

The Blue Beret

August/September 2008



**Veterans salute the fallen on
International Day of Peace**



THE BLUE BERET

Published monthly by the:
 Public Information Office
 United Nations Force in Cyprus
 HQ UNFICYP
 PO Box 21642
 1590 Nicosia
 Cyprus
 Tel: 2261-4550/4416/4408
 Fax: 2261-4461
 E-mail: unficy-blue-beret@un.org
blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com
 Website: www.unficy.org

Editorial Team

José Diaz
 Miriam Taylor
 Netha Kreuzos
 SSgt. Andrej Milovčík (Photographer)
 Capt. Tomas Pavlik

Unit Press Officers

Sector 1 Maj. Julian Gonzalez
Sector 2 Capt. Phil Lawrence
Sector 4 1/Lt. Miroslav Šepl
MFR Lt. Jonathan Frankling
UNPOL Garda John Kennedy
UN Flt 1/Lt. José Velasquez
FMPU Maj. Robert Schütz

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Editorial

Autumn is a time of returns: to school, to work, to the business of government. So it is with the re-launched negotiation process in Cyprus. The leaders of the two communities held the first round of fully-fledged talks on 3 September and discussed the question of governance and power-sharing in a future united Cyprus. They met two more times in September to continue those discussions. As Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus Alexander Downer is quoted as saying in these pages, the United Nations remains cautiously optimistic on the prospects for the peace process.

While much of UNFICYP has been mobilized to support the peace process, the mission is still conducting its day-to-day work. Indeed, the two are closely related.

Part of UNFICYP's mandate is to help create the conditions that make it possible for negotiations to take place. And one very important part of that work involves helping other UN and international efforts to bring Cypriots together or care for the large part of the island that has been placed under UNFICYP's custodianship. In this issue of the **Blue Beret**, you will read about two initiatives – on road safety and demining – that fall squarely into that category.

As UN Day approaches on 24 October, we believe it is important to remember the variety of the work of UNFICYP, which mirrors in a small way the multi-faceted nature of its parent Organisation. The United Nations family is a diverse and extensive one. High-level negotiations and political discussions in the General Assembly or the Security Council often garner all the attention, but UN workers around the world quietly go about a daily routine that in many places can mean the difference between life and death. Whether in the areas of humanitarian relief, human rights, peacekeeping or peacemaking, these men and women are working to make that difference.

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Downer cautiously optimistic at start of substantive talks



Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat exchange gifts before getting down to business on 18 September 2008

September saw the talks move into full swing after the brief lull in political activity on the island during August. Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Alexander Downer arrived on the island on 1 September for the formal opening of direct negotiations on 3 September.

Downer took the opportunity in the two days before the talks began to meet with the leaders of all of the major political parties on both sides of the island to ask them about their views and hear what they had to say.

After the formal launch of the talks, he travelled to Athens where he met with the Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis and the Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyianni before travelling to Ankara where he met with President Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Abdullah Gul and the Foreign Minister Ali Babacan. He returned to Cyprus to be here for the start of substantive talks on 11 September that began with the issue of governance and power sharing.

Following an almost four-hour meeting on 11 September, the two leaders did not make any statements. SASC Downer, in a brief statement, told the media that the leaders began negotiations on the subject of governance and power sharing and that the talks have been "productive and fruitful".



Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Alexander Downer together with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun at the formal opening of direct negotiations on 3 September

"Let me, though, say this: there is no doubt that this is a very difficult process. After all, there hasn't been a successful conclusion to the Cyprus problem for many years, as everybody knows. So therefore it's not going to be a simple and easy process. There will be ups and there'll be downs, there will be good days and there'll be bad days, there will be good headlines and there'll be bad headlines, of course."

"Inevitably these processes are difficult," he said but added that he was impressed with the determination on both sides to achieve a successful conclusion to these negotiations.

"There is a political will, which is impressive, and that political will gives me cause for cautious optimism."

"There is a political will, which is impressive, and that political will gives me cause for cautious optimism," he said.

Referring to the negotiations process, Downer stressed that, "it's not going to be the UN plan or the UN scheme. Ultimately this is going to be a negotiation, if it is to succeed, which must be embraced by the people of Cyprus."



Local and international media turn out in full force to cover the meeting of the two leaders on 11 September

The UN's role, Downter said, "is to be as helpful as we possibly can. As you know, we can't force anything

"The UN role is to be as helpful as we possibly can."

on anybody and if the UN is helpful, then its role will be valuable. If the UN is not seen to be helpful, then the process is not going to be advanced.



The two leaders take a break during the 11 September meeting



The two leaders bid farewell outside the SRSG's residence in the UNPA after the formal launch of talks on 3 September

"I think the important thing to remember is that what has happened in the past hasn't succeeded and what I am determined about is that this time it will succeed."

Reminded that there had been 16 UN envoys prior to him, Downter said: "Let me say that just because a process has failed in the past, doesn't mean you don't try to make it succeed in the present and the future." Time and circumstances change, he said, and the circumstances of today are not the same as the circumstances of four years ago or 34 years ago. So I think the circumstances of today are that you have two leaders who want to succeed. They are quite determined to succeed and they are quite aware of the tough issues and the problems. I wouldn't have taken on this job if I thought it was a doomed job. I looked at it very carefully before I accepted this job, and I thought there is chance of the process being successful. And I remain of that view."

Downter did, however, concede that the process is taking a lot more time than originally anticipated.

"Time and circumstances change. The circumstances of today are not the same as the circumstances of 34 years ago."

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun hosted the second meeting on 18 September, which continued negotiations on the issue of governance and power sharing. A brief statement issued after the meeting stated that the leaders have agreed to resume negotiations on these questions on 8 October 2008.



SRSG Zerihoun greets the two leaders on their arrival for the 11 September meeting outside the Good Offices premises in the UNPA



SASG Downter addresses the media after the 11 September meeting at the Good Offices premises in the UNPA on 11 September 2008



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"... Today you have two leaders who want to succeed. They are quite determined to succeed and they are quite aware of the tough issues and the problems."

Zerihoun - Transparency the best recipe

Interview with the UNFICYP Chief of Mission

Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has been described as an experienced, level-headed, international civil servant; well liked and highly regarded by his colleagues and officials of countries with whom he has worked. A diplomat whose over 30 years of experience in the international organisation means he knows his efforts on the Cyprus problem will take him down a long road, but he asserts that he enjoys a "good walk", and is pacing himself for the intensive months ahead.

The SRSG arrived in Cyprus at a time when dialogue between Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat was at a crucial turning point. After a lull of four years, the peace talks were finally getting back into full swing with direct negotiations between the two sides. Zerihoun, together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General Alexander Downer, is called on to facilitate these Good Offices efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue that has eluded peacemakers for decades.

Ethiopian born, Zerihoun was appointed Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on 16 April 2008. He assumed his duties on the island in May in the midst of ground-breaking developments on the Cyprus problem. The technical committees and working groups had been launched, and the much-awaited Ledra Street crossing had opened only weeks before he arrived.

Zerihoun previously served as the Secretary-General's Principal Deputy Special Representative in the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and remained in that position from 1 August 2004. He was the Acting Special Representative of UNMIS from October 2006 until October 2007. He also acted as Chief United Nations Mediator for the Darfur case.

Peace Talks since October 2007, in support of the efforts of Special Envoy Jan Eliasson.

Zerihoun says the differences (between Sudan and Cyprus) couldn't be starker. "Of course, UNFICYP is what we normally refer to as a first generation peace-keeping mission, very well set up in its ways and is quite efficient. In Sudan on the other hand, the mission intertwines cultural, political and religious issues and requires a huge budget of over a billion dollars employing around 4,000 civilian staff, both national and international, 10,000 military personnel and around 750 police.

"Here, of course, the issue is no less complex, but the mission is much smaller. But because it has been on the ground for 40 plus years, it is very well set in its ways," he says, noting that it runs like "a well-oiled machine".

"Also, the parties to the conflict have been responsible; they have kept the peace, and infractions that we have compared to Sudan are minor." However, he notes the political problems here are no less complicated. "I often say that in Sudan, the difficult issue is trying to get a clear indication of justification as it were from the parties – they are not clear, not least because there are many groups within the so-called rebels. There are different groups with different agendas and different reasons. Here, the parties know exactly where they differ, so in a way, they have agreed to disagree. But the status quo – the de facto division – has created its own difficulties, its own dynamics, its own reality which have complicated the mission further."

"Whatever we do as UNFICYP, it is in pursuit of a peaceful outcome that we link to the reunification of the island."

"What the leaders have done in the last two to three months shows that they are serious about the process."

Zerihoun concedes that there are very difficult and emotive issues that need to be addressed, but stresses that he is a firm believer that any political problem can be resolved. "If the parties have the will, they can make the necessary compromise and look at it as a win-win situation. It's always when one looks at the problem as a zero sum game that you are bedevilled to find a solution. Compromise literally means understanding and accepting the other's point of view and trying to accommodate this."

The SRSG notes that these are new times with new opportunities that are exciting but also daunting.

Another reason for coming to Cyprus was the fact that this time around, there would be a unified effort by the UN with the Good Offices established within existing UNFICYP responsibilities, Zerihoun explains. "The mission has a preventive deployment, so whatever we do as UNFICYP, it is in pursuit of a peaceful outcome that we link to the reunification of the island," he says, pointing to the original resolution's phraseology of "a return to normal conditions".

"The expertise, the institutional memory, the administrative, logistics and other capacities of this mission will support the Good Offices effort," he says. "So we have a new approach – I think the right approach, a more integrated approach."

The SRSG highlights the role of all UNFICYP personnel in the peace efforts, pointing out that the three pillars of this mission, whether it is civil affairs, the police or the military, all work towards maintaining the integrity of the ceasefire and contribute to the creation of conditions that would allow the parties to talk and move beyond the status quo towards resolving the problem.

Another significant aspect of UNFICYP's role is public information and Zerihoun says, "We are now looking toward a very robust and forward-looking public information strategy.

"It's best really to be as transparent as possible by telling the media what can be told. You cannot tell them about the parties' negotiating positions, but I think you can provide information that is in the public interest because all this is being negotiated on behalf of the people. So the people have to be informed and, of course, the two parties have their own responsibilities to provide information and update their own communities but often that would be targeted to a specific audience. We have the responsibility to provide the official line, as we have the proverbial third eye and can dispassionately provide the facts. That is a heavy responsibility," he says.

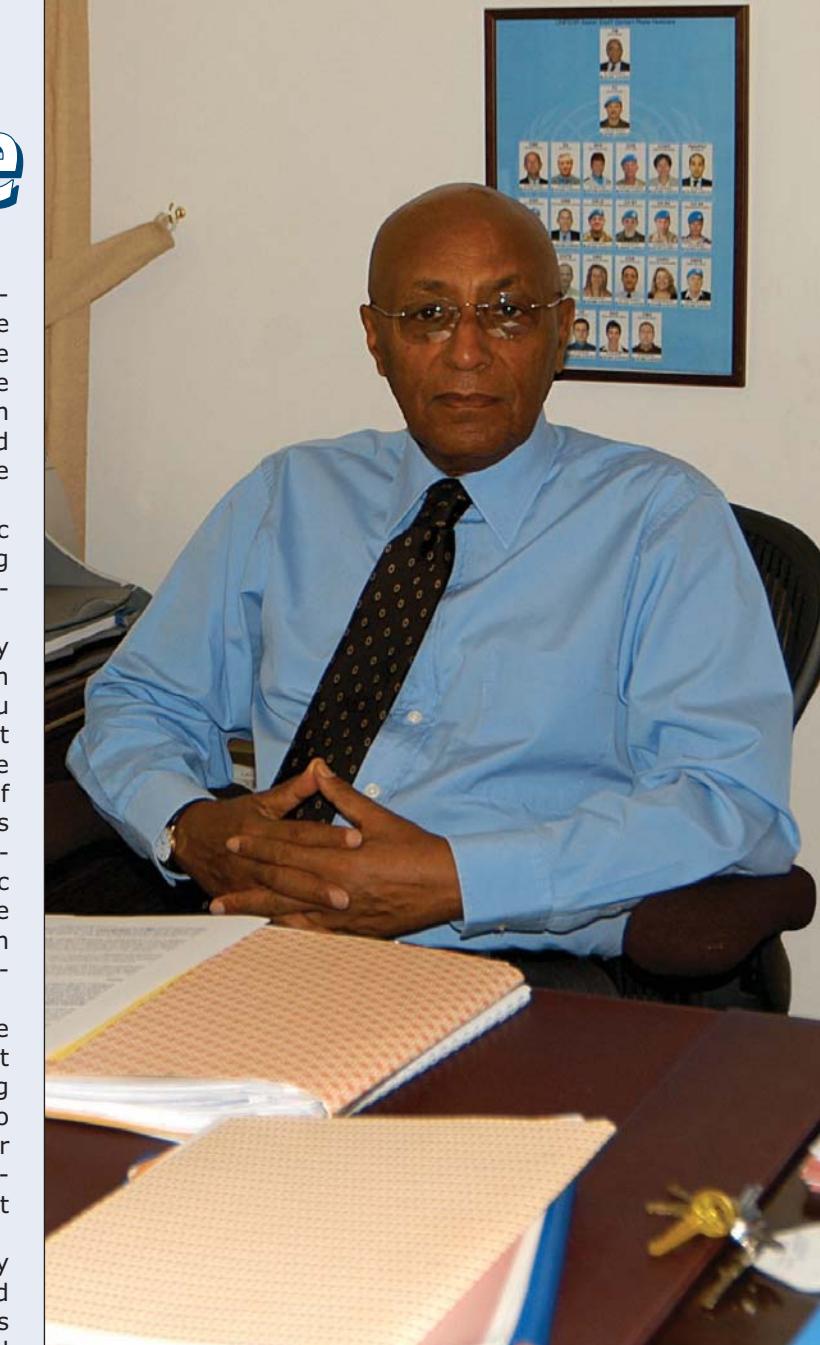
On a more philosophical note about the role of the United Nations as a body in pursuit of world peace, that has on numerous occasions been criticized for being unable to act effectively, Zerihoun says the first thing to underscore is that the UN is a collection of member states and is not, therefore, an independent organisation. "I think the closest that comes to an independent UN is the international civil service," he says.

"The principles and objectives of the UN as they were articulated more than 60 years ago are as valid today as they were then, and as many people have said, if the UN was not around, we would have to create it," Zerihoun says. He added that the UN is a forum where countries and peoples come together to deal with global issues and come to

some kind of agreement.

"An interesting observation to make is that the UN Charter starts by saying 'we the people', not 'we the governments'. This where perhaps the first wrong turn was made, but be that as it may, the UN is the only forum where the world can deal with global issues," he says.

Zerihoun observes that the UN has been growing and reforming ever since it was created. Whether that reform has always kept pace with emerging demands and changes is arguable, but the good thing is that there are different interests within the UN. Whether



these are expressed in regional groups or on different issues, they keep the UN blood circulating. So in that sense, the UN is forever young to the extent that all issues, not just political but social and other global issues, have awakened people to the need to work together to resolve these problems. The UN is a forum in which these issues are discussed, debated and where they get legitimacy. The biggest strength we have at the UN is our legitimacy, because it is the only one with its kind of membership. The UN, as they say, is the mother forum for positions and that legitimacy is unparalleled and unmatched.

Proud to be an international civil servant, Zerihoun says that despite the frustrations and limitations of the United Nations, working for the organisation can be very rewarding and points out that too often, attention is focused on the political side and not on the humanitarian, social and other work of the organisation and its agencies.

Away from the office, Zerihoun says he devotes a lot of time to reading and is currently building on his knowledge of the island and the region in general. He also enjoys the challenges of a game of golf, playing occasionally at weekends.

Netha Kreouzos



Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun (left) joining hands with Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias (centre) and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat

Leaders join hands at bicultural concert

peaceful environment with respect for each other's cultures. "We, together with my friend Demetris, really have this common aim, we are committed to working to achieve it," he said.

Tayé-Brook Zerihoun stated: "The Cyprus in the minds and hearts of all present, young and old, is one in which the island's obvious enormous potential is given full expression, a Cyprus at peace, a united and dynamic Cyprus that offers the best of opportunities and future to all its citizens. Such a day seems tantalizingly close, at least closer than it has been for a long time.

"Bicultural initiatives and cultural projects alone will not bring that day about; the leaders and people bear the greatest responsibility for turning what will clearly be a difficult peace process into a success. But overcoming divisions entrenched over the years will take more than political action and discussions at the negotiating table. Rebuilding trust among Cypriots across the divide in order to make this island one common home for all its citizens requires acts that may seem less spectacular and dramatic, but which are just as essential. That is why I am glad to take part in one such act this evening."

The Chief of Mission also praised Slovakia's ambassador to Cyprus, Anna Tureničová, saying he wished to "pay tribute to her work, her tenacity in perpetuating and reinvigorating the tradition of encouraging bicultural cooperation established by the Slovak Republic".

The event was organised jointly by the Slovak Embassy and the youth branches of political parties on both sides in the framework of the bicultural meetings between party leaders or representatives that take place regularly at the Ledra Palace under the auspices of the Slovak Embassy.

"We have started a serious dialogue and we have to combine our efforts in order to welcome the people of the UN without a uniform but as visitors to our peaceful island. This is our promise to the young people of Cyprus," he added.

The Greek Cypriot leader said: "I want to reiterate my commitment, before the young people of both communities, that I am going to do my utmost in order to find the common language we need with Mehmet Ali Talat, and with the assistance of the UN, to reunify our island.

"We have started a serious dialogue and we have to combine our efforts in order to welcome the people of the UN without a uniform but as visitors to our peaceful island. This is our promise to the young people of Cyprus," he added.

He also noted that Cyprus needed peace and expressed the hope that this time next year, such events would take place in a reunited Cyprus.

For his part, Mehmet Ali Talat stated that, "Our youth want to see a united, federal Cyprus. This is our joint goal."

A solution would mean Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots living together in a



Bicultural choir performing at the concert

International day of peace

International Day of Peace was observed by UNFICYP for a third year with a peace candle vigil ceremony at Ledra Palace Hotel, Nicosia on 22 September 2008.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNFICYP Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun inaugurated the event that was attended by Greek and Turkish Cypriot members of the World War II Veterans Association, members of the diplomatic community and representatives of the two communities on the island.

In his address, the SRSG pointed out that, "despite this day of celebration of peace, war and armed conflict continue to rage in many places. The millions of people living under oppression, going hungry or lacking shelter around the world are testament to the fact that peace is not just the absence of war."

And yet, amid this tragic reality, there are reasons for hope, and perhaps nowhere more so than here in Cyprus. Prospects for a comprehensive settlement are better now than they have been for a long time. The leaders of the two communities have started full-fledged negotiations to reunite the island. The opening of Ledra Street was the first of a series of measures we hope will build trust, and encourage Cypriots from both sides of the political divide to come together in ever greater numbers as they rebuild a common home in peace and prosperity."

Referring to the sacrifice of the veterans in the service of peace, Zerihoun stressed that they are the embodiment of the conviction we hold in common: that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can unite for a greater good.

"You, as Cypriots, helped bring peace as you fought tyranny during the Second World War. This shared history among sons of this land has continued to hold you together through the difficulties this island has and is going through."

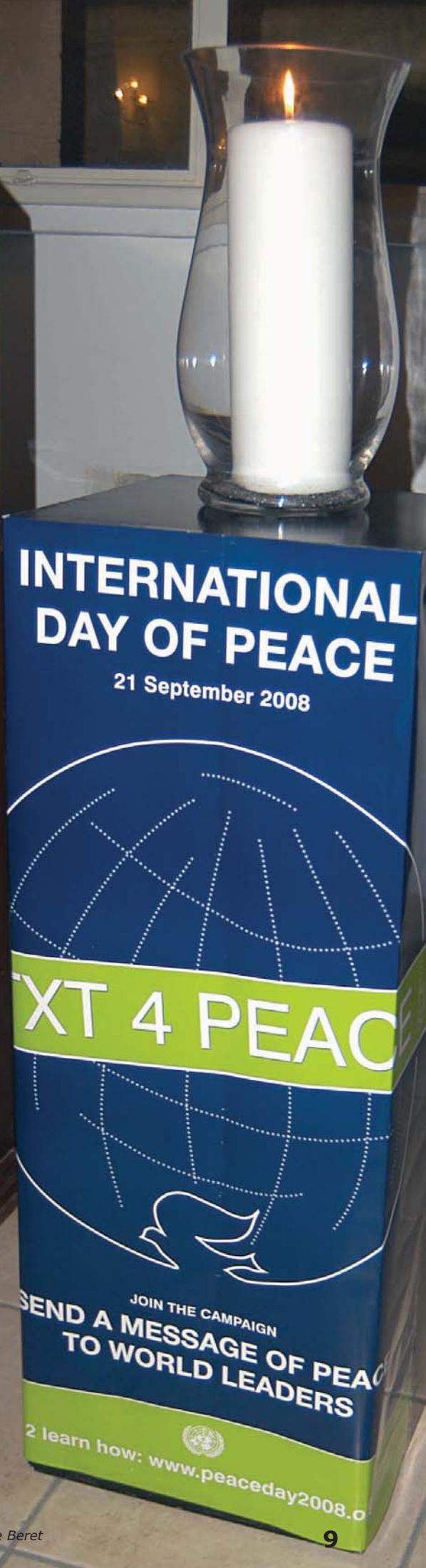
Zerihoun called on all attending to take counsel from the wisdom of the veterans present and expressed the hope that the lighting of the peace vigil candle will symbolize the rekindling of our commitment to lasting peace in a reunited Cyprus.

Cyprus World War II Veterans Association President Loizos Demetriou in a brief address said: "As veterans of the World War II, we are well aware of the misery and destruction caused by wars and shall always be ready to take part in events such as the present in support of peace and security. We are living in a region where violence and wars are not unknown and our duty to work for peace is therefore greater. We must all try hard to meet the call for building a better world in the 21st century."

SRSG Zerihoun lit a candle from the peace candle and passed on the light to those attending the ceremony. A minute silence was held in honour of those who have fought for peace. The peace candle burned for 24 hours.



Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot World War II veterans



Rewarding service



Sector 1 medal parade

Following six months of duty with UNFICYP, personnel from the Argentinian Contingent were decorated with the United Nations Medal during a ceremony that took place on 4 September.

The event kicked off with the presentation of troops to UNFICYP Force Commander, Rear Admiral Mario Sanchez Debernardi. Guests included the Spanish Ambassador, the Military and Defence Attachés of Argentina and Chile, Military Attaché of the British High Commission, UNFICYP Chief of Staff and other UNFICYP civilian and military personnel.

The ceremony began with the singing of the Argentinian, Chilean and Paraguayan national anthems, after which the Force Commander addressed the parade.

Later, "In the Service of Peace" medals were awarded to Officers, WCOs and soldiers from Argentina, Chile and Paraguay, who serve in Sector 1, HQ UNFICYP, the Mobile Force Reserve, the Force Military Police Unit and UN Flight.

The ceremony ended with a march past of troops saluting the Force Commander. Soldiers and visitors were then invited to enjoy Argentinian traditional dishes and beverages at a reception by the pool.

ARGCON is the largest contingent serving with UNFICYP, and has been part of this mission since 25 September 1993, contributing more than 10,000 peacekeepers to date.



MFR medal parade

The UNFICYP medal was introduced in 1964 for a minimum of 90 days duty in Cyprus. To date, in the interest of regional peace and security, 171,970 medals have been awarded since the start of the mission, and on 22 September, the Mobile Force Reserve held a military medal parade at the old Nicosia airport in the United Nations Protected Area.

On parade were soldiers from the United Kingdom, Hungary, Slovakia and Argentina; pulling together a parade with all these different nationalities and drill styles was no mean feat.

The parade commenced at 9.15 a.m. and was initially commanded by the MFR Company Sergeant Major Jacque Barlow, who handed the parade over to Maj. Dan McNeil, OC MFR.

In total, 57 soldiers received their medals from Force Commander Rear Admiral Debernardi, who then addressed the parade and thanked the MFR for their sterling efforts during the past six months. After all the preparation and hard work, the parade went without a hitch. It was a complete success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Respect for speed

About 120 young Cypriots and road safety experts came together in the United Nations Protected Area on 10 September to talk about safe driving during the first pilot test of the "Respect for Speed" programme, part of a two-year project called "Road Safety in Cyprus".

The programme, based on a Danish model, targets young drivers aged 18-25, and involves a driving drill, screening of short video clips featuring severe accidents, as well as educational modules. Since its introduction in Denmark, "Respect for Speed" has had a 100% success rate: none of the more than 10,000 young drivers who have been through the programme have been involved in a fatal car accident. First the participants are briefed on the realities of car accidents by ambulance doctors and police officers who then work to engage them in a dialogue on the subject.

Survivors of traffic accidents from Denmark along with doctors, police officers and first aid workers – the first witnesses at an accident scene – shared their experiences during the four-hour session, which took place at the old Nicosia International Airport. Under the supervision of experienced driving instructors, participants took part in a driving drill on the airport runway to experience the effects of having to unexpectedly stop to avoid hitting somebody at a short distance while driving at 110 km per hour. They are then schooled in first-aid and listen to the traumatic experience of a young public information officer who has to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair as a result of a road accident. Finally, the groups come together to view short films featuring interviews with young drivers who, driving under the influence of alcohol and/or too fast, have caused the loss of the life of another person in a road accident.

Traffic accidents have become one of the major social problems in Cyprus. The dramatic statistics presented by both communities show that Cyprus has the third worst death toll on traffic accidents in Europe. During the period 1996-2005, Greek Cypriots have mourned an average of 108 dead yearly due to traffic-related accidents. During 2005 alone, there were 2,398 road accidents of which 102 were fatal, 741 serious and 1,555 not serious.

In proportion to the size of the population, the picture is even more worrying in the Turkish Cypriot community. Last year there were 3,254 accidents and the average number of deaths caused by road accidents between 1996-2005 was 51. This calls for immediate island-wide action to reduce accidents and casualties.

Jaco Cilliers, Senior Programme Manager at UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust, said:



Experienced driving instructors conducting a traffic exercise

"This initiative creates opportunities for the exchange of knowledge which inevitably helps to develop mutual trust and lead to common solutions among Cypriots. Within this spirit, we hope the young people who will be involved in this project, will use their experiences to effect island-wide in attitudes and behaviour. Young people are being called to experience their own limits in order to learn to respect speed, respect human life, respect each other".

The event also saw the participation of Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, the Secretary General's Special Representative to Cyprus and chief of UNFICYP, George Iacovou, Senior Advisor to the Greek Cypriot Community Leader, and Ozdil Nami, Senior Advisor to the Turkish Cypriot Community Leader. The European University and Road Traffic Accident Prevention Association organised the event.

The "Road Safety in Cyprus" project was designed and implemented by the Foundation of Social and Political Studies, in collaboration with the European University Cyprus Research Centre in the Greek Cypriot community, and the Road Traffic Accident Prevention Association (RTAPA) in the Turkish Cypriot community. The programme is funded by the United Nations Development Programme's initiative, Action for Cooperation and Trust, which is supported by USAID and consists of several outputs, aiming at further development and promotion of road safety across the island.



SRSG Zerihoun (centre) with Ozdil Nami (left) and George Iacovou (right), senior aides to the two leaders at the "Respect for Speed" event

Mine clearance – returning the land for the communities

Clearing the remnants of war – landmines and unexploded ordnance – in Cyprus over the last four years has had a significant impact on the two communities in Cyprus. The mines that have contaminated the land for over three decades are finally being removed and, together with them, the fear they instil in the communities that live and work near them.

The United Nations Development Programme's Partnership for the Future – Mine Action Centre began its work in October 2004, with the support of UNFICYP to de-mine the buffer zone. The European Union has to date provided nine million euros for the project as part of humanitarian efforts to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance from Cyprus. Over 45 minefields are now safe, with over five million square metres of land released so far. A total of 4,512 mines have been cleared, including 2,281 anti-personnel mines and 2,231 anti-tank mines.

Farmers who live and work in the buffer zone areas are now able to cultivate land that was previously inaccessible, while other landowners have been able to develop their properties.

De-mining has also cleared the way for crossing points to be built, easing movement between the two sides. This has allowed for improved trade and employment opportunities, while at the same time facilitating religious and other educational and social activities.

UNFICYP's mandate is to prevent a recurrence of fighting and contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions. De-mining supports the restoration of normal conditions in that it enables people to safely use the land for daily activities without risk or fear of being injured or killed by landmines.

Even though access to the buffer zone was always strictly controlled by UNFICYP with suspected minefields clearly marked and entry prohibited, over the years, there have been incidents where civilians and UN personnel have been killed or injured in landmine accidents in Cyprus while bringing people together.

Minefields around Kato-Pyrgos and Lefka have been cleared in preparation for the opening of a new crossing point.

Sotiroulla Christodoulou, 71 from Kato Pyrgos who has seven children, 19 grandchildren and 10 great grand-

children, had a house in the buffer zone right next to a minefield. She says she raised her children with the constant fear they may enter the minefield and for 20 years, she could not sleep easy at the thought of what could happen. "Every day I worried about my children because they were still young. I was always telling them to stay out of the area but I still worried. I lived like this for many years until the government in 1994 moved us, along with several other families, to a safer area away from the minefields. They did this after a mine explosion in another village killed a young man. The tragic side of the story is that the young man lived among us – he was not killed in a minefield here, but in a minefield in another village," she says.

"It was a great relief when they cleared the land and we could return to our orchards with our goats, pigs and sheep," she says.

Christodoulou also notes that with the cleared land and the potential for the opening of a new crossing point, her children that have left the village due to its isolated position could return as they would not have to travel so far (over three hours) to Nicosia. They would have greater access to work opportunities as well as better medical and education facilities. "The house prices are also cheaper here than in Nicosia and they would be able to enjoy a healthier lifestyle in their village," she says.

Christakis Diogenous, 51, agrees that the opening of the crossing point would breathe life back into their ageing village because all the young are forced to leave to attend schools in the larger towns and then they remain there to find employment. Travelling to the bigger towns like Nicosia and Limassol for work is not a feasible option at present, he says, as it takes over three hours to get to Nicosia. Farmers have to stay overnight in order to be at the market early enough to sell their produce. This only adds to their costs, he says. If the crossing point were opened, it would take less than one hour. He notes that in the past, there were seven buses travelling to and from the village to Nicosia daily.

The land in the area of Kato-Pyrgos is extremely fertile and never suffers from drought. Here they grow everything except cherries, and now that the land has been cleared, farmers can re-cultivate the land and increase their productivity. However,

with the high cost involved in transporting their goods to Nicosia – which entails a longer journey, an overnight stay with expenses for food and lodgings – their profitability is limited and, therefore, interest in returning to the land is not high, Diogenous says.

Kato-Pyrgos Muhktar Costas Michaelides explains that before 1974, many people used to travel north across what is now buffer zone in order to go to school or work in Morphou, Xeros and Nicosia. Every day, several buses and about 100 private vehicles made these journeys. At that time, the population was about 2,000, and probably half the people worked between Morphou and Nicosia. It only took about an hour to reach Nicosia. The war changed all this and the buffer zone cut off Kato-Pyrgos from these places.

Now it takes about three hours to travel from Kato-Pyrgos to Nicosia, which means that it is too far for people to travel to work or access educational opportunities on a daily basis. As a result, people, particularly the younger generation, have left and the population has decreased from 2,000 to 1,600. The Muhktar explains that, "If the town had not been cut off, the population would probably have been closer to 5,000 and include people from all generations."

Lefka Muhktar Altan Oksuz echoes some of the views of his Greek Cypriot counterpart in Kato-Pyrgos, noting that the residents would benefit if a crossing were to open, particularly farmers wishing to sell their high-quality citrus fruit. It would also open up the area to more tourists, bringing trade to the town which now relies heavily on agriculture for its income.

The fact that large areas of land have been de-mined is positive, he says, as it removes the risk of potential accidents where people could be seriously injured or lose their lives.

Lefka Muhktar Altan Oksuz



Delivering as one on HIV prevention

DPKO invited its HIV advisers, focal points and coordinators as well as partners from UN Cares, UNFPA and UNDP to participate in the fifth annual HIV workshop hosted at the UNLB in Brindisi, Italy between 25-29 August 2008.

UNFICYP Focal Point Netha Kreouzos who attended notes that the most important outcome of the workshop was that the DPKO HIV team had moved from formulating the policy directive to its actual implementation and the minimum standards that should apply to all missions in mainstreaming HIV awareness and prevention programmes. Since HIV induction and awareness training has become mandatory for all personnel – civilian, military and police, it has become even more essential to integrate HIV prevention in peacekeeping operations and mission mandates.

Kreouzos said the update from UN Cares echoed the concerns expressed by many advisers and focal points of the need to streamline efforts and maintain a minimum standard across all UN missions and agencies. To address this the UN Cares representatives briefed participants on the system-wide programme created to address the problems of confusion and duplication of efforts.

UN Cares representatives pointed out that since 1991, the UN has had a system-wide HIV workplace policy stating that all staff and their dependents have access to prevention, education, voluntary counselling and testing services, and a workplace free of stigma and discrimination. However despite the many successes, agency-specific programmes were creating duplication of effort and confusion among staff. UN Cares aims to solve that problem by "Delivering as One" a unified HIV workplace programme across the UN system.

UN Cares builds on the UN Learning Strategy on HIV/AIDS, which will continue to enhance staff capacity to address these issues personally and professionally, and UN Plus, which serves as an invaluable advocacy and support network for UN system personnel living with HIV.

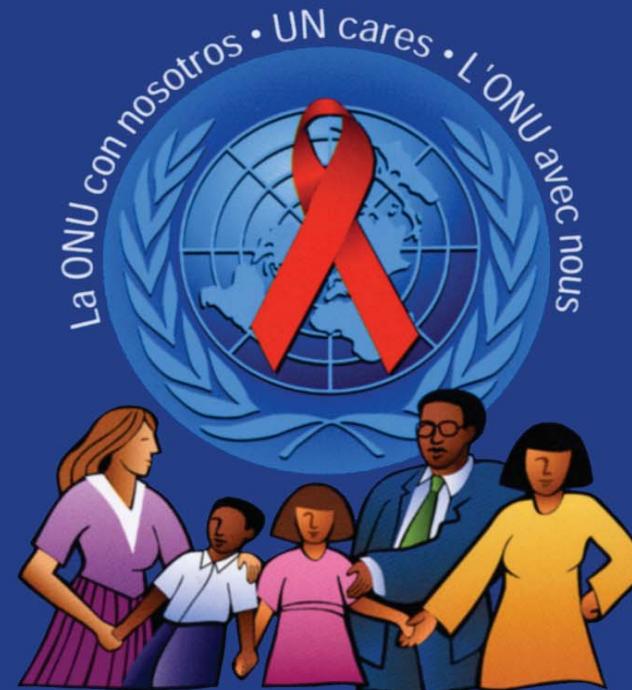
The issue of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and the availability of condoms in peacekeeping missions was also addressed at the workshop. "It was stressed that there is no contradiction between making condoms available in peacekeeping missions and the UN's policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The message that clearly came out of the discussion was that condoms are for health and safety and not a licence for sexual abuse," Kreouzos said.



Family photo of DPKO's HIV team at the workshop in Brindisi

UN Cares

The UN system-wide workplace programme on HIV



10 MINIMUM STANDARDS

All UN personnel and their families should have access to:

- 1 Information about UN policies and benefits**
- 2 Information about preventing transmission of HIV and accessing services**
- 3 Learning and training activities on stigma and discrimination**
- 4 Access to male and female condoms**
- 5 Voluntary counselling and testing**
- 6 Insurance covering HIV-related expenses**
- 7 Confidential handling of personal information**
- 8 First aid using universal precautions**
- 9 Rapid access to PEP starter kits**
- 10 Managerial commitment**

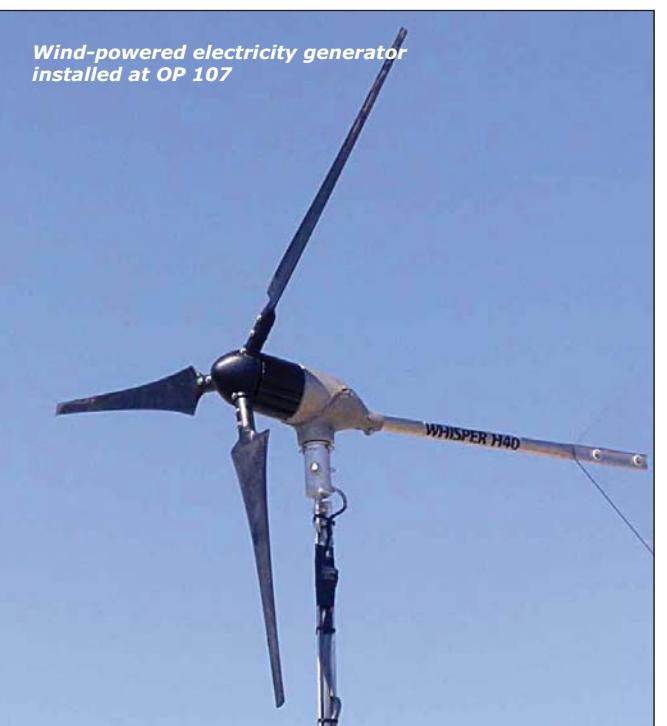
For more information:
www.uncares.org

A small step against global warming

Since taking up his appointment, Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon has made the adoption of renewable energy solutions as one of his major priorities to combat the threat of global warming. UNFICYP CITS is committed to reducing energy consumption from non-green sources by 15% in the current financial year. This will primarily be achieved through the installation of solar panels at remote OPs, but a variety of small but cumulative projects should help us achieve this target.

One recent initiative was the installation of a wind-powered electricity generator at OP107 to supplement an existing solar panel array. CITS technician Mark Hughes installed the generator with the help of the Hungarian soldiers stationed at Camp Szent Istvan, Athienou and he extends his warm thanks for their assistance. OP107 is the CITS channel 9 radio-repeater site, strategically situated on a hilltop for extensive radio coverage of the area. Fortunately, the hilltop is subject to windy conditions and hence is an ideal location for a wind-powered generator. The generator's rotors are extremely efficient and spin rapidly in breezy conditions, producing up to 900 Watts of cost-free, clean electricity.

Mark Hughes



Wind-powered electricity generator installed at OP 107

New trucks for old

In August 2008, the Transport Unit received 18 brand new Isuzu 4 x 4 double cabin trucks. Some of you may have seen them parked up in the yard in an impressive shiny white line. It wasn't very long before we started receiving a surprising number of visitors who just happened to be in the neighbourhood and thought they would drop by for coffee and casually wonder if they were a lucky winner of a new car.

One visitor felt that he should get three vehicles but we are quite possessive and do not let go of our new trucks that easily so most of our visitors, and you know who you are, left feeling a little deflated. But congratulations go to you all for your persuasive arguments. None of them worked but they were most entertaining!

On a more serious note, UNFICYP's vehicle fleet is required to be maintained to a standard ensuring the Buffer Zone patrols are carried out continuously and effectively with driver safety a priority. The unit constantly receives various requests for vehicles to be updated, for an increase in number of vehicles in an area or more specific requirements may be requested for specialised details and assignments.

These requests are put forward to the Vehicle Establishment Committee, who meet periodically to consider and then subsequently authorise or reject a request. The decisions are based on set vehicle/manpower ratios and criteria laid down by HQNY.

With this in mind, our fleet of hired vehicles is constantly inspected and monitored and on this occasion the oldest vehicles, those with high mileage and troublesome vehicles constantly requiring repair were identified and put to the top of the list. The type of terrain and work the vehicle is required to tackle is also taken into consideration.



Cyril Hames, Senior Transport Assistant (left), handing over a new vehicle to Sector 1

The procedure to exchange the vehicles was straightforward and involved de-rigging the old model – that is removing the Carlog Unit, the Motorola radio and number plates and fitting them to the new truck. And of course there is always the documentation assigning the new vehicle to the sector or unit and handing back the old one. The whole exercise progressed smoothly due to the expertise and preparation by the Transport Unit staff and as you can see from the photo's the satisfied customers left in their nice new vehicles.

Cyril Hames, Senior Transport Assistant, had this to say: "We are expecting delivery of more new trucks in continuation of the current vehicle rotation period. The whole operation is anticipated to be complete by the end of November 2008 so by that time, all the hired patrol vehicles will be less than 3½ years old, improving the operational efficiency and the reliability of a young fleet."

Good news for our military and UNPOL who patrol daily on some potentially very dangerous roads.

Christine Iacovou

Fire kills, but you can prevent it

Few of us realize how easily – and how quickly – fire can destroy our property and homes, or worse, the lives of those we love. Fortunately, a product is available that can help protect us against fire... the smoke alarm.

By providing an early warning in the event of fire, smoke alarms may allow you and your family sufficient time to reach safety. Many people have neglected to install smoke alarms, despite their life-saving potential and low cost. Even those who do have them installed often take them for granted, forgetting that they need some attention to continue working properly.

Fire kills, but tragedies can be prevented. All smoke alarms should be tested once a month, and their batteries replaced annually. Every family should develop a fire escape plan and practise it at least every six months.

- **Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for testing smoke alarms and replacing the batteries.**
- **Always check the packaging to make sure you buy an alarm with a recommended standards symbol displayed.**
- **For regular maintenance, test the alarm every week by pressing the test button.**
- **Every six months, just clean the alarm with dry brush.**
- **Every year, change the battery and every 10 years, change the alarm.**

fumes may overcome us before we wake up. Keep in mind that a fire will not wake even a light sleeper until maybe too late.

Crew Commander Incident Command Course



These devices should not be put in a bathroom, kitchen or garage, because there are sources or concealed sources of products of combustion, which can trip the sensor. As a bonus, when you are not at home, a smoke alarm can also alert your neighbours or passers-by about the fire in your property so that they can call the fire brigade.

Smoke alarms detect smoke before you can even see or smell it. The smoke particles break a circuit in the smoke detector which triggers a loud warning signal, and keeps sounding until the smoke clears.

There are two types of smoke alarms available today: photoelectric and ionization. While photoelectric smoke alarms generally respond faster to smoldering smoke conditions and ionization smoke alarms generally respond faster to flaming fire conditions, both types provide adequate protection against fire. Combination smoke alarms featuring both photoelectric and ionization technology are also available at hardware, department and home improvement stores.

Many people who already have smoke alarms could still be in danger. The alarm could be in the wrong place, there may not be sufficient smoke alarms for the size of their home or the device may not have been regularly checked.

Within UNFICYP almost all required locations have the fire smoke detectors/systems.

On 18 May and 28 July 2008, two electric fires occurred in UNFICYP Sector 2's Ledra Palace Hotel. Is it to the credit of the fire alarm system which detected the fires and alarmed the fire crew on time to evacuate all four floors and to extinguished the fire before it got out of control.

Excuses kill! To this end, it's for your safety and your responsibility to fit an alarm.

In Cyprus, there is a variety of models and makes to choose from, depending on requirements and budget.

The UNFICYP Fire Crew (telephone 22-61-4453) will be happy to give you advice on which is best for your circumstances.

Nadeem Paul Qadir
UNFICYP fire emergency number: 22-61-4777
South fire emergency number: 112/199 and 199
North fire emergency number: 199

UNFICYP Senior Fire Officer Nadeem Paul Qadir attended the Crew Commander Incident Command Course at the International Fire Training Centre, Darlington, UK, between 28 April and 2 May 2008. The school is one of the most prestigious Fire Training Centres in the world, and provides Fire Related Training for delegates from more than 80 countries.

"The course itself was different from anything I have previously attended," Qadir says. "The reason for this is the Command and Control training which uses the latest Computer Based Simulator Technology. It is same latest technology been used to train fighter pilots."

Now back within UNFICYP, equipped with more knowledge and experience, Paul has already put his training into good use on 2 August when the UNFICYP Fire Crew provided the fire cover for an emergency landing of the RAF Rescue Bell helicopter at Nicosia Airport/UN Flight area.

Visitors

Hungary, Slovakia defence chiefs visit

In late August, a four-star general delegation arrived for an official visit to the mission, headed by Gen. Ľubomír Bulík, Chief of Defence of the Slovak Republic, and Gen. András Havril, Chief of Defence of the Republic of Hungary. The inspection took place between 21 and 22 August.

UNFICYP Chief of Staff/Acting Force Commander Col. Gerard Hughes greeted the visiting generals on arrival at UNFICYP Headquarters and later gave a briefing on the mission operational issues, current tasks, political climate improvement, new visions and possible future challenges. The generals later met with their national staff based in the Headquarters. Gen. Bulík visited the Engineer Camp Tatry, while Gen. Havril dropped by the Hungarian national club.

The delegation then travelled to HQ Sector 4, Camp General Štefánik in Famagusta, where they were briefed by Senior Ops Officer Capt. Miroslav Štefánik on the operational update and tasks of Sector 4. The generals then took the opportunity to meet with Slovak and Hungarian soldiers.

A line tour to CP-10 and OP 146 in the Dherinia Line buffer zone followed. Subsequently, the Slovak party proceeded to PB 126 and OP 129 in Pyla, where they were briefed on the daily routine by the post commanders. The Hungarian delegation also called in on the HUNCON members of 1st Platoon at Camp Szent Istvan in Athienou village and PB 91 in the western part of Sector 4.



German ambassador

German Ambassador H.E. Mr. Gottfried Zeitz paid an official visit to UNFICYP on 5 August. On his arrival he was met by Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez and Chief of Staff Col. Gerard Hughes, after which he visited SRSG/Chief of Mission Mr Tayé-Brook Zerihoun.

Mr. Zeitz was then taken on a vehicle tour of the buffer zone at HQ UNFICYP, followed by a city tour of Sector 2.



Hungarian national day

Hungarian National Day was celebrated on 20 August in the Dolphin Club facility at HQ UNFICYP by members of the Hungarian Contingent led by Commander HUNCON/DCO Sector 4, Lt. Col. Béla Berena.

This day celebrates the founder of the state of Hungary, St. Stephen, the country's national leader and first king. A small reception followed.



New Faces

Chief of Staff

Col. Gerard Hughes was appointed COOS UNFICYP on 31 July 2008, following his appointment as Military Adviser to the UNSG's Special Envoy to Darfur, in the rank of Brigadier. Immediately preceding this appointment he was principal drafting officer on the Medili Team in UNHQ New York, drafting the concept, administrative and logistic framework for UNAMID. Prior to this he was the COS (Force) of UNMIS.

Commissioned into the Queen's Own Hussars in 1979, Col. Hughes served as a Tank Troop Leader in Germany and Armoured Reconnaissance Troop Leader on Operations in Belize. In 1985 he transferred into the Royal Gurkha Rifles where he commanded at all levels up to Lieutenant Colonel and was Military Attaché in Kathmandu in 1996/1997.

Col. Hughes was educated at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the Army Command and Staff College and has an MPhil from the University of Glasgow. He



to the UK Chiefs of Staff. In 2004/2005 he was Chief of Staff of UNAMSIL.

Col. Hughes is married to Ji and has one daughter, Rita, who is at boarding school in the UK.

was a Military Assistant in the Chief of the General Staff's office and in Military Operations Branch in the UK Ministry of Defence. IN NATO he served as Assistant Chief of Staff Intelligence in the ACE Mobile Force and Executive Officer to the Deputy Commander Joint Force Command. In 2002 he served as Assistant to the US Chief, Office of Military Cooperation in the US Embassy in Kabul, where he assisted in drafting the DDR Programme for UNAMA.

Col. Hughes served as an UNMO Team leader in Sierra Leone in 2000/2001, where he was awarded the OBE for leading the team that negotiated the disarmament and demobilisation of the first two RUF rebel brigades. In 2002/2003 he was Assistant Secretary

Chief Operations Officer

Lt. Col. Ricardo Daniel Beldi was born in Sante Fe, Argentina, in 1963. He took up the post of Chief Operations Officer on 8 September 2008.

Lt. Col. Beldi graduated from the Argentinian Military Academy in 1986. From 1987-1989, he served in an Infantry Mechanized Regiment, and from 1990-1996, he was an Instructor in two Military Institutes, the Argentine NCO School and Argentinian Military Academy training Officers.

In December 2001, as a major, he graduated as a staff officer in the Command and General Staff in Buenos Aires. From 2002 to 2004, he was the



Operations Officer in the 7th Mechanized Regiment. Later he was posted as Operational Training Centre Commander from 2005 to 2006 and his latest post in the Army in 2007 as Chief of Operations Plans Division in the Land Operations Command.

Lt. Col. Beldi holds a university degree in Strategy and Organisation from the Command General Staff College. He is now in his final year of a course in Political Science and International Relations.

He is married to Karina Amparo Schild and they have two sons, Agustín Roberto (14) and Tomás Ricardo (12).

Force Provost Marshal

Maj. Russell (Russ) Foulcer joined the British Army in 1978 as a direct enlistment to the Corps of Royal Military Police having previously been a Police Cadet with the Strathclyde Police Force.

Serving at Regimental Duty, he has seen service in the UK, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Northern Ireland, Berlin, Germany, Canada, Norway, Bosnia, Hong Kong (the last RMP RSM to hold the post prior to the handover of the colony to the People's Republic of China), Hawaii and Sierra Leone. Having commissioned from the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 in 2001, he has



held the appointments of 2i/c, Regimental Adjutant, Staff Officer Grade 3 G1/G4 and Loan Service Advisor.

A keen service shooter, as Secretary of his Corps' Shooting Association, he secured the Corps' championship title for the first time in the 22 years of the competition. An active individual, he enjoys almost all sports but particularly paragliding, motorcycling, golf, fishing and diving.

He is accompanied by his wife Carole and, following a year of separation due to deployment in Sierra Leone, looks forward to enjoying all that Cyprus has to offer when work permits.

New Faces

Human Resources Assistant

Richard Steggall took over the post of Human Resources Assistant in September 2008.

Richard started his UN career at UNHQ New York in 1998, working as an Administrative Assistant with the Department of Management until 2002 and then as a Human Resources Assistant with DPKO until 2007.

Prior to joining UNFICYP, he was a Senior Human Resources Assistant with the OUSG/DFS, working as part of the Senior Leadership Appointments Section, a small team dealing with



senior leadership issues in peacekeeping and political missions. During his stay at UNHQ, he had short-term assignments to Afghanistan and Nepal, working on HR issues and training local and international staff.

Richard is married to Dina and they have two sons: Rowan, aged four, and Reed, six months, who will all be joining him in Cyprus very soon.

Outside of working hours, his interests include sport, especially football and golf, photography and music.

Supply Assistant

The new UNFICYP Supply Officer, Paulo Oliveira Martins, was born in Angola on 11 September 1967 when it was still part of the Portuguese empire. After the war of independence, his family returned to Portugal where Paulo was raised and educated.

In 1988, Paulo joined the Special Forces of the Portuguese Army. He then worked for the Portuguese Railroad Company (CP) for two years as a Station Master. In 1995, he joined the Portuguese Police where he stayed until he joined the civilian police element of UNMIBH in Bosnia.



From there, he was invited to switch berets and remain with the European Union Police Mission as the Chief Supply Officer. He eventually joined the UN as an international staff member in 2004 as a logistics assistant in the electoral division. In 2007, he moved on to MINUSTAH in Haiti as a logistical planner for the JLOC.

Paulo is married to Paula and they have a daughter Sara (11) and a son Rafael (6).

His hobbies include reading, cinema, dining out and dancing as much as possible.

HQ Telephone Operator

Athena Georgiou was appointed UNFICYP's Telephone Operator on 18 September 2008.

Athena graduated from Makedonitissa High School, Nicosia, in 1992, studied Marketing and Hotel Management at the Cyprus College as well as Public Relations.

For the last six years, Athena has been working as the Assistant to an Executive Director of an Information Technology company in Cyprus.

First contacts with United Nations family Athena experienced was when



she served with the Red Cross in Cyprus during the war in Lebanon in 2006.

Athena, who is single, has a wide range of hobbies and interests, including amateur dramatics and art (in particular Salvador Dali). She was member of a professional dance group, which is one of her favourite passions. She loves history and enjoys visiting English castles and stately homes. She likes a wide range of music and has an active social life with her family and friends.

Force Hygiene Officer

1/Lt. Dr. Gábor Halász took over the post of Force Hygiene Officer on 17 September 2008.

Born on 22 May 1977 in Nyíregyháza, northeast Hungary, he graduated from the University of Debrecen in 2001 as a general practitioner.

He joined the Hungarian Defence Forces in 2002 as a Second Lieutenant and served in various home postings. In 2007 he graduated as an occupational physician from the Semmelweis



University. He currently holds the post of occupational physician of the HDF 43rd Signal and Command and Control Support Regiment.

He has served in peacekeeping in 2003-2004 as a physician in the Multi-national Force and Observers on the Sinai-Peninsula in Egypt.

Dr. Halász is married to Krisztina and they have a son, Bálint (one). His interests include swimming, diving and football.

SO2 Pers

Lt. Col. József Kovács joined UNFICYP's Personnel & Logistics Branch as SO2 Pers on 17 September. Born on 2 April 1967, he comes from Cegléd in Hungary.

He attended the second Military Secondary School, Nyíregyháza from 1981-1985 and the Zalka Máté Military Technical Collage, Budapest from 1985-1988, graduating as a radio-chemical engineer.

Lt. Col. Kovács joined the armed forces in 1988, taking up various posts within the government, and completed his PhD at Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University in 2005.



During his military career, he attended two special courses (Denmark and Germany) and two exercises (Spain and Hungary).

This is Lt. Col. Kovács's second tour with UNFICYP, having served in the same position from 2002 to 2004. Lt. Col. Kovács speaks English and Russian.

He is married to Tünde and they have two sons, Kristóf (16) and Ákos József (six).

His hobbies include reading, gardening and playing football. He is also interested in social sciences and internal/international politics.

Liaison Officer to the National Guard

Lt. Col. Bernhard Theissel arrived in UNFICYP on 24 August to take up the appointment of Liaison Officer to the National Guard.

He was born in Eibiswald, Austria in 1951 and joined the Army in 1971. He has served as an NCO in the functions of a recruit instructor, anti-tank platoon leader, infantry platoon leader, instructor for alpinism and in the Austrian MOD. As an officer, he also served in the MOD, and now serves as a senior CIMIC Officer in the Austrian Joint Forces.



Lt. Col. Theissel married Dorothea in 1972 and has one son Michael (37) who also serves in the army as a professional soldier.

Lt. Col. Theissel first served with this mission in 1975 as a platoon leader in the Pyla district, in 1978, 1979, and 1980 with the UNFICYP Military Police, and in 1999 and 2001 with the Civil Affairs Branch. He has also served in other missions including Syria, Israel, Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo.

His hobbies are skiing, mountain climbing, diving and motor racing.

Force Medical Officer

Maj. Dr. Zsolt Fejes was born in Szentes, Hungary. He arrived in Cyprus on 17 September to take over the post of Force Medical Officer. This is Maj. Fejes' third tour of duty with UNFICYP, having served as FHO in 2004 and 2006.

Maj. Fejes studied and graduated at the Semmelweis Medical University in Hungary, Budapest. He began his career in the Hungarian Defence Force's Health Protection Institute. One year later, he was posted to the Central Military Hospital, ENT and Head-Neck Surgery Department. He gained a diploma as an ENT/Head-Neck



surgery specialist in 2001 and was promoted as an Assistant Professor in 2004. He also graduated in Disaster Medicine in 2006.

Maj. Fejes is current working on his PhD thesis, "The biological and medical effects of chemical weapons". He will graduate next year from the University of National Defence.

He speaks English and Russian. His hobbies, apart from his family, include reading, travelling, photography and his collection of antique medical books.

Maj. Fejes is married to Judith, and they have an 11-year-old daughter, Csenge.

SO2 JLOC Plans, ISS

Capt. Rastislav Kapa comes from Presov in eastern Slovakia, and took over the position of SO2 JLOC Plans on 9 September.

He was born on 3 June 1972. After graduating from the Military High School in Zilina and the Military Academy in Liptovsky Mikulas as a supply officer, he



went through positions in logistics branch at Helicopter Airbase in Presov. Since 2004 he has been serving at the Slovak Air Force Headquarters in Zvolen as senior logistics officer. This is his first UN mission.

Capt. Kapa is married to Silvia and they have one daughter Katarina (six). His hobbies include hiking and football.

Downer visits patrol base 126

