

The Blue Beret

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ANZAC Day
Lest we forget



THE BLUE BERET

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Editorial

The Security Council at the end of May renewed UNFICYP's mandate until the end of 2009. The Council, through resolution S/2009/276, welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to keep UNFICYP, along with all peacekeeping operations, under close review and noted the importance of contingency planning in relation to the settlement of the Cyprus problem, including recommendations as appropriate for further adjustments to UNFICYP's mandate, force levels and concept of operations, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties. The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on implementation of resolution 276, including on contingency planning in relation to the settlement, by 1 December 2009 and to keep it updated on events as necessary.

The Council's text clearly reflects a sentiment in the international community that the current negotiations present a real opportunity to finally settle the Cyprus problem. But with all the attention focused on the peace talks, it is easy to overlook the important work the UN is doing everyday on the ground in Cyprus. The Secretary-General's report, reproduced in this issue of **The Blue Beret**, details all of UNFICYP's important activities, from facilitating civilian activities in the buffer zone to assisting the work of bodies like the Committee on Missing Persons and the Mine Action Centre. The breadth and length of experience of the mission in Cyprus, now in its forty-fifth year, puts it in good stead to assist in the event of a settlement in accordance with the wishes of the parties.

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Front Cover: ANZAC Day - Lest we forget

Back Cover: Women of UNFICYP

Cyprus parties come together in Bratislava

Leaders and representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties gathered in Bratislava, Slovakia from 14 to 17 May 2009 to mark the 20th anniversary of their peace dialogue.

Forty leaders and representatives of all participating parties from both communities attended the Bratislava meeting, which aimed at encouraging and giving impetus to the ongoing peace process.

"Another objective of the gathering was to give international recognition and pay tribute to the leaders of the political parties for their dedication, strong will and endurance in overcoming many differences and difficulties through dialogue", said Slovakia's Ambassador to Cyprus, Anna Turenicova, who hosts the regular meetings of the peace dialogue in Nicosia.

Community leaders Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat sent video messages to the commemorative event, praising the meetings for contributing decisively to the development of friendly relations between the participating parties.

At the commemoration in the Slovakian capital, organized on the initiative of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Cyprus, the political party leaders and representatives adopted the Bratislava Joint Communiqué, in which they emphasized their full support for the ongoing peace talks. Both sides reiterated their faith in the reunification of Cyprus and the common future of all Cypriots in peace and stability.

UNFICYP was represented at the Bratislava meeting by its Force Commander, Admiral Mario Sanchez Debernardi. His presence underlined the close cooperation between the framework of the bi-communal dialogue and the UN Mission in Cyprus.

The presence of representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Czech Presidency at the meeting underlined the importance the European Union attaches to the Cyprus issue and particularly to the current peace negotiations.

The Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mechtild Rothe, as well as members of the high-level contact group Karin Resetarits and David Hammerstein,

attended the meeting and conveyed their appreciation for the commitment of the political party leaders to continue working for a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The history of the bi-communal dialogue goes back to spring 1989 when the then Czechoslovak Ambassador to Cyprus Dr. Emil Keblusek suggested calling the leaders of the political parties from both communities together to discuss the possible outcomes of the long lasting Cyprus problem. The five Greek Cypriot and three Turkish Cypriot leaders invited to a first meeting in Prague on 16 May 1989 found the discussion useful and constructive. They established the framework of the bi-communal dialogue, which exists under the auspices of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Nicosia for 20 years.

The Slovak Embassy bi-communal forum is the only communication channel of its kind between the leaders and representatives of the political parties from both communities. It represents a unique opportunity for the participants to express their opinions on particular issues, but also to learn first-hand the reactions and positions of the other parties. Fourteen political parties from both communities — eight Greek Cypriot and six Turkish Cypriot parties — have been involved in the bi-communal meetings in the Ledra Palace for the last two decades.

Recently, the Forum has developed and implemented a number of confidence-building measures, including visits to places of worship of both communities, giving visible support to the opening of Ledra Street and organizing bi-communal cultural events for young people. The Forum's activities are organised by the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Cyprus, many of them in cooperation with UNFICYP.

"The fact that political party leaders from two communities are able to sit around one table and to listen to each other is considered by all to be an essential foundation for dialogue and a tangible demonstration of their willingness to seek a solution of their country's national issue", said Ambassador Turenicova.

"For Slovak diplomacy it is especially the gratitude and positive reception of all common activities by the Cypriot leaders and Cypriot people which prove the legitimacy and usefulness of the efforts of Slovak Ambassadors serving as the facilitators and organizers of the Peace Dialogue", Ambassador Turenicova said. "In this way, Slovakia wishes to contribute to a process, which will bring a mutual satisfying outcome and will lead to a future in which all Cypriots may live in peace and harmony".

The statement by the participants in the first meeting 20 years ago that the bi-communal dialogue can be considered an important instrument in building bridges of confidence and goodwill between the two communities, is still valid.





Report of the Secretary-General on the Cyprus operation in 2009

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 24 November 2008 to 10 May 2009 and brings up to date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1847 (2008). The report also elaborates on the activities of my Special Adviser on Cyprus in the context of my good offices mission.

2. As at 30 April, the strength of the military component stood at 859, including all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (see annex).

II. Good offices mission and other developments

3. At the time of my previous report (S/2008/744), the Greek Cypriot leader, Demetris Christofias, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, had begun full-fledged negotiations under United Nations auspices aimed at the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. From the formal launch of the process on 3 September to late November, the leaders met on nine occasions to discuss the governance and power-sharing arrangements of a future united Cyprus. Since then, there have been a number of important developments.

4. On 12 December, the Security Council adopted resolution 1847 (2008) extending the mandate of UNFICYP. The resolution urged the parties to fully exploit the opportunity of the negotiations, including by intensifying the momentum of the talks, preserving the current atmosphere of trust and goodwill and engaging in the process in a constructive and open manner. In resolution 1847 (2008), the Council also welcomed the appointment in July 2008 of Alexander Downer as my Special Adviser on Cyprus, whose mandate is to assist the parties in the conduct of full-fledged negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

5. Since then, the leaders have held 18 additional meetings, bringing the total number of meetings since 3 September to 27. Discussions to date have revolved around governance and power-sharing issues, property issues, European Union matters and, partially, economic matters. Topics remaining to be addressed in the first reading or review of negotiation issues relate to security and guarantees and territory. All of these meetings have taken place in the presence of either my Special Adviser Downer, or my Special Representative Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, or both.

6. While the leaders have maintained a steady pace of almost one meeting per week, their efforts have also been supported by a gradually increasing number of preparatory meetings between their respective representatives, George Iacovou (Greek Cypriot) and Ozdil Nami (Turkish Cypriot), as well as technical meetings at the expert level. In early May, the leaders publicly committed, through my Special Representative, to intensifying their efforts further, not least through additional meetings at the level of their representatives.

7. On 22 December, the leaders issued a joint statement in which they reaffirmed their strong commitment and resolve to finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. In their statement, the leaders also recognized that, although some progress had been made, it had been insufficient. The two leaders thanked the United Nations for its contribution.

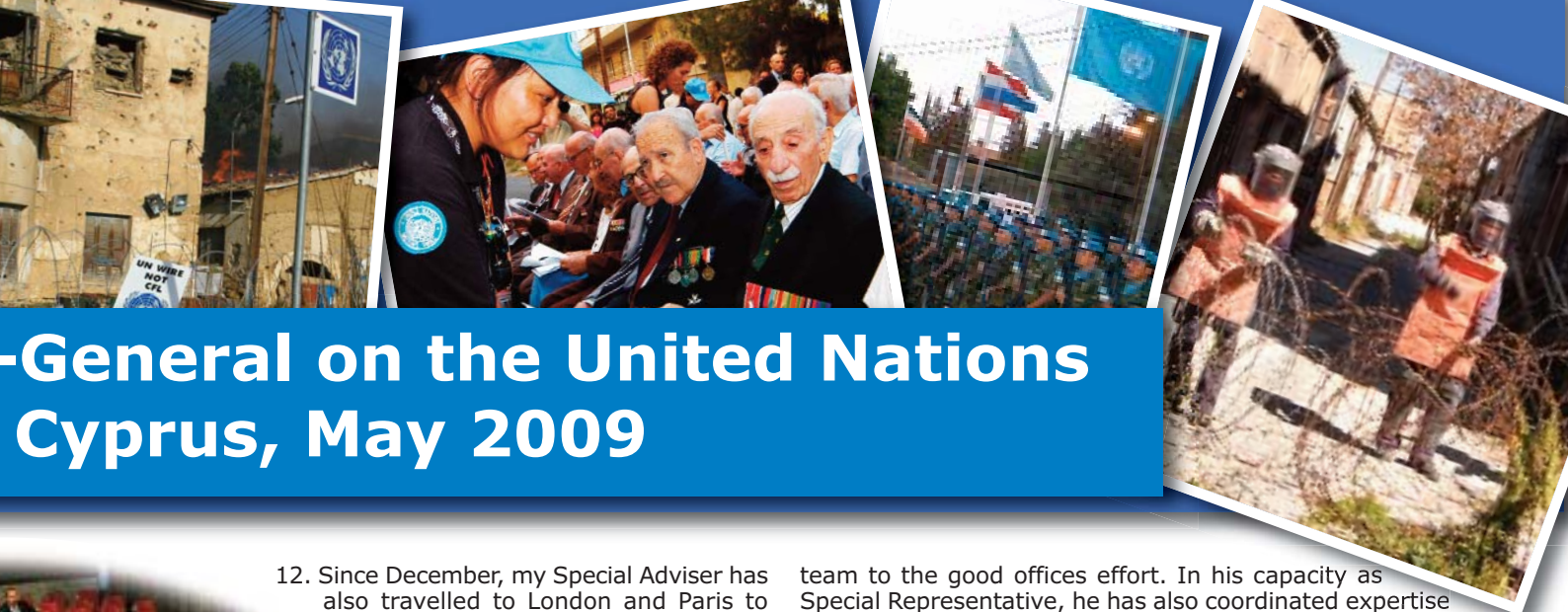
8. In parallel to the full-fledged negotiations, some of the technical committees established by the leaders in March 2008 have continued to meet, albeit at a slower pace than during the preparatory phase of the talks. Out of the seven established technical committees, four have continued to work — those on crime and criminal matters, cultural heritage, health matters, and the environment.

9. On 14 April, the leaders agreed to the implementation of 4 of the 23 confidence-building measures identified by the technical committees, which were aimed at improving the daily life of Cypriots across the entire island. They concern the passage of ambulances through crossing points in cases of emergency, the establishment of a communications and liaison facility (operating round the clock) to share information on crime and criminal matters, an initiative funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on awareness-raising measures for saving water and the establishment of an advisory board on shared cultural heritage. UNDP has earmarked more than \$600,000 to support such initiatives.

10. Since my last report, I have had various contacts regarding the Cyprus issue directly with the leaders, Mr. Christofias and Mr. Talat, as well as with other key interlocutors, such as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey and Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis of Greece. During these encounters, I reiterated my support to the process and urged those interlocutors to remain committed to the current process and to continue to show flexibility in the months ahead. All interlocutors expressed to me their support for a mutually acceptable solution.

11. Over the reporting period, my Special Adviser has been on the island on five separate occasions, to meet primarily with the leaders and their representatives and to host and facilitate the formal negotiations. He also used those opportunities to listen to as many views as possible from a wide cross-section of Cypriots on both sides of the political divide. This included regular meetings with the leaders of political parties, representatives of the business community and trade unions, religious figures, the academic community, civil society groups and others.





-General on the United Nations Cyprus, May 2009



12. Since December, my Special Adviser has also travelled to London and Paris to meet with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as high-level officials of the Office of the President and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France. All interlocutors reaffirmed their support for the peace process and their commitment to assisting the parties in their efforts. My Special Adviser is scheduled to visit Moscow and Beijing in May and June, respectively.

13. In late April, my Special Adviser briefed the Security Council on the developments in the negotiations, welcoming the good and steady progress achieved by the parties. The Council subsequently issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/ 2009/10) on 30 April, in which the Council reiterated its full support for the process, commended the leaders for their political leadership and warmly welcomed the progress made so far and their joint statements. The Security Council strongly urged the leaders to increase the momentum in the negotiations, emphasizing the importance of all parties engaging "fully, flexibly and constructively" and said it looked forward to decisive progress in the negotiations in the near future.

14. In line with a request from both sides on 14 April 2008 for the United Nations to provide infrastructure and personnel support to allow the parties to carry forward the process, the Office of the Special Adviser has continued to strengthen its capacity. In coordination with the Department of Political Affairs and UNFICYP, the Office of the Special Adviser on Cyprus provides support to my Special Adviser and facilitates work on specific themes and chapters dealt with in the talks, as required. His immediate office aside, my Special Adviser is also assisted by international thematic experts, who provide him with insights into some of the more complex topics of the ongoing negotiations. To date, international thematic experts have been engaged on issues relating to governance and power-sharing, property and European Union matters.

15. As I reported previously, the United Nations has adopted an integrated approach, which maximizes synergies between my good offices mission and UNFICYP. My Special Representative and Chief of Mission of UNFICYP, Mr. Zerihoun, continues to serve as my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus. As such, he articulates and is the conduit for support — substantive and administrative — provided by UNFICYP and the United Nations country

team to the good offices effort. In his capacity as Special Representative, he has also coordinated expertise from the United Nations country team in a common effort to help create an environment conducive to a successful outcome.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

A. Prevention of a recurrence of the fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

16. During this reporting period, the situation in the buffer zone has remained stable. In general, the opposing forces have cooperated well with UNFICYP. The main focus of the military operations of the Mission has been to maintain stability in the buffer zone. UNFICYP has submitted a package of military confidence-building measures to both of the opposing forces. To date, the National Guard has responded by nominating a designated committee on confidence-building measures to work with UNFICYP. It is hoped that this positive step will be followed by similar steps by the Turkish Forces soon.

17. The total number of military violations and other incidents during the current reporting period was 276. This figure represents a decrease of 22 per cent compared with the previous reporting period. Typical violations were minor in nature and had little effect on the stability of the ceasefire lines. Such violations included unauthorized improvements to military positions, incursions into the buffer zone, overmanning of observation posts and minor cases of ill discipline.

18. The opposing forces continue to employ low-level measures in an effort to irritate or cause minor intimidation of the opposing side. Such acts are more common where the positions of the opposing forces are in close proximity, as in the centre of Nicosia. It is hoped that the confidence-building measures proposed to both sides can be taken forward to help prevent such incidents in the future.

19. The Turkish Forces committed nine military airspace violations during the reporting period. These included VIP inspection visits of the ceasefire line by and resupply/ troop rotation in the Kokkina pocket.

20. Both the National Guard and the Turkish Forces conducted low-level and familiarization training during the reporting period. In addition, the Turkish Forces conducted an armoured manoeuvre exercise (Grid 38SWD4286) east of Nicosia and within 1,000 metres of the buffer zone in sector 4. Due to the close proximity of the exercise to the buffer zone, it caused considerable concern to the National Guard.

The exercise was conducted over a period of several weeks in March. It involved main battle tanks moving in close proximity to the ceasefire line in full view of the National Guard. The exercise was in contrast to the decision of both the National Guard and the Turkish Forces to cancel their major exercises ("Nikiforos" and "Toros") last year, as reported previously.

21. During the reporting period, the Turkish Forces increased the restrictions on the movements of UNFICYP. Since 1 January 2009, there have been 43 such incidents in the north. The restrictions have taken various forms, from preventing UNFICYP personnel from crossing at Turkish Cypriot checkpoints to escorting them out of the northern part of the island. UNFICYP has recently received assurances from authorities in the north that the restrictions have been lifted; however, although the rate of incidents has diminished, restrictions continue. The matter has also been raised by UNFICYP with the Turkish Forces and by United Nations Headquarters with the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations in New York.

Further to these new incidents, routes continue to be denied on the Karpas peninsula and tight controls imposed on access to, and the conduct of operations within, the fenced area of Varosha. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

22. Positions established by the opposing forces in the Dherinia area that violate the status quo, referred to in my previous reports (S/2008/ 353 and S/2008/744), remain in place. The Turkish Forces retain the checkpoint in the Laroujina pocket. They have conducted regular inspections of the liaison post at Strovilia, and have repeatedly overmanned the position, in violation of the military status quo in the area.

B. Demining activity in the buffer zone

23. The Cyprus Mine Action Centre has continued to manage mine clearance operations in the 26 minefields agreed for clearance under the current agreement. By the end of April, 21 of the 26 minefields had been cleared. Discussions continue with a view to obtaining the agreement of the Turkish Forces on the clearance of 12 additional mined areas.

24. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Union agreed to provide €2.5 million each to fund the project until April 2011. The European Union contribution is provided from the €259 million aid package for development in northern Cyprus. The €5 million should allow the programme to fulfil its objective of delivering a mine-free buffer zone.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

25. Cypriots from both sides continued to seek assistance from UNFICYP in facilitating day-to-day issues arising from the division of the island that affect their lives, including on educational matters, medical evacuations and the transfer of deceased individuals, as well as on commemorative, religious and sociocultural gatherings. The mission also continued to facilitate the normalization of conditions in the buffer zone and humanitarian assistance to the communities as required.

26. During the reporting period, UNFICYP recorded approximately 873,700 crossings through the buffer zone, of which 210,950 were through the Ledra Street crossing point. As at March, the two chambers of commerce recorded that goods worth approximately €500,000 crossed from the south to the north and goods worth approximately €2.3 million crossed in the opposite direction.

Implementation of the joint project prepared by the two Nicosia municipalities under the Nicosia master plan for the restoration of buildings at Ledra Street, is still pending, awaiting agreement between the two sides.

27. Despite an earlier commitment, the impasse regarding the opening of Limnitis/Yeşilirmak and other crossings continues. Various options suggested by the United Nations have failed to satisfy the respective concerns of the parties.

28. UNFICYP, in cooperation with international and local partners, facilitated 65 bicommunal events, with the participation, since my last report, of more than 4,000 people from both communities who came together to promote the reunification of the island and support the ongoing negotiations between the leaders of the two communities. These events were held at the Ledra Palace Hotel and nearby in the buffer zone, which continues to be considered by both sides as a neutral venue.

29. On 17 March, the leaders spoke at a bicommunal event organized by the respective chambers of commerce and industry, which launched a new project for promoting greater business collaboration between the two communities. The UNDP funded project aims to reinforce, foster and nurture economic interdependence between the two communities.

30. Regular monthly meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives continued to be held at the Ledra Palace Hotel under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. The political parties issued joint communiqués expressing support for the two leaders and the political process and emphasizing the importance of education to promote the peaceful coexistence of communities, reconciliation and multiculturalism. The Government of Slovakia is hosting a meeting of this forum in Bratislava from 14 to 17 May to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the initiative.

31. UNFICYP continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the northern part of the island. During the reporting period, UNFICYP conducted 54 humanitarian convoys and visits to 367 Greek Cypriots and 133 Maronites in the north.

32. UNFICYP also continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education. In Limassol and in Paphos, the mission has worked with local authorities and community representatives to strengthen support for the educational and social needs of the community. In this regard, there have been no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish-language primary school in Limassol.

The requests made by 11 Greek Cypriot and 44 Maronite internally displaced and refugee families that wish to return to, and permanently reside in, the north are still pending, owing to differences between the two sides over the eligibility criteria for permanent returns.

32. UNFICYP also continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education. In Limassol and in Paphos, the mission has worked with local authorities and community representatives to strengthen support for the educational and social needs of the community. In this regard, there have been no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish-language primary school in Limassol.



33. Members of both communities continue to seek to use the buffer zone for various civilian activities, including farming, maintenance of public and private infrastructure, construction and commercial ventures. Consideration and facilitation of those activities while ensuring stability remains one of the main challenges facing the mission, as the continued lack of adherence to UNFICYP procedures regarding civilian activities in the buffer zone continues to pose problems to the implementation of the mandate of the mission.

34. During the reporting period, UNFICYP authorized 18 projects in the buffer zone, including the establishment of one new civil-use area. These projects included construction of a residential and agricultural nature, along with an increase in water extraction activities attributable to the recent drought conditions on the island.

35. UNFICYP continued in its efforts to assist in maintaining good relations and building confidence between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone. To that end, UNFICYP plays a mediation role and monitors long-standing arrangements established between the two communities. UNFICYP facilitated five bicomunal events involving children from the Greek and Turkish Cypriot schools in Pyla, in cooperation with an international non-governmental organization, as a means of increasing awareness and building confidence between the two communities. These events, which had been taking place at regular intervals, were suspended in early May due to disagreements between the communities.

36. The technical committee on cultural heritage continued to discuss the preservation, protection and restoration of immovable and movable cultural heritage on the island. Both sides continued to seek UNFICYP facilitation to access sites and icons of religious and cultural significance. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated five religious and commemorative events on the island, which took place without incident.

On 7 February and 25 April, holy mass was conducted in the Monastery of Apostolos Barnabas in the north, the latter mass to commemorate Easter. On 10 May, the Armenian community held prayers at the Monastery of Sourp Magar in the north for the second time since 1974. In the buffer zone on 20 April, approximately 250 Greek Cypriot worshippers visited the church in the abandoned village of Varisha in an annual pilgrimage.

On 10 May, an annual pilgrimage took place to the abandoned village of Ayios Georgios Soleas.

37. UNFICYP continues to liaise with the two sides on law enforcement and on issues related to crossings on humanitarian grounds. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 23 medical evacuations and the transfer of seven persons who were deceased (three Greek Cypriots and four Turkish Cypriots). The mission also conducted 34 prison visits to the 14 Turkish Cypriot inmates in the south and three visits to the one Greek Cypriot detained in the north.

38. Relations between UNFICYP and the police forces on both sides remained cooperative and constructive, with regular communications taking place between the United Nations police liaison officer and liaison officers from the respective police forces.

39. On 15 April, senior United Nations police members met with the Deputy Commissioner of Cyprus Police. Following the meeting, all Cyprus Police commanders of districts adjacent to the buffer zone were given a briefing at UNFICYP headquarters. The Cyprus Police district commanders met their United Nations counterparts and agreed to conduct regular monthly meetings at the local level.

40. In March and April, there were nine cases of theft in the area around Athienou, in the buffer zone. A large quantity of crops, covering at least seven farms, was harvested, and two water pumps were stolen. Enquiries in relation to these thefts are ongoing and United Nations patrols of both military and United Nations police members have been increased in the area. Escorts have also been provided to local farmers who were fearful they could become targets of thieves.

41. The technical committee on crime and criminal matters, which is facilitated by the United Nations police, met on three occasions during the reporting period and agreed to open a joint communications room, which will be staffed by representatives from both sides. The priority task for the joint communications room will be to exchange information and provide timely intelligence.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

42. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons continued the exhumation, identification and return of the remains of missing persons. By April, the remains of 530 individuals had been exhumed on both sides of the buffer zone by the Committee's bicomunal teams of archaeologists. The remains of more than 340 missing persons had undergone examination at the Committee's bicomunal anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. Following DNA genetic analysis, carried out by a bicomunal team of scientists at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, the remains of 150 individuals had been returned to their respective families.

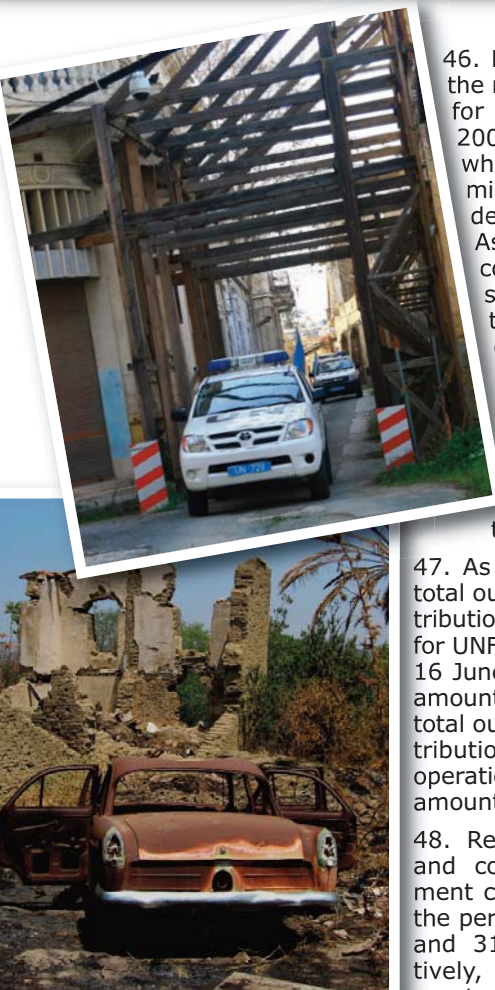
43. In March, the Committee on Missing Persons was invited by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to present its activities. The Ministers' Deputies adopted a resolution strongly supporting the current work of the Committee on Missing Persons and underlining the need for the Committee to have access to all relevant information and places concerning missing persons.

44. The Committee enjoyed broad political and public support during the reporting period. I continue to urge all parties concerned to take every possible action to speed up the exhumation process.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

45. As indicated in my last report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 62/255, appropriated the amount of \$54.9 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to \$17.5 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to do likewise, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.





46. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, which amounts to \$56 million gross, will be considered by the General Assembly during the second part of the resumed sixty-third session. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the Assembly.

47. As at 31 March 2009, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 June 2009 amounted to \$16.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to \$1,940.6 million.

48. Reimbursement of troop- and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 30 June 2007 and 31 March 2007, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VI. Observations

49. During the reporting period, the situation in the buffer zone remained calm. There was a decrease in military violations, and the opposing forces demonstrated restraint and overall good cooperation with UNFICYP. I am hopeful that the discussions on confidence-building measures initiated by UNFICYP will enjoy the support and cooperation of the opposing forces and produce tangible results.

50. The generally good cooperation with the opposing forces was marred by increased restrictions imposed on UNFICYP by the Turkish Forces. These restrictions are constraining the ability of UNFICYP to carry out its mandate and pose significant difficulties for the soldiers based in UNFICYP camps in the north and for UNFICYP civilian staff members conducting routine business in United Nations vehicles. I hope that, following recent assurances from the relevant authorities, UNFICYP will no longer be subjected to such restrictions of movement.

51. Both communities continued to rely on civilian assistance from UNFICYP in a variety of areas, ranging from humanitarian and economic matters to a variety of bicomunal issues affecting the lives of Cypriots. UNFICYP's non-military activities, particularly in the buffer zone, are expanding as a result of popular demand. In the absence of any formal agreements between the sides, the authority of UNFICYP remains in many cases the only accepted means of resolving local conflicts. I call on both communities to continue to work closely with UNFICYP on solving practical day-to-day issues pending a comprehensive settlement. In this context, I renew my call on the parties to accept the 1989 aide-memoire used by the United Nations to regulate activities in the buffer zone.

52. Further progress has been achieved on the clearing of minefields in the buffer zone. Thanks to the generosity of the Government of Cyprus and the European Union and the support of authorities in the north, the operation, which is an important confidence-building measure, will proceed without interruption.

53. I note with satisfaction that the humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons continues unhindered. I am additionally pleased that the activities of that Committee have also been strongly supported by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. I continue to urge all parties concerned to take every possible action to speed up the exhumation process.

54. Since my last report, the parties have maintained a steady rhythm of meetings, conducting the negotiations in a positive and constructive manner. The parties now move closer to the end of the first reading of the different issues, having recorded convergence on many points. As I have said on previous occasions, this is of little surprise, as the broad outline and established parameters of the solution are well known and already articulated by the two sides. Nor are they starting from scratch; they have the advantage of a significant body of work to draw upon.

55. At the same time, while areas of significant divergence may be fewer, most are nonetheless fundamental, reflecting the challenge of translating the agreed objective of a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality into a functional united Cyprus, where legitimate interests are not only represented but also effectively pursued.

56. My overall assessment is that, while the parties have made steady progress, I see a need for an increase in the pace of the talks as the sides start to address issues more holistically. Indeed, the parties themselves recognize that a settlement will be harder to reach as each day passes without a solution. They also acknowledge that the status quo is unacceptable and that the process cannot be open-ended. The spirit of the negotiations, and the constructive and open manner in which the two leaders are approaching the talks, demand that the solution should be achievable within a reasonable time frame.

57. It is important to note that the excellent personal chemistry between the leaders remains strong, despite the challenges facing them, both in the negotiations and domestically. Their often long one-on-one meetings prior to the plenary sessions are evidence of their mutual commitment and determination to see the process through. Together they have taken ownership of and full responsibility for the process. The challenge facing them — as partners and not adversaries — is to sustain the momentum of the process that they have begun as they enter the next phase of the talks. Further joint messaging and visible joint engagement may help in this direction.

58. I am gratified to see that the close relationship between the leaders has led to a lessening of the mutual public recriminations that were more prevalent in the past. At the same time, it is discouraging to note that, during the reporting period, polls have clearly shown a high level of scepticism among the respective populations towards the ongoing negotiations. Given that any eventual agreement will require popular support expressed through simultaneous referendums, it is imperative that the leaders develop strategies to actively communicate to their respective constituencies the economic, political, security-related and many other benefits of a solution, and to convey that a solution would be impossible without compromise.

59. An involved, informed and more energized civil society is essential to building trust and is desirable in and of itself. It is also an essential vehicle for garnering more

support for a solution and creating an environment that is more conducive to moving the process forward. The active participation of civil society groups can contribute to making any future settlement sustainable. I call once again upon the sides to find the best means to facilitate the active involvement of Cypriot civil society in the debate and the effort to reach a solution on the future of their country.

60. It is disappointing that, since the agreement on nearly two dozen confidence building measures during the preparatory phase of the talks, the parties have made little progress on their implementation during the reporting period. The original agreement had been received as a welcome breakthrough, not only for improving the daily life of many Cypriots across the entire island but also for encouraging and facilitating more interaction between the two communities.

The apparent lack of political will to implement the agreed measures constitutes a missed opportunity in building public support within the communities for the process and creating an improved intercommunal atmosphere crucial to a future united Cyprus. In the same vein, military and other confidence-building measures, such as the creation of crossings, including at Limnitis/Yeşilirmak, and the implementation of the second phase of the restoration of the Ledra Street crossing, which UNDP stands ready to fund, would greatly contribute to an improvement in the atmosphere on the island. I call upon the parties to implement these measures without further delay.

61. As I have stated before, the establishment of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts will have a positive impact on the ongoing efforts. Such contacts would nurture a sentiment of trust between the communities and help ease the sense of isolation felt by the Turkish Cypriots. Further, greater economic and social parity between the sides will make the eventual reunification not only easier, but also more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counter-productive.

62. On the process itself, the leaders have so far maintained the approach adopted since the start, namely to identify and put to the side the less controversial issues on which they agree, identify and negotiate options where they disagree, and put to the side those issues that are difficult to resolve at this stage or that should be considered in tandem with other issues. In this way, the parties have been diligently and commendably consolidating the positions into a meaningful body of understandings to allow for the necessary compromises at a later stage.

63. Both leaders recognize that a comprehensive agreement can only be reached by moving, in the spirit of compromise, beyond positions of principle to how these principles will be applied in practice, and by addressing issues of difference that cut across one another, not in isolation but as areas for potential compromise. They also recognize that a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem will only be achieved through a negotiated settlement.

64. To this end, and to help bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion, the need to rationalize the process to deliver results becomes more pressing. The recent increase in the number of meetings at the level of representatives and experts, as a dedicated structure in support of the leaders, as well as the commitment of the leaders in early May to intensify this level of the talks, has been encouraging. As the leaders conclude the first reading, it will be necessary for them to give shape to the broader outline of an agreement which will naturally emerge. The representatives could play a useful role in taking this idea forward in a dynamic and interactive manner.



65. As indicated in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/10) adopted by the Security Council on 30 April, the Council has commended the leaders for their political leadership and warmly welcomed the progress made thus far. In my view, there is a clear expectation and desire on the part of the international community that the leaders continue to engage flexibly and constructively in the negotiations, with the aim of making decisive progress in the near future.

66. Based on the encouraging progress to date, I reiterate that the support of the United Nations to the process will remain unwavering under the leadership of my Special Adviser. The role of the United Nations is to accompany the parties and to assist and facilitate this Cypriot-owned process, as required; in this I will spare no effort. I remain fully prepared, at their request, to offer more assistance.

67. For the time being, and in the absence of a comprehensive settlement, I believe that UNFICYP continues to play a vital and unique role on the island, both as a stabilizing factor on the ground and as a source of substantive and administrative support for my good offices mission. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the mission for a further period of six months, until 15 December 2009.

68. At the same time, in light of my earlier stated intention to keep all peacekeeping operations under review, and, more specifically, as the Security Council has reaffirmed in resolution 1847 (2008), I will continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and will revert to the Council with recommendations as appropriate for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted.

69. In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude to my Special Adviser, Mr. Downer; my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Mr. Zerihoun; the Force Commander, Rear Admiral Mario César Sánchez Debernardi; and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP and the good offices mission for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

International Peacekeepers Day: Role of women gets deserved recognition. On 29 May the world marks International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This year the focus is on the increasingly important role women play in keeping and building peace around the world. In this photo feature we shine the spotlight on some of the women – in the military, police and civilian branches – who help UNFICYP deliver on its mandate.



Renalyn Natural (38) is UNFICYP's Archive Assistant whose job is to implement a good system of archiving and record-keeping based on New York best practices in order to standardise and regulate the 45 years of records that have mounted up in UNFICYP. Her prior peacekeeping assignments included Sudan and Timor Leste.

Renalyn notes that when she joined peacekeeping she experienced the first culture shock for

her was being in a completely male dominated environment, not only having to interact with her male colleagues professionally but also socially 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week as a result of the working and living conditions they had to endure.

However, she notes women are significant actors in peacekeeping as they can help break barriers, particularly in conservative societies. They can play an invaluable role of intermediary when it comes to approaching local communities, and women in particular who are usually the most vulnerable in post-conflict situations.

A female peacekeeper is seen as less threatening and women will feel more comfortable in approaching them for assistance. Celebrating International Peacekeepers Day is important, not only to recognise the contribution of women, but also the sacrifices they have made being away from their families and children.

Recognising these contributions and sacrifices will encourage more and more women to become peacekeepers.



Major Kate Hepinstall, (35), SO2 Ops Info, is the only woman in her branch, although she says that being in the military, she is accustomed to working in a male dominated environment.

Her tasks include monitoring the buffer zone and particularly the opposing forces interpreting any violations and analysing them for any trends which are then reported to the

sectors and the chain of command.

Kate says that comparing the percentage of female peacekeepers to that of her own national military, she finds the numbers are much lower. In the United Kingdom, the percentage of females in the military is at about 10% and this figure can even be as high as 20%

in some units. "For me to come here and be the only female in the morning briefing is very unusual," she says, adding that women can contribute a different dynamic to a team. "Women do approach things differently and there are circumstances where this can be beneficial," she adds.

Referring to the debate about physical constraints of women serving as peacekeepers, Kate says: "There are very few occasions where the physical differences between men and women are of concern – my job as ops info makes no difference, but I can appreciate that there are some circumstances where the physical differences will be of concern, however these are in a very small number of cases.

Reflecting on the International Day of Peacekeeping, she says because, "both genders have an equal role to play in peacekeeping and it is important to take stock of where we are and look at how we want to progress in efforts to achieving our mandate. Do we have the right balance of skills, thoughts, creativity and how they can best be used to enhance our peacekeeping efforts.

After almost two years in UNFICYP, her tour is coming to an end and Kate says it has been a fantastic experience and what made it so special were the men and women that make up the force in Cyprus. She would definitely consider going on other missions like Sudan and Darfur, but would equally come back to UNFICYP as it has been interesting times for the island where she witnessed the opening of Ledra Street, the start of the direct talks and other confidence-building measures.

peacekeeping

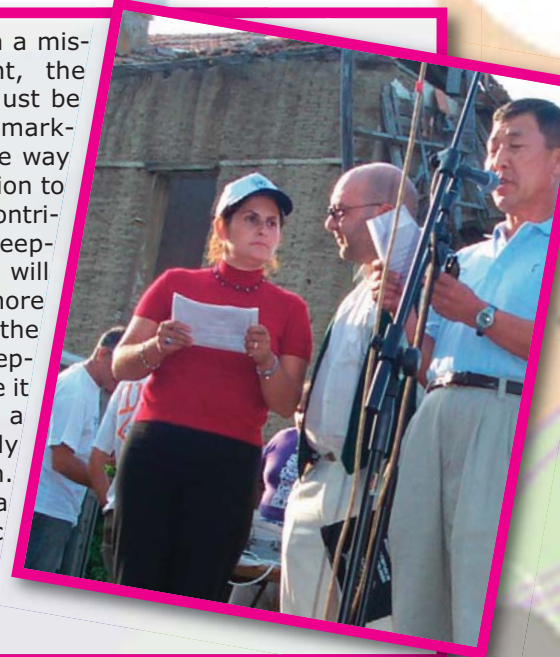
Ersin Öztoycan, Information Assistant (46) has been in UNFICYP since 2003 and works in the Public Information Office on media monitoring and liaison.

Ersin was initially posted in the Civil Affairs branch focusing on assisting the Turkish Cypriot community in Limassol on issues related to welfare and housing.

Referring to that period when the office was being set-up, she says, "Being a woman made me more approachable to the Turkish Cypriot women in that community as I was able to speak their language, but also they could confide more easily in me and we developed a good rapport to resolve their problems."

Being a woman has also helped her in other more tense situations, like when an angry farmer tried to bulldoze through a UN barrier. "At the time I was acting as an interpreter for UNPOL who were having difficulties restraining him. As a non-threatening calm presence out of uniform, I was able to talk to him and get him to rethink his actions and he was persuaded to withdraw."

Particularly in a mission environment, the role of women must be recognized, and marking the day is one way of drawing attention to their significant contribution to peacekeeping, she says. "It will also encourage more women to join the ranks of peacekeeping as they realize it is not necessarily a career path solely suited to men. Women bring a different dynamic and complement the work of their male colleagues."



Efi Angeli made history when she arrived in UNFICYP in 2006 as the first female driver at the Transport Unit. Her duties include VIP driving duties as well as heavy goods vehicle driving for the regular long and short north-wind patrols taking government welfare supplies to the Greek Cypriot and Maronite

communities living in the north. She also assists in the water delivery to OP's manned by UNFICYP soldiers along the buffer zone as well as being emergency standby recovery assistant for damaged vehicles.

Efi points out that women are as skilled as their male counterparts and don't have to fight nearly as hard for opportunities, or to dispel stereotypes, as they did before. "What they have contributed by undertaking traditionally male jobs in peacekeeping is expand the concept of team work, show respect for diversity and the core values of the United Nations through their daily activities and behaviour," she said.

Marking International Day of Peacekeeping gives a human face to the men and women serving communities in need around the world and honouring their work.

Yanna Tsangara (38) who is a mother of three is the SCAT Liaison Assistant in the Civil Affairs Branch. She has been with UNFICYP since September 1988 when aged 18, she started her career as the Secretary to the Sector 2 Commanding Officer and was based at Wolseley Barracks. In 1999, she transferred to the Civil Affairs Branch where she worked as a records clerk until 2007 when she took up her current position.

Yanna says as SCAT Liaison Assistant, her job is to explain the permit system to farmers and others wishing to utilize their land in the buffer zone, whether it is for farming or construction, and explain to them what the procedures are to apply for a permit and coordinate with the UNPOL and military components of the SCAT team to resolve any issues that may arise. She also liaises with local authorities and district officers when processing requests from landowners in the buffer zone. Being a woman can at times be beneficial, she says, as "we are less intimidating and can soothe

things over more diplomatically".

Being part of the Civil Affairs Branch means from time to time she may also be requested to go on a humanitarian patrol which transports government welfare assistance in the form of food items and pension cheques to Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the Karpas and Kormakitis regions in the north.

Yanna says it is important to recognize the contribution of women, and marking international day of peacekeepers is an opportunity to do just that and say bravo.



Women in peacekeeping (continued)



Garda Sandra Master-son arrived in UNFICYP in August 2008 as part of the Irish Police Contingent and started off as a patrol officer in the UNPOL station at Mammari, a small village in the buffer zone inhabited by Greek Cypriots.

As a patrol officer Sandra patrolled the buffer zone in order to prevent unauthorised entry by individuals not permitted to be there, monitoring the farming security line, new constructions, shepherd activities, illegal dumping and abandonment of vehicles within the buffer zone.

Duties also included facilitating peaceful rallies and pilgrimages. She then moved to the Sector Civil Affairs Team (SCAT) at Ledra Palace Hotel working closely with all three pillars of the mission to fulfil the three primary tasks of civilian management the buffer zone related to farm-

ing, construction, maintenance and infrastructure, humanitarian activities and bicomunal activities facilitating the use of the Ledra palace Hotel as a venue for such events. She has just recently been appointed team leader of SCAT.

Referring to her role as a peacekeeper, Sandra says serving as a UN police officer is not that different to her role as a police officer in Ireland because they are also an unarmed force and to a great extent involved in community policing. While there is no conflict on the island there are many political sensitivities, she says and tensions can easily escalate as a result of this so therefore "our role is to go out on the tracks and get to know our community, the local farmers and muhktars and ensure tensions do not escalate."

The local community in Mammari's initial reaction to her as female peacekeepers she says was one of amazement that a woman would take on such a role but later they expressed admiration for her decision to go to a foreign country to offer her services as a peacekeeper.

They have seen that women can be as effective as their male colleagues, she says and although there is a small number of female officers their contribution is significant. She says she would highly recommend other women take up the opportunity to be a peacekeeper in a UN mission as it is a challenging and rewarding experience that will bring you into contact with people from across the globe to work together for the common goal of peace.

Message of the Secretary-General on peacekeepers day

The international community's reliance on United Nations peacekeeping continues to deepen. Deployment is at a record high, with the number of troops, civilians and police totaling more than 113,000.

The personnel who serve under the United Nations flag do so in some of the most difficult and inhospitable areas on earth, where they face instability, disease and violence on a daily basis. These efforts often come at high cost to the peacekeepers themselves. In 2008, 132 peacekeepers lost their lives in the line of duty – the highest one-year total in the history of United Nations peacekeeping. Whether felled by acts of violence, disease or accidents, each left an important legacy.

The loss of 10 women among those who died reminds us that female personnel are playing an increasingly important role in peacekeeping, and that they now shoulder grave risks as well.

It has been nearly a decade since the Security Council adopted its landmark Resolution 1325 (2000) – the first omnibus text to recognize that women bear the brunt of armed conflicts, and should have a commensurate role in their prevention and resolution.

Since then, the United Nations has pressed forward with intensive efforts, not only to involve more local women in peacemaking and peacebuilding, but also to recruit more women into our own operations.

The point is not to achieve gender parity for its own sake; the imperative is to draw on the unique and powerful contribution women can make. Female blue helmets, human rights monitors and other mission staff offer new skills and styles of functioning in the ever-evolving field of peacekeeping. Often, they can better communicate with local women, generating a greater sense of security while serving as an example of women's empowerment.

As the Security Council has acknowledged, women frequently suffer most during conflicts, including from horrific acts of sexual- and gender-based violence. By including female police among our ranks, we foster a safe environment for victims to get the help they need and deserve. And by enabling victims to feel secure enough to come forward and press charges against perpetrators, we fight the culture of impunity that has prevailed for too long.

There are still far too few women peacekeepers. With women joining national militaries and police in greater numbers, it is critical that Member States contribute even more female personnel to the United Nations. On this International Day, let us draw on the power of women to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping while helping women and girls themselves to transform their destinies – and societies – for the better.

UNFICYP training to keep HIV away

UNFICYP held its first HIV/AIDS Peer Education Training Workshop from 27 April 2009 – 1 May 2009 with the support of the UNIFIL HIV/AIDS Unit.

As part of the DPKO mandate UNFICYP is required to conduct mandatory HIV awareness training for all civilian and uniformed personnel and implement a prevention programme for the mission. Currently all inductions include a mandatory HIV briefing; however part of this prevention programme also requires Peer Education Training (PET) which is a model of training that supports participants to develop and then deliver information workshops to their peers.. This was the first such training course to be held at UNFICYP in collaboration with the HIV Unit from UNIFIL.

UNIFIL, the only mission in the region with a fully established HIV/AIDS unit, provided two trainers. Stephen Talugende, Chief of UNIFIL's HIV/AIDS Unit, and Annet Kyazike, HIV Programme Officer for Prevention and Training, conducted the five day training workshop for UNFICYP national and international civilian staff, UNPOL and military personnel.

Of the 16 participants who started the course, 15 completed it and now form part of the HIV steering committee led by the UNFICYP HIV Focal Point.

Participants indicated a 93 per cent approval rating of the training programme, with many singling out the demonstrations, group work and role play as particularly effective in reinforcing

the messages presented in lectures. They also highlighted the excellent rapport they had with the trainers.

Christine Iacovou, deputy UNFICYP HIV Focal point said: "At the start of the training we were a group of strangers a little afraid of what would be expected of us in what is after all a controversial and intimate subject. By the end of second day we found ourselves completely at ease using terms that 24 hours previously we would have only whispered and confidently discussing various aspects of HIV/AIDS. By the end of the week we were a group of friends and a team of peer educators eager to get the message across to as many people as possible.

Stephen and Annet far exceeded our expectations and it's thanks to their commitment that UNFICYP now has its first team of dedicated peer educators."

Snjezana Charlton agreed that the training helped build on her knowledge of HIV/AIDS and energized her to work on the HIV prevention programme in the mission. "The two trainers were fantastic," she said, adding that she feels empowered with the knowledge and skills to deliver information to colleagues, friends and family in a clear and effective manner.

A second HIV Peer Education Training Course will be held in October and interested staff members who are expected to be in mission for at least six months after the training can contact HIV Focal Point Netha Kreouzios to register.



Anzac Day

More than 100 people commemorated ANZAC day at the World War II cemetery in the area of the buffer zone known as "Wayne's Keep" in the early morning of 25 April.

Under the watchful eyes of both the National Guard and Turkish Forces observation posts Australian UNPOL officer Rob Duckworth hosted the dawn service, with a sermon from Britcon Padre Maj. Richard Pluck. As the sun slowly rose on the cemetery and the two British Forces buglers played the last post, the Australian and New Zealand flags were raised to full mast by Australian UNPOL officers Scott Hardman and Russell McCall.

Out of respect for the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who died in World War II, contingents of all UNFICYP forces, both police and military, were well represented. Australian High Commissioner Evan Williams, New Zealand Honorary Consul Tony Christodoulou, and British High Commissioner Peter Millett attended the ceremony.

Wreaths were laid on the graves of three RAAF, one RNZAF, and one RAF servicemen whose remains are interred in the cemetery. A wreath was also laid on the Cross of Sacrifice by David Hancock, whose father, Col. Malcolm Hancock of the Northamptonshire Regiment, won the Military Cross for gallantry in the field whilst fighting at Gallipoli. The service was followed by breakfast and ANZAC biscuits at the UNPOL club in the UNPA. The significance of the cooperation of many nations necessary to make the ceremony a success in an area still under dispute was not lost on those who attended.



UNFICYP firefighting training courses 2009



UNFICYP Engineering Section/Fire HQ always have fire safety as a priority.

Training at different levels is the first step to preparing personnel not only for fire prevention but to deal with fire-related emergencies followed by exercises and drills.

The first lesson to be learned is prevention. It is of the utmost importance to stay vigilant and responsible to reduce fire accidents to the minimum.

If a fire does occur, you could be faced with a really tough situation. Tackling a blazing fire is a dangerous and difficult task, however with the correct training, you can learn to save lives and property. The UNFICYP Fire Officer holds regular training sessions, which is available for civilian, military and police personnel.

The last courses took place on 14, 15 and 16 April 2009.

These basic fire fighting/safety/prevention/familiarization courses are designed to meet the highest safety standards. A total of 245 UN personnel from different locations were trained at different levels and now in a position to deal with basic or immediate fire fighting and prevention, including evacuation with all available resources within their area of responsibility.

Tips for household bushfire protection:

"Home Sweet Home" – an investment of one's life-time savings, emotional dreams and aspirations to realize your ideal home.

Please, make note of the tips below to prevent or deal with any emergency:

1. Check your home insurance is up-to-date and make sure that bush/grass and all types of fire damages claims are covered.
 2. Make sure that all your family members know the fire emergency number UNFICYP 22-61-4777, South Fire Brigade 112/199, North Fire Brigade 199.
 3. Clear any debris from within a 15-metre radius of the house.
 4. The house address should be clearly visible for easy identification in an emergency.
 5. Don't throw cigarette butts on the ground or out of a vehicle. Make sure they are completely extinguished and then dispose of them properly.
 6. Do not burn trash, leaves or brush – it is against the EU law.
 7. Do not park your vehicles on dry grass or shrubs. Exhaust systems on vehicles can reach temperatures of more than 1000 degrees; it only takes about 500 degrees to start a grass fire in the summer.
 8. Parents should emphasize to their children the dangers of playing with fire. Children who have no idea how quickly flames can grow and spread start many grass fires.
 9. Homeowners who barbecue should maintain a 10-foot area free of brush and shrubbery around grills and propane tanks. Non-flammable liquid should be used to light the fire. Never leave a grill unattended.
 10. Cut back tree branches, overhanging around the house.
 11. Clean the gutters of leaves on a regular basis.
 12. Keep all grass and creepers cut short.
 13. Empty your rubbish bin on a regular basis and keep the bin area clear of any combustibles.
 14. Invest in a good water hose with a length that can cover your house area.
 15. Buy one 2 kg CO₂ fire extinguisher for an electric fire within the house, one fire blanket for kitchen fires, one 9-litre water fire extinguisher for any small bush fire and one 2 litre/kg foam/dry powder fire extinguisher for your garage/car park.
 16. If you have a swimming pool, invest in a water pump to connect a hose.
 17. If you live in a high bush fire hazards area, then invest in a sprinkler system (not less than 7 twin nozzle 20 mm impact sprinklers through a 5.5 HP to 6.5 HP pump) around the house in addition to having sprinklers on the roof.
 18. Carry out regular fire drills with your family, making it a fun day.
- For more information and inquiries, please contact the Engineering Section/Fire HQ on telephone 22-61-4453/4.

Nadeem P. Qadir, Senior Fire Officer

Farewell ... Samba

UNFICYP bid farewell on 20 March to Samba Sane, who had served the mission since August 2005, first as officer in charge of civil affairs and later as deputy chief civil affairs officer.

Samba's tenure coincided with a very challenging time for the mission and for civil affairs in particular: the review of the force and the transfer of humanitarian activities from the military to UN police under the civil affairs banner; the concomitant structural adjustments within civil affairs to support the transfer; the increasingly civilian nature of day to day conflicts arising from the Cyprus problem; the provision of political support to the chief of mission in 2005 to 2008 and to the lead-up to full fledged negotiations;



as well as substantive support to the technical committees and working groups under the Good Offices structure.

All this, coupled with the constant rotations of UNPOL and military staff in civil affairs, made working life a constant juggling act. It is an understatement to say that Samba played a central role in all of this.

A quiet person by nature, his departure has been deafening. Samba left for a much deserved promotion at NYHQ where his skills of tact and diplomacy will be put to the test. We have no doubt he will continue to do his colleagues in civil affairs and the Organisation proud.

Kyoko Shiotani

... Carla



Carla Van Maris, Senior Police Adviser UNPOL, September 2004 to April 2009.

Thursday 30 April saw the UNPOL Club decked out in orange to celebrate the departure from mission of Carla Van Maris after a four-and-a-half year spell as the Senior Police Adviser.

The club was packed to capacity with well wishes from all walks of society. Her own ambassador from the Netherlands, as well as the Irish Ambassador, turned up to bid her farewell.

The Chief of Mission was represented by the Force Commander who made a presentation to her. There were speeches as well from the incoming Senior Police Adviser John Farrelly, as well as the great lady herself.

In her farewell speech, she said she had very much enjoyed her time at UNFICYP and had seen so many people passing through the mission during that time. She had served under four Chiefs of Mission, three Force Commanders as well as being in charge of over 300 contingent UNPOL's from nine different countries during that time.

She wished everybody health and happiness for the future, and said she would be keeping a very close eye on the political developments.

The Force Commander in his remarks said that she had served the mission as a true and dedicated professional and he wished her well for the future.

The incoming SPA, John Farrelly, said Carla would be a very hard act to follow and that she had given her all to ensure that UNPOL had contributed in a positive way during her time.

Formalities over, it was time to strike up the band which played popular dance music throughout the night. Carla was hardly ever off the dance floor.

Afterwards she said that it was a night to remember and a lovely way to end her time on mission.

Carla is now taking a well-earned break for a while, but watch this space – her name will probably appear in a mission near you soon.

John Farrelly

... Margaret

A legend has gone! Margaret Theophanous, or Maggie (or even Mags) as her colleagues know her, has retired at the age of 62.

Margaret first started working at UNFICYP in the Claims Department in June 1974. Through the years, she moved to the Chief Administrative Officer's office, and then the Finance Section, even though, as she says, "I never really wanted to work in any office!" Margaret's precision and institutional memory made her invaluable to the department, so there she stayed until 30 April when her colleagues held a farewell party in her honour.

The first to praise her work was of course the CFO Husein Moussa, who will be the person most likely to miss her presence. On behalf of the Finance Office, he presented Margaret first

flowers, then a framed photograph of her taken in 1975 on behalf of CITS. As Margaret said, "here is the before and after!" She also received a diploma for her devoted service, signed by the Chief of Mission, and a silver craft design of Kyrenia port as a memento from her closest colleagues.

The local staff union ULESO presented her with a crystal dish, and she also received many individual personal gifts.

Among those to sing her praises were the Senior Adviser Wlodek Cibor, CGS Tom Grasberger and Kritos Erotokritos from the local union. Wine was served as a toast to the quiet lady who through her loyalty and dedication to her job, her generosity and her wonderful sense of humour, will be very much missed by all those who knew her.

Come up and see us often Margaret, and enjoy your retirement!



Miriam Pericleous

Sweden remembers



Sweden was among the original countries sending peacekeepers to UNFICYP



in 1964. On 24 April, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt



opened a photo exhibit honouring those soldiers at the Ledra Palace Hotel.

In the photographs, Swedish peacekeepers patrol the area around Famagusta's old castle and along the buffer zone in the 1960s.



CO Sector 1

Lt. Col. Carlos Ramon Aguilar arrived Cyprus on March 21. Born in Entre Rios, Argentina in 1965, he took up the post of Deputy Commander Officer Sector 1 on 25 March.

Lt. Col. Aguilar graduated from the Argentinian Military Academy in 1986, and has served in a number of different appointments including 1 Cavalry Regiment, Gral San Martin's Mounted Grenadier Regiment, Cavalry School, and Mechanized Brigade Commando XI. Between 2005 and 2007, he

was chief of 11 Squadron Armor Cavalry in southern Argentina. In 1995, he served with the United Nations in Croatia and in October 1998 he was posted to Belgium. In December 2001 as a major, he graduated as a Staff Officer in Buenos Aires. Lt. Col. Aguilar holds a University degree in Strategy and Organizations.

He is married to Susana Marini and they have two children, Sebastian (11) and Josefina (3).



OC Mobile Force Reserve

Maj. Mark Comer took over the post of OC of the Mobile Force Reserve on 2 April. Born in Belfast in 1973, Mark joined the Army aged 20 and served for two years as a soldier in the Royal Irish Regiment in Northern Ireland. He then attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, commissioning into the Royal Logistic Corps in 1996.

Since becoming a Second Lieutenant, Mark has served on operations in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq (twice) and Afghanistan. He has also been lucky enough to serve on a number of exercises abroad,

including the United States, Norway, Hungary and Oman. In addition to these deployments, he has spent a number of years as an instructor of recruits and officer cadets, becoming universally loathed by generations of young soldiers and junior officers alike.

His wife Johanna is a Police Officer in the UK and he says he is the luckiest Daddy in the world with a set of beautiful twin girls, Charlotte and Scarlett (two) and a wee man, Thomas, who is just four months old.



Civil Affairs Military Liaison Officer

Maj. Harald Klimmer joined the Austrian Army in 1984. After the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, the oldest in the world, he served as platoon and company commander in the logistic branch of a tank battalion.

After several national and international courses he worked in the staff of an armoured brigade. On completion of his master studies of law in Linz he was employed in the Ministry of Defence in

Vienna where he is responsible for the logistic support of Austrian missions. He gained some experience working in Headquarters during his last mission 2006 in the European Union Staff Group OHQ for the operation ALTHEA at SHAPE.

Harald has three children (Manuel 13, Tanja 11 and Valerie, one). His interests include sports, reading, travelling and playing board games.



Senior Medical Officer

Capt. Silvia Patricia Nogueira arrived in UNFICYP on 23 March. Born on 2 December 1971, Silvia studied medicine at the University of Buenos Aires and graduated in 1998 as a doctor of internal medicine and rheumatology.

She joined the army in 2000 and prior to deploying on her first UN mission to Cyprus, she served at the Campo de Mayo Hospital and the Central Military Hospital. She also held the post of doctor in the Liceo Military San Martin Academy from 2003-2005. She

is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Buenos Aires University and is member of Rheumatology Society and Internal Medicine of Argentina. She is experienced in medical evacuations by air and pre-hospital trauma and life support having completed the accident trauma life support course (ATLS).

Her interests include reading, surfing the internet and playing volleyball, having been in the first league team of the Buenos Aires Volleyball Federation.



Chaplain, Sector 2

Revd Richard Pluck arrived in UNFICYP on 1 April 2009, taking over chaplaincy responsibility from Revd Brian Millson. Chaplains in the British military are traditionally known as "padres", and when in uniform wear a name tab and have crosses on their lapels, which helps them to be recognised.

Padre Pluck is ordained an Anglican and joined the British Army as a chaplain in 1994 after spending four years working in a parish church. During his time in the army, he has deployed operationally to Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Sierra Leone. In 2000, he was based at Ayios Nikolaos in Cyprus for two years which he very much enjoyed. He has

worked with many different units as their Padre including Infantry, Gunners, Signals and the Royal Logistics Corps, as well as serving as a Brigade Chaplain, Garrison Chaplain and in a Training Regiment with new recruits.

Padre Pluck is based at LPH with the Sector 2 URR, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC, and has responsibility for St Columba's Church, UNPA. He is single and enjoys horse riding, travel, visiting historical sites and buildings, and the countryside.



CO Sector 2

Lt. Col. Wheelton commissioned into the Royal Corps of Transport in August 1987 aged 19. His troop command was with 1st Armoured Division Transport Regiment in Germany before a two-year posting as the Manager of the British Junior Biathlon Team.

He then took up the post of Second-in-Command 63 Airborne Squadron before moving on as Adjutant of 21 Logistic Support Regiment in Northern Ireland, after which he returned to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as an instructor. Next came a year at Shrivenham on the Defence Technology Course (Master of Arts) before the Advanced Command and Staff Course (No. 3). His Black Bag appointment was as Directing Staff on the Junior Command and Staff Course. In September 2002 he assumed command of 82 Air Assault General Support Squadron, 13 Air Assault Regiment deploying to Iraq in February 2003. In April

2004, he took up the appointment of Chief of Staff 104 Logistic Support Brigade before promoting to Lieutenant Colonel and assuming the post of SO1 Logistic Operations in the Joint Force Logistic Component in September 2005. He deployed to Afghanistan in February 2006 as part of the National Support Command. In July 2007, he took command of 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC and deployed to Afghanistan again.

He is married to Denise, and they have two children (William, 12 and Ella, 11) and an excitable Old English Sheepdog (Guinness). His interests include skiing, long-distance running, orienteering, hill-walking and most types of adventure training.



CO Sector 4

Lt. Col. Lubomir Kochansky was born on 27 March 1960 in the Slovak Republic. His military career started in 1987 when he joined the Slovak Armed Forces.

After graduating in 1991 from the Military Academy as a Mechanized Infantry Officer, he was assigned as the Commander of a reconnaissance platoon of the Reconnaissance Battalion on a two-year tour. He was then promoted to the position of Reconnaissance Company Commander within the same unit.

From 1999 to 2000, he completed the course for senior officers and was assigned to the post of Chief Intelligence Officer of

the Reconnaissance Battalion. A year later, he gained the post of Chief of the Command Group within the same unit. From 2004, he has held the position of the Chief of the training section of the Slovak Republic's General Staff.

Lt. Col. Kochansky is married with two children and lives in the town of Presov. His hobbies include fishing, playing tennis and football, table tennis, all kinds of music and picking mushrooms.



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