

The Blue Beret



Historic Visit of the Pope

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Editorial

What's the buzz?

There's been a lot of buzz on the streets and in sidewalk cafes on the island about the prospects of the UN-backed peace talks and the future role in Cyprus of the UN itself. Fresh opinions and theories have surfaced in recent weeks following the announcement of the Secretary-General in his May report that he will submit a further report in November assessing progress made in the ongoing negotiations. While speculation on what this forthcoming report might say is not surprising but, in fact, expected, the submission itself of a report should not come as a surprise.

We are rapidly approaching the two-year mark since the current talks began in September 2008, and nearly 80 leaders' meetings have taken place since then. Certainly, much progress has been made in these last two years. Further, the two leaders are showing their commitment to reaching a solution by agreeing to meet so regularly, including in the usually serene month of August. In his May report, the Secretary-General encouraged the leaders of the two communities "to keep up the momentum and to work towards solution of the problem in the shortest time possible". It could be said that one of the aims of the November report is to help the leaders maintain this momentum towards reaching a settlement by the end of 2010.

Some are skeptical about what has been achieved in the talks so far. Adding to the topical buzz, a commonly heard expression is "all talk and no action". Negotiations are complex, difficult and often lengthy, and these are no different. As Secretary-General Ban himself said: "the issues are exceedingly complex and embedded in a troubled history". What is important is that the leaders, and their teams, have the space they need to carry out the negotiations and maintain the pace and vigor. The overriding principle in the talks is that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", a standard set by the parties themselves.

Shifting back to the November report, there are no foregone conclusions about what this document might hold. While debates on future scenarios are only natural and a sign of a healthy society, they are also an expression of interest in the issues at hand. Indeed, discussions on future prospects in Cyprus should serve as a useful exercise when placed in a broader context, and not at the expense of focusing on the here and now – i.e., the ongoing talks. Bottom line: there are still plenty of new leaves to turn over, and plenty of time for the parties to make significant progress before November.



Leaders pick up pace in the talks focusing on property

The leaders of the two Cypriot communities held six additional meetings over the course of June and July focusing exclusively on the issue of property, one of the six chapters under discussion in the ongoing negotiations aimed at reunifying the island.

Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu have been meeting regularly since 26 May when the United Nations-backed peace talks resumed following a brief break due to elections in the north. Over the course of their recent meetings, the Cyprus leaders have been thrashing out proposals aimed to resolve numerous complex claims between the two sides on property seized decades ago.

Speaking at United Nations Headquarters in early June where he presented the latest report of the Secretary-General on his good offices mission, Special Adviser Alexander Downer stressed the need to ensure that the negotiations continue to progress. "The process needs to maintain momentum. There needs to be continual forward movement in the negotiations," he said. Following a closed-door meeting with the Security Council, Mr. Downer told reporters in New York that the two leaders need to be enthusiastic about meeting, and having their officials meet from time to time, particularly when issues become difficult.

The two leaders have scheduled meetings through the usually quiet month of August, a move seen as "a pretty good sign of the level of their commitment," Mr Downer said.

In late June, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with Mr Eroglu at the United Nations in New York, the Turkish Cypriot leaders' first visit to the world body headquarters since being elected on 18 April. The Secretary-General encouraged Mr. Eroglu to grasp



TC Leader Dervis Eroglu with the SG, 28 June 2010

the current political window of opportunity to reach a settlement and expressed his hope that the two leaders would make serious advances in the coming months. For his part Mr. Eroglu voiced his commitment to reaching a settlement, adding he believed it could be achieved this year with goodwill and compromises from both sides.

Also in June, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNFICYP for an additional six months to 15 December 2010. As part of the resolution the Council welcomed the progress made in talks between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots and encouraged them to reach a comprehensive, durable settlement.



SASG Downer speaks to reports after a meeting of the Security Council.



The United Nations Security Council

New SRSG/Chief of Mission

Lisa M. Buttenheim was appointed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

She brings to the position extensive experience with the United Nations in the political and peacekeeping areas.

Ms. Buttenheim succeeds Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, who served in the position from May 2008 to April 2010. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to Mr. Zerihoun for his dedicated service and exemplary leadership of UNFICYP over the last two years. Mr. Zerihoun also provided invaluable support to the Secretary-General's mission of good offices, acting as Deputy to his Special Adviser on Cyprus.

Prior to her latest appointment, Ms. Buttenheim was Director of the Middle East and West Asia Division in the Department of Political Affairs from January 2009, having previously served in the same department as Director of the Asia and Pacific Division from January to December 2008, and as Director of the Asia and Middle East Division in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations from April 2004 to December 2007. She was Director and Head of the United Nations Office in

Belgrade from March 2003 to March 2004.

Between May 1997 and February 2003, Ms. Buttenheim served as Senior Political Adviser in the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. During that period, she also held assignments as Chief of Staff, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and as Director and Senior Adviser in the Office of the Special Envoy for the Balkans in Geneva.

In addition, she held a number of positions in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs in New York, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Jerusalem, having joined the United Nations in March 1983.

Ms. Buttenheim holds a Master's degree in international economics and Middle East studies from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor's degree in political science and English, from Stanford University, in Palo Alto, California.

Born in 1954, she is married to Jean-Claude Aimé, a former United Nations official.



Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi welcomes Lisa M Buttenheim, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNFICYP Chief of Mission.

Pilgrimages celebrating Ayia Marina feast day

Over a thousand Greek Cypriot pilgrims attended an Orthodox Church service celebrating the feast day of Ayia Marina in the buffer zone area of Dherynia on 17 July 2010.

The annual pilgrimage is facilitated by UNFICYP peacekeepers who escort the pilgrims to and from the church. For the first time in almost four decades the pilgrims were also able to attend an evening mass the day before the feast day on 16 July in preparation for the celebration of the saint's day. Approximately 150 people attended the service. On the feast day the church-goers were also able to use their own vehicles to drive through the buffer zone to the small chapel of Ayia Marina. Others were escorted in UN vehicles by peacekeepers. Following the service the icon of Ayia Marina was taken on a procession around the church and the pilgrims were able to pay homage.

Military, police and civilian units of UNFICYP, in a coordinated effort with the local Mayor of Dherynia, facilitated the event which was attended by a total of 1110 people.

The feast day of Ayia Marina was also celebrated by the Maronite community at the church of Ayia Marina Skylloura, located in the north near Kokkina, for the first time in 36 years. UNFICYP facilitated communication between the two sides to enable this historic occasion to take place. Over 500 people



attended the mass in the Maronite church held by Youssef Soueif, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus.

The Maronite Archbishop, described the day as "historic for all Maronites of Cyprus" and especially the Ayia Marina residents who expressed their desire to witness a service being carried out in their village church.

"My prayer today is of gratitude to God, a plea for a just and continuing peace on our island," said the Archbishop, adding his hopes for this historic service to be the start of a whole new era for Cyprus.



Representatives of Cyprus leaders visit Limnitis/ Yesilirmak road project

The Representatives of the two Cyprus Leaders travelled with United Nations officials to the north-west of the island on 25 June 2010 to witness first-hand the progress being made on the Limnitis/Yesilirmak road project

The visit, agreed to by Greek Cypriot Leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot Leader Dervis Eroglu at their meeting on 15 June, took the Representatives - George Iacovou and Kudret Ozersay - to the site where workers and contractors from the Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot FAP-Tarmac Joint Venture are upgrading the stretch of road linking the towns of Limnitis/Yesilirmak and Kato Pyrgos/Asagi Pirgo.

Also participating in the visit were the mayors of the two villages, who, together with the Representatives,

took part in a brief tour of the road works and received a briefing by Tiziana Zennaro, project manager of the UN Development Programme - Partnership for the Future (UNDP-PFF), the UN body overseeing the project.

The project aims to improve the condition of the road between the two towns to allow civilian traffic to flow again through this area. When the road is opened in the coming months, the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing will be the seventh such gateway through the buffer zone facilitating movement across the island.

Before leaving the construction site this morning, the Representatives agreed to follow the progress being made on the project with a view to a further visit in the coming weeks.



Limintis-Yesilirmak road project in buffer zone, 25 June 2010.



Aerial view of construction onLimintis-Yesilirmak road project



The representatives being briefed on the progress of the road construction works

Historic visit by Pope Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI, in an historic three-day pilgrimage to Cyprus from 4 to 6 June 2010, was accommodated at the Roman Catholic Holy Cross Church located in the buffer zone area of Nicosia.

The Holy Cross Church is a Franciscan monastery which falls into the civil use area of the Nicosia buffer zone and is wedged between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot sides of the capital.

The Church in the medieval heart of Nicosia still bears scars from the crossfire of the ethnic strife in the 1960s and the 1974 events and bullet marks are evident on the pale yellow sandstone of its upper levels.

The building lies opposite a United Nations observation post and sandbagged gun positions of opposing forces -- now unmanned -- and is surrounded on two sides by a derelict corridor of no-man's land where access is restricted and is patrolled by UN peacekeepers.

In preparation for the Pontiff's visit, UNFICYP uniformed and civilian peacekeepers worked closely with Cypriot authorities to ensure the security of the Pope while in the buffer zone.

"Maple House" patrol base, a compound within the old town buffer zone, which received its name from the days when Canadian peacekeepers inhabited the building, was re-opened and refurbished in preparation for the visit. The complex, which has not housed UN peacekeepers for the last two decades as a result of the unmanning of positions by the two sides as a confidence-building measure, was transformed into a situation centre operated by peacekeepers from Sector Two's British contingent, as well as the multi-national Mobile Force Reserve, throughout the three-day visit.

United Nations police collaborated with the Cyprus Police to control access in and out of the civil use area, in addition to maintaining the integrity of the buffer zone.

The Pope arrived in Cyprus on June 4, blessing an olive tree as a pledge of his prayers for peace on the island. In his statements he said: "Let us all redouble our efforts to build a real and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region." he said.

Pope Benedict met with Cypriot Church leader Archbishop Chrysostomos as well as with the 88-year old Turkish Cypriot Islamic leader Sheikh Nazim, who leads the Islamic Sufi Naqshbandi sect, in a brief yet symbolic encounter outside the small Holy Cross Church in the buffer zone.

As he arrived at the Church complex, which served as the residence for the Pope during his three-day trip, Nazim expressed his optimism on prospects for a lasting peace on the island stating: "I hope that despite our faults our hearts are moving in the same direction."

The Pope has said his visit is not political and in a speech to Archbishop Chrysostomos, head of Cyprus's Orthodox Church, said he hoped all "could find the wisdom and strength to work together for a just settlement."

He urged all to "strive for peace and reconciliation and to build for future generations a society distinguished by respect for the rights of all, including the inalienable rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of worship."

Addressing President Demetris Christofias at the



Peacekeeper manning the observation post at Paphos Gate opposite the Holy Cross Church in the buffer zone area of old Nicosia for the Pope's visit.



The Pope arrives at the Holy Cross Church in the buffer zone.



The Force Commander and UN peacekeepers await the arrival of the Pope outside the Holy Cross Church in the buffer zone.



departure ceremony, the Pope said that "having stayed these past nights at the Apostolic Nunciature, which happens to be in the United Nations buffer zone, I have seen for myself something of the sad division of the island, as well as learning of the loss of a significant part of a cultural heritage which belongs to all humanity....Surely, truth and reconciliation, together with respect, are the soundest foundation for the united and peaceful future of this island and for the stability and prosperity of her people," the Pope declared.

The Pope said the Christians and Muslims of Cyprus must learn to speak to one another and respect one another. "Let me also express again my sincere hope

and prayer that, together, Christians and Muslims will become a haven for peace and reconciliation among Cypriots and serve as an example to other countries," he said.

Before going to the airport, Pope Benedict paid a brief visit to the Maronite Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Graces, the spiritual heart of the largest Catholic community in Cyprus, where he conducted his last service before leaving the island. This was an opportunity for the families of the UN staff to come down and line the route to the church. Some of the families with babies had the unique opportunity of having their infants blessed by the Pope.



The Pope with Archbishop Chrysostomos



Turkish Cypriot Islamic leader Sheikh Nazim (centre)

“The story of “Maple House”

«Maple House» is the arcade style building complex where the troops patrolling the buffer zone area of old Nicosia, mainly Canadians, were once housed. Twenty-five thousand Canadians served as peacekeepers in Cyprus between 1964 and 1993. The building had not been used since their departure and was opened for use by the United Nations peacekeepers during the visit of the Pope to cyprus from 4-6 June 2010.



View of “Maple House” building complex- so-named by the Canadian contingent when they manned the patrol base there. The building which had not been used by peacekeepers since the unamning of positions in Nicosia by the two sides in 1989 was re-opened and partly refurbished for use during the visit of the Pope.



“Maple House” is famous for its underground parking lot, which still houses cars imported from Japan, marooned there since 1974. They are thickly coated in dust and their tyres are flat, but they are still in working order. All have just 60 miles on their clock: marking their sole journey from Famagusta port to Nicosia.



Another feature of Maple House is a room where soldiers have collected a number of items, including televisions, radios and other memorabilia from houses and other buildings and have put them on display.



Building near the Holy Cross Church and the French school where sandbagged gun positions of opposing forces lay unammned.



Bathroom in “Maple House” building.



Internal corridor of the residential part of “Maple House”.



A soldier from the British contingent on duty in the operations centre of “Maple House” during the Pope’s visit

Defining moment as General Assembly creates UN Women

In a bid to accelerate the empowerment of women, the General Assembly today voted on 2 July 2010 unanimously to create a dynamic new entity merging four United Nations offices focusing on gender equality, a move hailed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other senior officials.

“The newest member of the UN family has been born,” Mr. Ban told the Assembly after it passed the resolution setting up the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women. “This is truly a watershed day,” he declared.

The new body will merge four of the world body’s agencies and offices: UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW).

“By bringing together four parts of the UN system dedicated to women’s issues, Member States have created a much stronger voice for women and for gender equality at the global level,” said the Secretary-General.

“It will now be much more difficult for the world to ignore the challenges facing women and girls – or to fail to take the necessary action,” he added.

UN Women is the result of years of negotiations among Member States and advocacy by the global women’s movement. Set to become operational next January, it will drive the world body’s efforts to promote women’s rights.

UN Women is set to have an annual budget of at least \$500 million – double the current combined resources of the four agencies it will comprise.

Mr. Ban acknowledged that many Member States are facing resource constraints due to the global economic downturn, but expressed confidence that the new office will receive strong financial support.

“UN Women is a recognition of a simple truth,” he said in a statement issued by his spokesperson.

“Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human rights, it is a social and economic imperative. Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and strong. Where



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable,” it added.

“Today’s action will do more than simply consolidate United Nations offices,” Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro told reporters earlier today. “It will consolidate the United Nations strengths.” She noted that while the UN has made significant strides, it has also faced serious challenges such as inadequate funding and fragmentation.

One of the main goals of UN Women will be to support the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and other inter-governmental bodies in devising policies.

The new body will also aim to help Member States implement standards, provide technical and financial support to countries which request it, and forge partnerships with civil society.

Within the UN, it will hold the world body accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.

“UN Women will give women and girls the strong, unified voice they deserve on the world stage,” Ms. Migiro said, calling today a “positive and exciting moment” for the entire UN family.

Set to be based in New York, UN Women will be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The UN, said General Assembly President Ali Treki, is “uniquely placed” to take the leading role on the issue of promoting women’s rights, expressing his delight at the creation of UN Women.





It might have been an ordinary sunny day in Cyprus but for 250 of the soldiers who arrived in UNFICYP in March 2010, Monday 14 June 2010 was a very special day; it was the day when the United Nations recognized their individual and collective contribution to the peace process on this island.

Just as the sun was going down, HQ UNFICYP Staff NCO led by Capt Tomas Dano and SSgt Deborah Hughes, ushered Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Defence and Military Attachés, Diplomats, UNFICYP Senior Staff and all other guests to their seats outside of the old Nicosia Airport Terminal Building, the venue for this year's UNFICYP Combined Summer Medal Parade.

The event started at 19.00 hrs when Parade Commander, Major Adrian Patrick, gave the command for the troops to march on. The first to march on was the Music Band, which provided the parade not only with music but also an amazing spectacle of colour and sound. The band was followed by the Sector 1 Contingent which was predominantly made up of soldiers from Argentina, but also had a representation from Chile, Brazil and Paraguay. The Sector 2 Contingent of British soldiers from 40 Signal Regiment, based in Ulster, Northern Ireland, marched on next,

followed by the Sector 4 troops made up of Slovak and Hungarian Contingents. The Slovak Contingent was made up from the NBC Battalion based in Rožňava, Slovakia and marched in one formation with their Hungarian colleagues.

Newly appointed Chief of Mission Lisa Buttenheim and Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi jointly received the parade salute and carried out an inspection of the troops.

"The medal has been awarded for various supervisory or observation roles with the United Nations Force in Cyprus since March 1964 onwards. For subsequent tours over the initial qualifying 90 days, a silver numeral is affixed to the ribbon. To date 173,773 Medals have been awarded since the start of the Mission."

Following the conclusion of the parade, participants and guests were invited to share in some truly multinational hospitality at a post-parade reception. The contingents put on an eclectic spread of traditional foods and beverages for everyone to enjoy. This evening event had been superbly staged to the great credit of all those involved in the transformation of this runway at the old Nicosia International Airport.

By Capt. Tomas Daño



Force Commander salutes peacekeepers efforts

Force Commander and Acting Chief of Mission Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi in his address welcomed Ms Lisa Buttenheim, who was appointed by the Secretary-General as his Special Representative and UNFICYP Chief of Mission, and attended the event whilst on her familiarization visit to Cyprus before she takes over her duties in the mission.

The Force Commander noted that since 1964 UNFICYP personnel, both military and civilian, have served the cause of peace in Cyprus. "Though the nature of the challenge has evolved, shifted and faced setbacks, previous generations and ours have remained resolute and we have done our job well. We have fulfilled our mandate to prevent a resumption of hostilities. But the fact that we have been, on the whole, successful, is not necessarily a matter for over-congratulation. For it is impossible to escape another fact: if the UN peacekeeping mission has been in Cyprus for so long, it is because a comprehensive settlement to the division of the island remains elusive," he said.

Debernardi said that in the last two years the UN has deployed great efforts to help the two communities negotiate an end to the conflict. The Secretary-General, through his Special Adviser and his Good Offices

Mission, has made clear his commitment to the peace process and support for the two sides, he said. "UNFICYP has continued to do its part by helping to create the conditions that allow the peace talks to carry on. In the end, however, it is up to the sides to determine whether an agreement is possible and what kind of deal they can live with. As the Secretary-General has consistently said, an agreement is within reach. We all share the hope, expressed by the Cyprus leaders, that the sides will be able to conclude such an agreement in 2010," he said.

Looking ahead, the Force Commander said, "I believe that it will be a very interesting and challenging time for the mission and we must be even more diligent in our efforts to enable a just and lasting political solution to be found."



In the Service of Peace

The UNPOL Medal parade was held on 16 July, 2010. In total 19 police officers from 5 contingents received medals for their service in UNFICYP.

Addressing the parade, Force Commander and Acting Chief of Mission Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi pointed out that UNFICYP's mission is not a simple one and the often political and news worthy nature of the daily decisions that have to be taken require an in-depth understanding of the situation here in Cyprus, its subtleties and history. "In all that you have been asked to undertake you have not been found wanting. You have performed to the highest standards and without the clear legislative framework usual in your home countries. As a unit you have experienced tangible success with the opening of UN OP 54 – the joint communications room. I am certain, that this bi-communal project, which is the result of your collective enterprise and hard work, will be an unequivocal success," he said.

Receiving the United Nations peacekeeping medal awarded by the Secretary-General is formal recognition of your efforts and not simply a token of attendance; he said stressing that it is earned through the challenging role undertaken here. "Upon receiving your medal, you join a select group of individuals who proudly wear their medal in the knowledge that they have given of themselves in the services of peace on this island."

Senior Police Adviser Chief Superintendent John Farrelly in his address to the medal recipients said that wearing this meal has two sides, "on the one side it demands you always give the very best of yourself and on the other that you be a role model to others in showing unselfishness and commitment in striving for peace. He congratulated the peacekeepers on their dedication and commitment to the peacekeeping effort in Cyprus.



UNFICYP Military Skills Competition

The first of two Military Skills Competitions took place on 17 March 2010 in the UNPA as eagerly expected by all sectors. Last winners of the previous competition held in November were from the Mobile Force Reserve who had their eyes on taking the trophy again in March. Sector 1, who came in a close second in the winter competition, also trained hard, leaving no stone unturned in their preparation to win the trophy back. The competition began in the early morning darkness and everybody could feel the anticipation in the air as all sectors lined up at the start of the first endurance - stand.

Following the first test of their physical strength, all competing teams turned their eyes to the more sophisticated tasks aimed at demonstrating their military knowledge and skills. They underwent the following disciplines: driving skills, command task, incident reaction, map reading, shooting, patrolling and observation. The teams gave their best and tried to score as many points as possible to get ahead in the competition. The closing discipline was the assault course, which again demonstrated the physical

preparedness of the teams, but it was also the test of their psychological and mental capabilities. Towards the end of the competition, competitors were mentally and physically exhausted and feeling depleted of energy, moments which will undoubtedly remain etched in their memories.

After a hard days contest the winners were announced. As follows: Sector 2 - team A in first place; followed by Sector 4 - team A in second; and Sector 2 - team B in third. Shouts of joy and laughter resonated along with the announcement of the winning teams. Feelings of pride and satisfaction were strewn on the faces of all competitors, evidence of their team spirit and hard work which provided them the hard-earned victory they so eagerly sought. Only days after the Military Skills Competition I spotted a group of international UN peacekeepers running around Blue Beret camp with heavy backpacks - perhaps future winners?

By Capt. Tomas Daño



New Faces



Chief Civilian Personnel Officer in UNFICYP

Armen Vahradyan is on assignment from the Field Personnel Division of the Department of Field Support at HQ in New York as Chief Civilian Personnel Officer in UNFICYP, effective 27 June 2010. He was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1965 and graduated from the Yerevan Institute of National Economy in 1987, and obtained his Master's degree in Business Administration from the American University in Armenia in 1993. He joined the United Nations in 1998 as one of the successful candidates for the National Competitive Examination from his country.

He started his career in the UN with the Personnel Management and Support Service of DPKO. From 1998 to 1991 he worked in the front office of ASG/OPS in DPKO as an Administrative Officer before

returning to PMSS. From 2004 to 2006 he served in UNMEE as Chief of the International Staff Unit and OIC Personnel Section. He returned to PMSS in 2006, which was later renamed Field Personnel Division. From 2006 until his posting with UNFICYP, Armen served as the desk officer for the biggest peacekeeping missions, first UNMIS and then UNAMID, and over the last three months he was OIC of the Africa I Section in FPD/DFS. Armen is fluent in Armenian, Russian and English. He is married and has two daughters.



Senior Medical Officer

Maj. Ernesto Pfister arrived in UNFICYP on 6 March 2010 to take up the post of Senior Medical Officer. He studied medicine in the Universidad de Cordoba and after completing his degree specializing in surgery and emergency medicine he served in several leading positions at Campo de Mayo Military Hospital and Salta Military Hospital. His recent rank in the Argentinean army is "Major Medic Specialist in surgery". Major Pfister is married to Silvana and they have 3 children.



2IC MFR - Captain Gabriel Roveda

Capt Gabriel Roveda arrived in UNFICYP on 6 March to take the post of MFR deputy commander. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1972 and graduated the Military College in 1995, from the infantry branch specializing in Airborne troops and intelligence. He has served in several positions including paratrooper, coy commander and mountain coy commander. This is second tour of duty with UNFICYP having served in 2004 in ROCA camp in Sector 1. He was deployed in the MINUSTAH mission in Haiti in 2008 as an intelligence officer. He is married to Maria-Elena Martinez and they have two children: Iñaki (4) and Ana (2). His interests are football, rugby, parachuting.

Force Supply Officer

Maj Murdoch MacRury MBE RLC took over the post of Force Supply Officer on 3 May 2010. He was born on 3 June 1962 in Benbecula, in the Outer Hebrides, western Scotland. He joined the Army as an apprentice chef in 1978. In his time as an Officer in the Royal Logistic Corps his posts have comprised stints as administration officer to welfare officer and more recently Quartermaster.

Maj MacRury has worked all over the world on many deployments, from the Falklands conflict in 1982 to the more recent troubles in Iraq. He has served with the United Nations on two other occasions: once in the Balkans and recently as Quartermaster on Op TOSCA, UNFICYP. He is married to Jennie and they have three grown up children -- Amy (24) Ben (22) and Sam (18). His interests include squash, water-skiing, football, golf, cricket, sailing and DIY motor racing (F1).



HQ JOC Duty Officer

Cpt. Pavol Koskovsky took over the post of HQ JOC Duty Officer on 17 March 2010. Born on 13 April 1978 in Humenne, Slovakia, he graduated from the Military Academy in 2001 as a lieutenant.

Cpt. Koskovsky started his carrier as an infantry platoon commander. After serving a year and a half he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant and he was posted as an S -3 staff officer at battalion level. His last appointments were company commander at Basic Training School and Chief of the Internal Management Branch at Training Battalion. This is his first tour of duty as a peacekeeper.

He is married to Martina and they have a daughter, Bianka (3). His interests include tennis, swimming, and volleyball.



HQ JOC Duty Officer

Capt Diego FRISOLI took over the post of HQ JOC Duty Officer on 30 March 2010. Born on 23 August 1976 in Entre Ríos, north of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he graduated from the Military Academy in 1998 as 2nd Lieutenant. In the same year he received his university degree in Administration. From 1998 to 2001 he was assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Tanks Regiment as a Platoon Leader. From 2001 to 2004, as Lieutenant, he served in the Grenadiers Regiment on Horseback escorting and giving security to the President and his family. In 2005, he was assigned to the Military Academy as Cavalry Cadets Instructor and in 2009 he became Company Commander. He is a parachutist and is completing his Masters Degree in International Relations.

This is his second tour of duty as a peacekeeper having previously served in 2000-2001 in UNIKOM (Iraq-Kuwait). He is married to Lucía and they have a daughter, Valentina (5). His interests include tennis and football.



Digger donated to CMP

In May, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP) received a donation of a backhoe digger and loader worth EUR 47,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

This donation, done through the United Nations Development Program – Action for Cooperation and Trust (UNDP-ACT), will enable the CMP to pursue its project on the Exhumation, Identification and Return of Remains of Missing Persons in 2010.

The CMP has been striving to locate as many remains as possible in order to bring an end to the uncertainty

which has affected so many families for so many years. To date, the remains of 672 individuals have been exhumed from different burial sites located across the island.

Exhumations are carried out on both sides of the buffer zone by bi-communal teams made up of over 40 Cypriot archaeologists and anthropologists. Bi-communal teams are now autonomous after having been trained by international experts from the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) during the first 18 months of the project.



From left to right: Alan L. Davis, USAID Representative, Frank C. Urbancic Jr., US Ambassador to Cyprus, Gülden Plümer Küçük, Turkish Cypriot Member of the CMP, Christophe Girod, Third Member (UN) of the CMP, Elias Georgiades, Greek Cypriot Member of the CMP, Jaco Cillier, Programme Manager UNDP-ACT.

The Secretary-General sounds the alarm on biodiversity

World Environment Day is celebrated each year on 5 June. This year the UN focused on the fact that biodiversity, the incredible variety of life on Earth that sustains us, is in peril. In his message for the Day, the Secretary-General stressed that species are becoming extinct at the fastest rate ever recorded. "Most of these extinctions are tied to human activities that are polluting and depleting water resources, changing and degrading habitats and altering the global climate. From frogs to gorillas, from huge plants to tiny insects, thousands of species are in jeopardy," he said.

The theme of this year's World Environment Day, "Many Species. One Planet. One Future", echoes the call of the International Year of Biodiversity to stop this mass extinction and raise awareness about the vital importance of the millions of species that inhabit our planet's soils, forests, oceans, coral reefs and mountains. Our health, well-being and sustainable future depend on this intricate, delicate web of ecosystems and life.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the global host of the 2010 World Environment Day celebration is

Rwanda. This small country in the Great Lakes region of Africa is rapidly earning a reputation as a green pioneer. Home to 52 threatened species, including the rare mountain gorilla, Rwanda is showing how environmental sustainability can be woven into the fabric of a country's economic growth. Despite its many challenges, including poverty and widespread land degradation, the "land of a thousand hills" is working to reforest, embrace renewable energies, pursue sustainable agriculture and develop a green vision for the future.

"This year, Kigali will be the heartbeat of a global, multicultural, intergenerational celebration of our planet, its millions of species and the countless ways in which life on Earth is interconnected. On World Environment Day, I appeal to everyone – from Kigali to Canberra, from Kuala Lumpur to Quito – to help us sound the alarm. Get involved, speak out. Learn and teach others. Show leadership and help clean up. Reconnect with nature, our life force. Together, we can develop a new vision for biodiversity: Many Species. One Planet. One Future," the Secretary-General said.

Cypriot pupils raise funds for Haiti



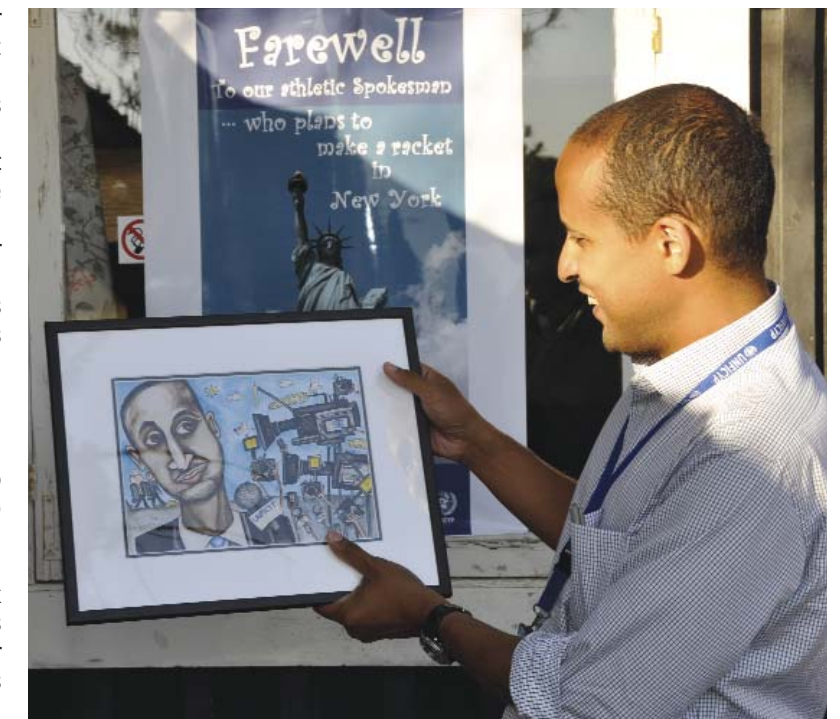
Pupils from seven Cypriot schools joined forces to hold a concert aimed at raising funds for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti earlier this year.

Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi was invited by the pupils to attend the concert as guest of honour. The students were motivated to use their talents to respond to the call for international assistance for the people of Haiti and managed to raise €3330 that was equally divided between the Cyprus Red Cross and the UN's Central Emergency Relief Response Fund Haiti. American Academy pupils and their principal Franco Onesti visited the Force Commander at his office in the UN Protected Area where they presented him with the cheque on behalf of all the participating schools. The seven schools involved were The American Academy, the American International School, the English School, The Falcon School, the GC school of Careers, the Grammar School and the Senior School.

Goodbye and good luck!

Early July marked the end of another era in UNFICYP as José Luis Díaz moved on from UNFICYP after having served two and a half years as its Spokesperson and Chief of Public Information. Not only has he left the mission, but also the United Nations after an impressive 20-year stint which has taken him around the globe. To look at José, you would never guess he had been with the Organization that long, but after seeing him at work his wealth of knowledge and vast experience is immediately apparent.

Before joining the ranks of UNFICYP in January 2008, José worked in Geneva with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, where he also served as Spokesperson. Now heading up the New York Branch of Amnesty International, he finds himself once again working with a subject he is so devoted to and back in his adopted city. Yes, Jose's departure is a loss to our mission and a major gain for Amnesty International. Jose, we will miss you!



Ayia Marina pilgrimage

