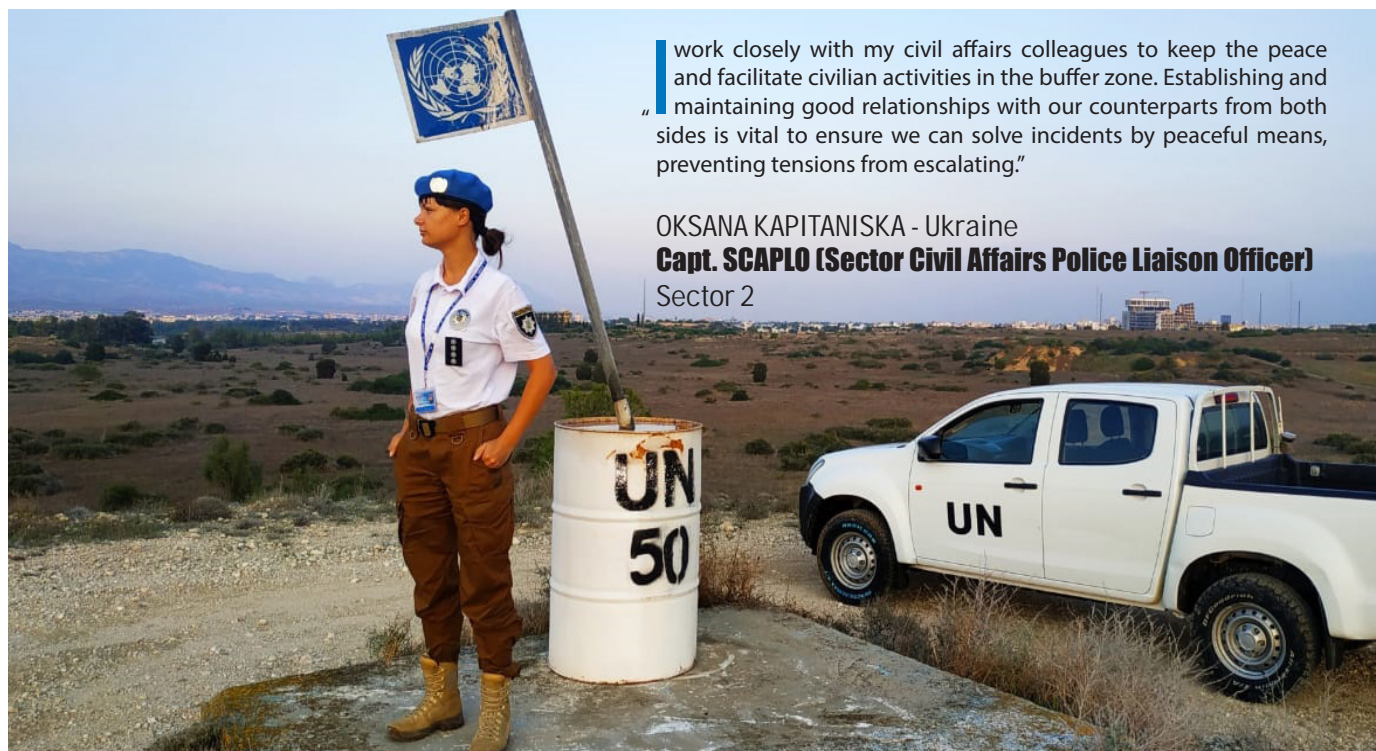
Force Hygiene Officer (FHO) is responsible for coordinating preventive health and field hygiene measures including inspections of all facilities in the UNPA and across the buffer zone. I conduct trainings for all military personnel and new rotations and briefs them on the health and environmental risks while serving in Cyprus; I work closely with the Force Medical Officer providing professional advice on COVID-19 hygiene requirements (disinfection, designation of isolation facilities, hygiene plan).



WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING

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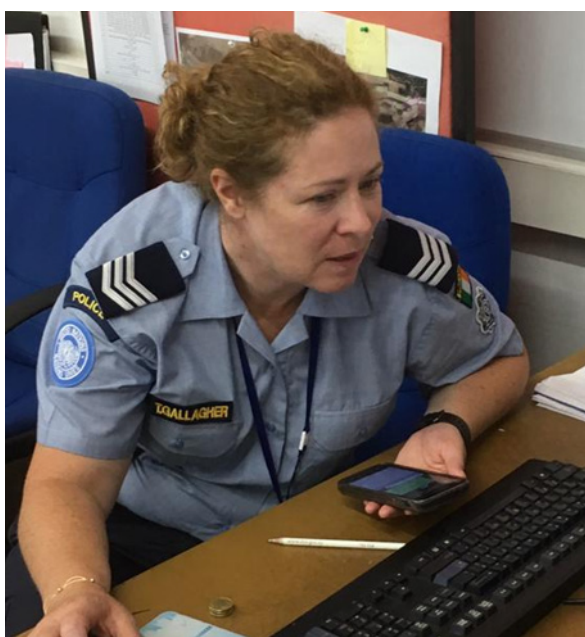
work closely with my civil affairs colleagues to keep the peace and facilitate civilian activities in the buffer zone. Establishing and maintaining good relationships with our counterparts from both sides is vital to ensure we can solve incidents by peaceful means, preventing tensions from escalating.”

OKSANA KAPITANISKA - Ukraine
Capt. SCAPLO (Sector Civil Affairs Police Liaison Officer)
Sector 2

TRACY GALLAGHER - Ireland

Sergeant, Staff Officer Planning and JMAC focal point.

My role involves providing critical insight from a police perspective on incidents occurring in the buffer zone. I am the Police focal point for the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and I am trained in CPAS, an analytical tool used by the UNFICYP mission to guide the leadership in making collaborative and informed decisions.





**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



SOCIAL DISTANCING



UNFICYP has stepped up safety measures against the Coronavirus. Strict social distancing, hygiene and sanitation measures are in place for all peacekeepers to stop the potential spread of the virus.



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

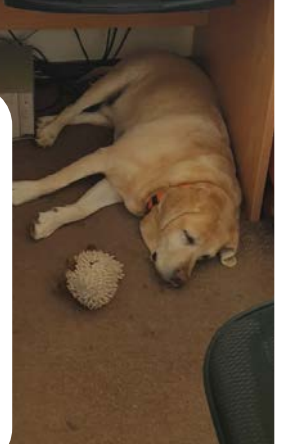
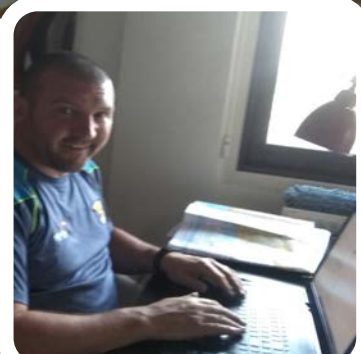


HYGIENE





TELECOMMUTTING





**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



TELECONFERENCE

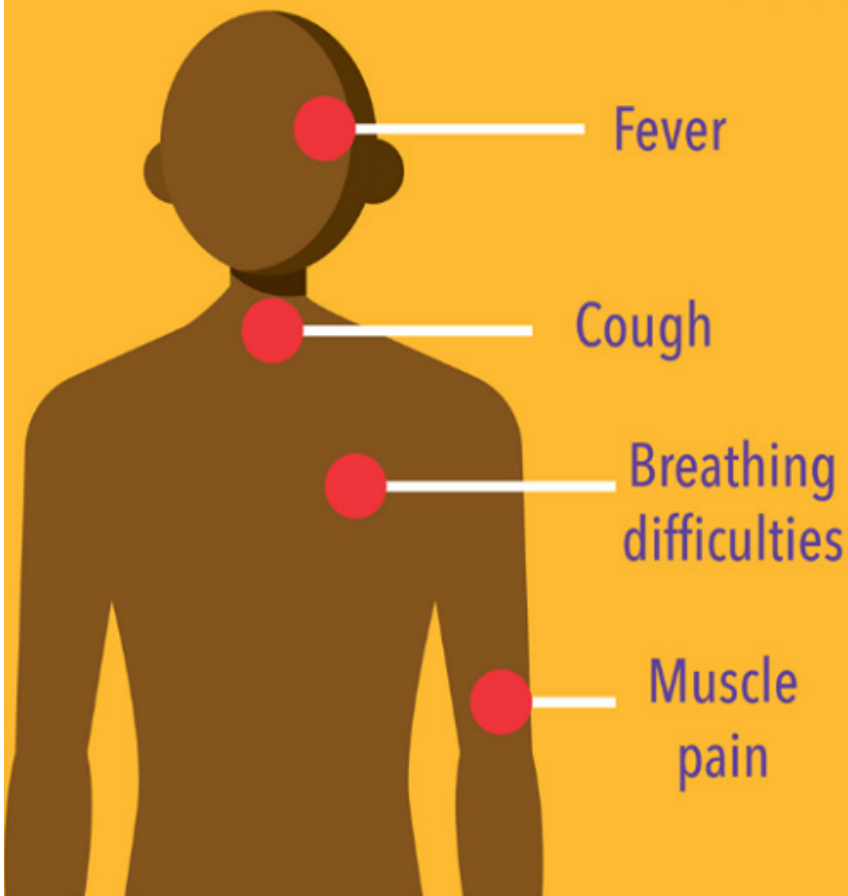




SYMPTOMS

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

Source: WHO, 2020





COVID-19 RESPONSE

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

FACT:

Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



#Coronavirus #COVID19

WOMEN RISE FOR ALL



COVID-19
RESPONSE

“Ensuring women leaders are at the forefront of planning healthcare, economic and humanitarian responses to the health crisis is vital. A recovery from the #COVID19 crisis must not roll back progress on women’s rights. Let’s work together to build a better future for all.”

Elizabeth Spehar

Head of UNFICYP
and Special Representative
of the Secretary-General



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COVID-19
RESPONSE
