



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

29 MAY

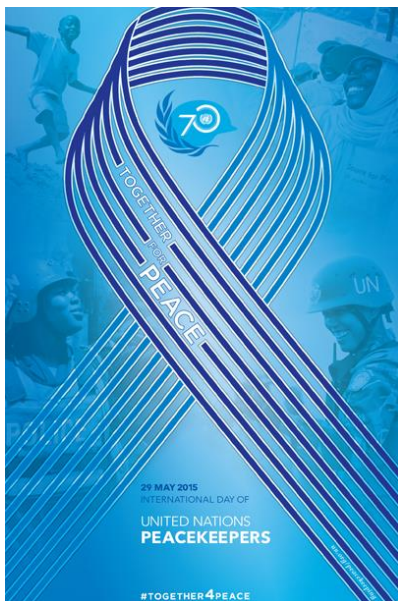


PRESS RELEASE

International Day of UN Peacekeepers Celebration Interactive Panel Discussion

Peacekeeping in Perspective:

Reflections from Africa on the past five decades



When: 9.00 – 13.00, 27 May 2015

Where: United Nations Office in Nairobi, Conference Room 1

United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Office in Eastern Africa in Nairobi, together with our stakeholders in Kenya are organizing an interactive panel discussion on Peacekeeping in Africa, in celebrating the contribution of the UN Peacekeepers to peace, security and development in this region.

The event will be a prelude to the actual International Day (29 May), during which a formal ceremony of wreath laying, and parades by the security services, among others, will take place at the UN Compound in Gigiri.

The interactive panel discussion, *Peacekeeping in Perspective: Reflections from Africa on the Past Five Decades*, is aimed to generate a public conversation on the experience of peacekeeping in Africa, and to explore its complex challenges leading up to present day peace and security situations.

About International Day of UN Peacekeepers

On 22 May, 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 57/179 (A/Res/57/1790), declaring 29 May, as International Day of UN Peacekeepers. In that resolution, the General Assembly set out two clear objectives for marking the day annually, namely; first, to honour the memory of those peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the line of duty; and second, pay tribute to those who continue to serve as peacekeepers around the world. The General Assembly therefore called on all Member States and the UN System for that matter, to observe the day, “in an appropriate manner.”





Rationale

Since its inception in 1948, the UN has established 71 peacekeeping operations – in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. The number of people who have been UN peacekeepers — more than 1 million — far surpasses the total number of staff who had worked for the UN in all other capacities worldwide. Statistics also show that since 1948 more than 3,326 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty, including that of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Organization's second Secretary-General, who was killed during his mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo, in 1961.

Today, some 125,000 women and men serve in 16 peacekeeping missions across the globe. Our peacekeepers are deployed in some of the world's most challenging and austere environments and mandated with increasingly complex and difficult tasks. Over the decades, UN Peacekeeping has implemented a series of reforms to be both 'fit for purpose' and innovative in the management of our field operations. We continue to strive towards greater performance, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, introducing new technologies and strengthening our partnerships worldwide.



On 31 October, 2014, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, appointed a high-level panel to examine the future of peacekeeping in the context of a rapidly changing and transforming global environment. The protection of civilian lives, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants and restoration of the rule of law, among others, constitute the cardinal principles that underline peacekeeping in the 21st century. To what extent have these ideals and principles been achieved over the several decades of peacekeeping, one might ponder?

Role of UNESCO, Culture of Peace and Non-violence

The Preamble to [the Constitution of UNESCO](#) declares that "**since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed**". In order that a unanimous, lasting and genuine peace may be secured, the Preamble declares that the States Party to the Constitution believed "in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge".

Given the Organization's role as lead agency for promoting the *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)*, and its *Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence*, the discussion is aimed to advance the dialogue on broader issues of peace and security. Although peacekeeping occurs in a specific context where parties to armed conflicts usually fail to agree on peacefully resolving socio-political differences, often involving the intervention of third parties. Therefore, it is important that the conversation also interrogates other related elements, such as placing the role of youth at the center. UNESCO is promoting a series of structured and institutionalized public conversations on promoting values related to culture of peace, especially among young men and women in the region.

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09:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 10:00	Musical Interlude/Entertainment (Red Acapella Band)
10:00 – 10:15	Introduction and Welcome <i>Mr. Nasser Ega-Musa, Director, UNIC</i>
	Video At the Frontline of Conflict (4 mins)
10:15 – 11:45	Interactive Panel Discussion <i>Moderated by Abdul Rahman Lamin, Social and Human Sciences Specialist, UNESCO</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Col. Festus Aboagye, African Peace Support Trainers Association</i>• <i>H.E. Dr. Martin Kimani, Kenya Ambassador to UNON</i>• <i>Lt Col. Joyce Sitienei, Republic of Kenya Armed Forces</i>• <i>Ms. Catherine Njeru, Republic of Kenya Armed Forces</i>• <i>Lone Felix, Youth Representative</i>
11:45 – 12:00	Respondent/Intervention <i>Dr. Karanja Mbugua, Africa Policy Institute</i>
12:00 – 12:55	Plenary Discussion
12:55 – 13:00	Wrap Up and Closing
13:00	Refreshments