Launch of De-mining – Phase 2

Guide to the CMP

The Blue Beret
August 2005

Launch of De-mining – Phase 2
I. Historical Background

The problem of the missing persons in Cyprus first arose as a result of the intercommunal troubles of 1963-1964. During this unstable period, several hundred Turkish Cypriots disappeared and 203 cases are still unaccounted for. A good number of Greek Cypriots also went missing, and some 40 cases are still unaccounted for today.

During the events that took place in July and August 1974, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots went missing. At that time, both UNFICYP and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were operating in Cyprus and were also dealing with the problem of the missing. During this tragic period, the ICRC was visiting all the detention centres in Greece and Turkey. A general programme for the repatriation of the prisoners detained in Turkey took place in October and November 1974, under the auspices of the ICRC.

In 1976, concluding that it could no longer be of assistance on the ground, and, since there was no further necessity for a neutral intermediary because of the cooperation of the two communities, the ICRC terminated its operations and all activity of theCMP.

From 1975-1977, a number of intercommunal meetings on the problem of the missing persons were held but there was no significant progress. Between 1977 and 1981, negotiations took place in Nicosia, Geneva and New York for the establishment of a Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP).

The 31 July 1997 Agreement, which has been agreed upon by the two leaders in the same time of death.

II. Legal Basis of the CMP and its Mechanism

Terms of Reference of the CMP call upon the Committee to look into the cases of persons reported missing in the inter-communal fighting as well as the events of July 1974 and afterwards. The mandate of theCMP is purely humanitarian. The Committee will not attempt to attribute responsibility for the deaths of any missing persons or make findings as to the cause of such deaths (Article 11, CMP Terms of Reference).

The 31 July 1997 Agreement, which has been agreed upon by the two leaders in the same case, provides for the exchange of information regarding known burial sites and return of the remains of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot missing persons.
A Brief Guide to the CMP

III. Reactivation of the CMP

On 30 August 2004, after more than four years of inactivity, the CMP met formally in the Ledra Palace. The Members agreed to consider how to expand the Committee’s scope of activity and responsibility, in accordance with the proposals formulated by the Secretary-General in his two letters to the two leaders of December 2003 and August 2004, calling for the resumption of the work of the CMP, namely:

a. To conclude the remaining investigative work on both sides on the basis of an agreed, comprehensive timetable.

b. To agree on the modalities for implementation of the 31 July 1997 Agreement in accordance with Article 12 of the Terms of Reference of the CMP on April 1981.

These two proposals are the result of long and intense bilateral negotiations carried out by the Third Member a.i. with his two Cypriot colleagues, in close consultations with the UN and the ICRC. These proposals merge the Terms of Reference of September 1994 and the July 1997 Agreement, a delicate integration which has enabled the two communities to address this issue with more efficiency and credibility.

The new mandate of the CMP now covers completion of the investigations, as envisaged in the 1981 Terms of Reference and procedural rules, as well as exhumations and identification, as provided for by the July 1997 Agreement.

The implementation of this new mandate is time-consuming and requires a complete reorganisation of CMP activities. Since September 2004, the Committee has had weekly meetings to address this important challenge, and progress is being made.

IV. INFORCE Involvement

On 25 October 2004, the CMP announced that INFORCE, a non-profit forensic science organisation, had been selected to undertake the exhumation project in Cyprus. The UK-based foundation was selected by the CMP after careful review of forensic institutions recommended by the ICRC in response to a formal request from the CMP.

Once INFORCE was selected and a work agreement was reached, the forensic foundation started with a technical survey of burial sites in preparation for exhumations and identification of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot remains.

In May 2005, Dr. Margaret Cox, CEO of INFORCE, participated in a survey of selected burial sites all over the island. The technical requirements for emergency exhumations, from 27 June 2005, the CMP carried out emergency exhumations under the supervision of an INFORCE forensic archaeologist guiding a Turkish Cypriot team comprising archaeologists, an anthropologist and specialised workers, along with the participation of a Greek Cypriot expert. This first phase had an emergency basis intended to safeguard remains and burial sites at risk due to heavy constructions and land use projects taking place, and was completed in early August 2005.

On Dr. Cox’s recommendation, the CMP also agreed to set up a forensic anthropological laboratory to be located in the buffer zone. For this purpose, an INFORCE forensic anthropologist visited Cyprus in July 2005 and prepared a comprehensive report which will enable the CMP to establish this laboratory in the near future.

In the meantime, remains found were to be taken to an upgraded Turkish Cypriot laboratory in the buffer zone, set up by INFORCE, for transfer to the anthropological laboratory as soon as it is set up in the buffer zone. A team of INFORCE experts will be in charge of this laboratory, placed under the auspices of the CMP.

V. Identification

Identification can be achieved by comparing “ante mortem data” (AMD) collected during contacts with families concerned with “post mortem data” (PMD) gathered during skeletal analysis in the anthropological laboratory. This comparison will be combined with DNA analysis of samples taken from the exhumed remains and from the families.

On 30 June 2005, the CMP agreed on the principles for the project in connection with the DNA identification of remains of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to be exhumed on the island. This project involves the Molecular Genetics Department B and the Laboratory of Forensic Genetics of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING), as well as an upgraded Turkish Cypriot laboratory.

To set up this mechanism, the two Cypriot Members of the Committee each appointed a Scientific Adviser. Dr. Marinos Caroulou and Dr. Erol Baysal are now working in INFORCE in the implementation of the DNA identification project.

The Advisers will also recommend two Turkish Cypriot scientists to be designated by the CMP to participate fully on this project under their supervision.
The Kilcullen Contingent

Back in June 2003, Sgt. Walter Kilcullen had a difficult decision to make. He very much wanted to apply for a posting abroad, since he had never overseen in his 33 years of service with the Irish police force "Garda Siochana." Translated literally, this means "guardians of the peace," and Walter felt that having spent most of his working life in the inner city of Dublin as a detective sergeant dealing with murders and serious crime, it was time for a change. Overseas postings are much sought after by the Irish police – hundreds of applications for few places (18 in Cyprus, three in Bosnia). Walter wanted to try.

However, he had other factors to take into consideration – the prime one being his family. His wife Mary and six children definitely had a say in this, since Walter had decided that it was all or none! So, they had a family consultation and Mary, who at first had reservations about the suggestion, said: "Go for it. If you get the posting, we shall take it from there". Walter went ahead and applied. When the news came through that he was accepted, he, Mary and daughters Sara and Emma flew to Cyprus to check out the location where they would spend the next year – in or near the village of Pyla, where Walter was to take up the post of PYCALO (Pyla Civil Affairs Liaison Officer). There were many rudimentary issues to clarify – most importantly, where they were going to live and which schools the children would be attending. Walter’s posting was an unaccompanied tour, so all expenses were to come straight out of his pocket. They immediately decided to buy a house, rather than rent one. One evening, Walter took Emma, who suffers from cerebral palsy, out for a stroll. They came across a small estate of villas being built. Emma walked into the shell of one of them and said: "Nice house, Dad". They bought it!

Walter met and became friendly with the headmaster of the Greek Civil School in the village. Mr. George Demosthenous. He invited Walter and Mary to visit his school, and told them that if they considered the idea worthwhile, he could offer Gary and Dara (9-year-old twins) a place there. Emma (11) was also offered a place. Even though the school was Greek-speaking, the boys had each other for company and soon managed to communicate with the other children in their class.

Emma, however, was a different matter altogether. Being a child with special needs, she required more intensive attentions. This was not the question in the village of Pyla. Walter made enquiries everywhere, including the British Bases, but the schooling there was only for British children, which they couldn’t afford. However, he had also contacted the authorities in the south. To his delight, they managed to find a place for Emma a primary school in Prodromos Primary School located in the centre of Larnaca. Here she received full-time special needs education and she thrived. The class had only three other children, all Greek-speaking, but somehow they – teachers and children – managed.

When Walter arrived in Pyla in August 2004, the only other UNPOL members apart from Walter and Mary were from Australia. Two months ago, with the augmentation of the civilian police force, Mr. Hans Kempe, a Dutchman, joined the Pyla team. According to Walter, "This adds the right flavour!" Walter enjoys meeting up with other members of UNPOL and civil affairs personnel at the time of his posting at HQ UNFICYP. "Now we have police officers not only from Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands, but also from Argentina, Bosnia, Croatia, India and Italy. It’s a growing family and we all get on well. UNPOL police officers may wear a different uniform and speak a different language, but back in our home country, there is a great similarity. The same types of situations, the same problems – and the same jokes!"

Now that the Kilcullens are nearing the end of their year in Pyla, Walter feels very much at home. He feels a sense of belonging in Pyla, which he considers a "very special place". He says: "I was openly accepted and welcomed here immediately by both communities, both as a police officer and as a family man". However Walter hastened to add that it is no easy task to get used to living in a world of conflict. Walter has nothing but the highest praise for the help they provided with Emma’s education.

With the family settled, Walter felt much more at ease to tackle his job. Based at the UNPOL station in the only mixed village in the buffer zone. He says: "I was openly accepted and welcomed here immediately by both communities, both as a police officer and as a family man". However Walter has found it difficult to get used to living in a world of conflict. He says: "I was openly accepted and welcomed here immediately by both communities, both as a police officer and as a family man". However Walter has found it difficult to get used to living in a world of conflict. He says: "I was openly accepted and welcomed here immediately by both communities, both as a police officer and as a family man". However Walter has found it difficult to get used to living in a world of conflict. He says: "I was openly accepted and welcomed here immediately by both communities, both as a police officer and as a family man".

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Launch of Second Phase of Buffer Zone De-mining Project

Phase two of the European Union-funded, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Partnership for the Future (PFF) Landmine and Ordnance Clearance Programme in Cyprus was launched early in the morning of 12 August. Two landmines were detonated in a Turkish Forces minefield in the buffer zone adjacent to the United Nations Protected Area (UNPA) and UNFICYP headquarters.

The controlled explosions were triggered after countdowns by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zbigniew Wlosowicz, UNFICYP’s Chief of Mission, and by Dr. Kezban Akansoy from the office of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus.

Mr. Wlosowicz welcomed the expansion of de-mining activities into the minefields of the Turkish Forces as well as the commitment of the Turkish Cypriot authorities and Turkish military authorities to the removal of landmines from the buffer zone once and for all.

"As of today, it is especially gratifying to note that we are now in a position to plan and programme for a mine-free buffer zone with the full co-operation of all concerned, an outcome that can only be of benefit to the island as a whole", he said.

The SRSG paid tribute to the ongoing collaboration between UNFICYP peacekeeping, UN Mine Action expertise, and the EU. He thanked the EU for its generous support for the buffer zone de-mining project.

He recalled how, at the initial launch of the de-mining programme last November, he had commented that every mine destroyed "brings us a step forward on the path to crossing points, to normalcy and to peace and reconciliation". Now, he hoped it would not be long "before more crossing points are opened.

Dr. Kezban Akansoy, on behalf of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus, spelled out the EU’s long-standing tradition of financing de-mining operations around the world, noted how mine clearing in Cyprus would contribute to normalization of the situation on the island and thanked UNFICYP for its help and cooperation. She described the four million Euro initiative as “an active contribution to peace building, increased safety and reconciliation here on the island”.

Both the United States Embassy in Cyprus and the British High Commission issued statements welcoming the fact that the new phase had been launched and that, in the words of the U.S. statement, “the two sides are actively cooperating with the UN on the process of de-mining.”

Said a spokesman for the British High Commission: “We welcome both sides’ commitment to a process that can only help to build confidence between the two communities.”

The Mine Action Centre was set up in October 2004 and mine clearance activities officially began on 19 November 2004. To date, the programme has cleared 1,294 anti-tank mines and 892 anti-personnel mines, making for a total of 2,186 mines cleared. In the process, 13 minefields and some 575,686 square metres have been declared clear by the de-mining team.

As part of the phase two programme, the Mine Action Centre announced the start of de-mining operations to the west and east of Nicosia’s Ayios Dhometios/Kermia area beginning 22 August.

A 100-metre safety cordon will be in place around the minefield during normal working hours (7.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.), necessitating possible road closures for mine clearance operations. To ensure safer, faster operations, detour directions are being posted in affected neighbourhoods, while the public is being advised to comply with safety instructions from local authorities.
New HIV/AIDS Focal Point Joins Campaign

This July marked the fifth anniversary of the passing of UN Resident Coordinator, Ivete Fernandes, who commissioned the campaign. The event commemorates the UN’s ongoing efforts to address the AIDS epidemic. The resolution underscored the fact that if left unchecked, AIDS could pose a risk to stability and security worldwide.

The UNFSU's T-shirts are available to purchase online and through local UN offices. The campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage people to take action against HIV/AIDS.

Introducing Peacekeeping Conduct and Discipline Units

The latest move in reforms to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations has instructed eight of the United Nations' peacekeeping operations to establish Conduct and Discipline Units immediately.

Each office will be staffed by senior-level experts on sexual exploitation and abuse, including points on sexual exploitation and abuse, who were installed following reports of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations over the past year and a half. The Conduct and Discipline Units place conduct and discipline problems for peacekeeping personnel in several peacekeeping mission headquarters. They will be guided by a Conduct and Discipline Unit now being set up by UNFICYP for peacekeeping operation’s New York Headquarters.

The new units will address issues such as preventing misconduct, handling complaints and data management and ensuring compliance with United Nations standards of conduct. United Nations rules forbid staff from contact with prostitutes, forbid sexual relations with anyone under 18, and “strongly discourage” relations with beneficiaries. (In UN peacekeeping, that means all members of the host country’s armed forces or UN forces within a country that have their own codes of conduct with more stringent requirements, including such measures as curfews, in which peacekeeping personnel are not allowed to wear military uniforms off-duty, and telephone hotlines to report cases of harassment.

The new Conduct and Discipline Units will not conduct investigations. These will be handled by the United Nations’ Office for Internal Oversight Services and other offices.

The new units are part of the ongoing reforms sparked by the United Nations’ HIV/AIDS strategy, which was endorsed by the Security Council in March. They are intended to complement existing efforts to reduce the risk of peacekeepers contracting the virus while in mission: first, the creation of specific capacity within missions to address AIDS; second, ensuring the availability of condoms and observing universal medical precautions; third, the development of voluntary counselling and testing capabilities in mission; fourth, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; fifth, setting up projects for outreach to local communities and mainstreaming the issue of AIDS into mission mandates.

The UNFSU has already launched a number of initiatives to address the issue of HIV/AIDS, including awareness campaigns, training sessions, and partnerships with local organizations. The campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage people to take action against HIV/AIDS.

If In Doubt, Stay Out!

It remains a priority objective for UNFICYP to implement the Secretary-General’s zero tolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

In case of doubt, staff should contact United Nations’ Office for Internal Oversight Services and other offices. It is important to report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse promptly.

In the event of an incident, staff should follow the procedures outlined by UNFICYP. This includes reporting the incident to the United Nations’ Office for Internal Oversight Services and other offices.

If in doubt, stay out!
New Contingents as UNCIVPOL becomes UNPOL

Much news on the Civicpol, sorry, make that the UNPOL front. It has been quite newsy. Not only has UNFICYP increased its police contingent but there are at least two other big upcoming stories. Many will have noted that the mission’s UNPOL configuration has been in expansive mode these last few months. Not only has UNFICYP acquired more police, but we have a new range of unfamiliar uniform insignia on our personnel. The five-contingent strong UNPOL (remember, the Croats joined the Australians, Dutch, Indians and Irish in mid-April) now boasts eight contingents with the late June arrival of the first Argentinian police, followed by the Italians in mid-July and the Bosnians in late July. This brings UNPOL’s strength to 59, ten short of the 69-strong ceiling set by the Security Council. Still, keep a sharp watch-out for new uniform insignia because there’s bound to be more to follow!

The first Bosnian UNPOL Contingent joined UNPOL on 24 July 2005

The first Italian UNPOL Contingent joined UNPOL on 12 July 2005

The first Argentinian UNPOL Contingent joined UNPOL on 29 June 2005

Irish Rotation

As we welcome the 10 new members of UNPOL, UNCIVPOL said its goodbye this month to 11 members of the 12th Irish Civilian Police Contingent. The mug-out took place on 5 August in the UNPOL club.

The festivities started at 7:00 p.m. Mugs were presented by the Irish Contingent Commander, Capt. Sergio Oltana (Contingent Commander for the 12th Irish Civilian Police Contingent). In the previous months, he is presently a patrol officer in Dhenia.

Lt. Elias Auadre is involved with public security and terrorism. He is now attached to the UNPOL club in Mamiani, Sector 1.

Sgt. Domingo Zerpa is a communications officer. He is presently attached to the SCAT team in Mammari, Sector 1.

Insp. Slobodan Kovacevic (Contingent Commander) holds a law degree and specializes in people trafficking, narcotics and organised crime. He is currently attached to the SCAT team in Sector 2.

Snr. Police Officer Nenad Djuric is a firearms and field training officer. He is now attached to the UNPOL training office in the UNPA.

Ch. Insp. Salvatore Masia (Contingent Commander) deals with crime, traffic investigations and public order. He is currently Station Commander in Dhenia.

Ch. Insp. Antonello De Chiara is involved with the emergency services and INTERPOL. He is attached to the SCAT team in Sector 2.

Insp. Massimo Diagona is a crime scene investigator. He now holds the post of Staff Officer Ops at HQ UNPOL, UNPA.

Insp. Salvatore Cassara deals with criminal investigations in southern Italy. He is presently a patrol officer in Dhenia.

The evening’s pageantry began with a drill formation and medal presentation to peacekeepers who had served in Cyprus over the last six to 24 months.


South American Medal Parade marks Tour’s End

UNFICYP’s Sector 1, Argentinian Contingent headquarters, known as Camp San Martin, lies nestled amongst a forest of cypress trees and green valleys, past the village of Katydahata, and adjacent to the western sector of the buffer zone. It was here, on 11 August where UNFICYP guests, officials from Chile, Germany, Switzerland, the French Defence Attaché, families and friends were invited to celebrate the 12th Argentinian medal parade for 155 troops coming to the end of their tour in Cyprus.

Lt. Col. Vílchez presenting the UN medal to one of his soldiers

The Argentinian Contingent (ARGCON) has served UNFICYP in Sector 1 since September 1993 and comprises troops from the Argentinian Task Force 25, the MFR and UN Flight. With the arrival of new recruits, these South American troops fly out on 7 August 2005, returning to bases in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Argentina.

The evening’s pageantry began with a drill formation and medal presentation to peacekeepers who had served in Cyprus over the last six to 24 months.

The highlight of the evening once the sun had set was a “Gatos” dances by Camp San Martin personnel.

Sgt. Vílchez showed off several lively, fast and precise toe-tapping manoeuvres in a dance style called “Malambo”. Complete with the very finest of “Classic Tango” demonstrations, the show was capped with a finale of folkloric song by the Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Jorge Giudice, radiating yet more of Argentina’s rich musical tradition.

Lt. Col. Sidders presenting the UN medal to one of his soldiers

Force Commander Maj. Gen. Figoli complimented members of Sector 1 on their immaculate turn out and bearing on the medal parade.

He commended them on their professionalism while serving with UNFICYP and bid a fond farewell to those soon returning home to be reunited with families and loved ones. One minute of silence was observed in memory of the fallen Argentinian soldiers who died in the name of peace throughout UN missions.

Commanding Officer Sector 1, Lt. Col. Frederico Sidders, gave a very moving speech in both English and Spanish, noting: “We worked responsibly, with efficiency and commitment toward accomplishing the assigned mission”. As the soldiers marched off proudly bearing their new UNFICYP medals, guests were led to an elegantly laid out array of food and drinks on the moonlit terrace overlooking pool and stage.

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Maj. Gen. Figoli saluting the troops

Standing at attention: this resplendent uniform dates back to the historical Grenadiers’ Regiment led by Gen. Jose de San Martin in the emancipation campaign of 1812 against the Spanish.
**Albanian Elections**

As a member of the European Youth Forum (AEGEE), I was fortunate enough to be selected as an international election observer to help monitor Albania's parliamentary elections in early July. We worked closely with a local NGO (MIJAT) to promote voter turnout in a campaign entitled “Walk the Vote.”

Amidst rumour and speculation about the way the elections would be run, we set about our challenging task, backed by USAID as part of its commitment to free and fair elections worldwide. In helping to fund our presence and by providing technical support for the electoral process, USAID helped ensure a more secure and comfortable environment in which to vote.

We, in turn, as international observers were able to experience Albanian hospitality. During my week monitoring the election campaign in the city of Schodër, I talked to local people about their concerns and expectations for the up-coming event.

On 3 July, Albanians proved they could indeed “walk the vote,” as the electorate voted to replace the incumbent Socialist Party with the Democratic Party.

**Outside Activities ...**

**Dyslexic Conference in Limassol**

Association, Mr. Costas Apostolides. Drawing on Costas’ experience, Ersin set up the NCDIA. At first, their only contact was by e-mail. However when the crossing points were opened on 23 April 2003, facilitating passage between north and south on the island, members of the two associations then had the luxury of meeting up in person.

Thus, a three-day International Multilingualism and Dyslexia Conference – the first Cyprus Symposium – took place in Limassol, starting on 14 July. Twenty Turkish Cypriots representing the NCDIA crossed to the south and gathered at the Hawaii Hotel to meet 20 Greek Cypriots from the CDA. The featured keynote speaker was Dr. Ilhan Raman of the School of Social Sciences, Middlesex University, UK. His insightful remarks sparked a lively discussion on how to help the children of both communities through the design of appropriate education systems for dyslexics.

A follow-up conference has been arranged for later this summer at the premises of NCDIA in northern Nicosia. Ersin and Costas will no doubt be getting their heads together to achieve even more progress for dyslexics island-wide. As Ersin says, “All children have the right to an education, irrespective of any learning difficulty. It is no different in Cyprus.”

**Argentinian Air Force Day**

This month was very important for all personnel of the Argentinian Air Force around the world. On 12 August, we celebrated the creation of the “Escuela de Aviación Militar,” built in Buenos Aires in 1912 during the presidency of the late Roque Sáenz Peña. This date officially marks the birth of the Air Force in Argentina, 1912 during the presidency of the late Roque Sáenz Peña.

On 12 August, UNFICYP hosted a moving ceremony at the old Nicosia Airport to honour such actions. All 28 members of UN Flight attended (see photo above), including our Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Osvaldo José Anuleni. Force Commander Maj. Gen. Hector Figoli was also there. In celebrating 93 years of dedication, the acceptance of the Cypriot “dance of the tumblers”! in their teenage years for whom being uprooted is not terribly appealing. The energetic last dance – “Sousta” – bringing the evening to a close.

The event shows once again Facility Manager Michael’s dedication to the military and civilian personnel as he continues his efforts to bring these unique aspects of the Cypriot dimension experience to the table. This is an event that many soldiers might not have had the opportunity to enjoy outside the UNPA during their time in Cyprus.

Ersin and Costas during the Cyprus Symposium