

United Nations

Press Release

UN Headquarters Observes International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, 24 May 2017

-- 5 fallen peacekeepers from Pakistan to be honoured at ceremony at UN Headquarters --

The United Nations Headquarters will observe the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on Wednesday, 24 May. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will lay a wreath to honour all fallen peacekeepers and will preside over a ceremony at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal will be awarded posthumously to 117 military, police and civilian personnel who lost their lives while serving in peacekeeping operations during 2016.

Five fallen peacekeepers from Pakistan are among the 117 who will posthumously receive the Dag Hammarskjöld medal -- Havildar Abdul Majeed Khan and Havildar Zishan Ahmed, who served with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); Lt-Colonel Muhammad Ashraf, who served with the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI); Naik Qaiser Abbas, who was deployed with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); and Ms. Sjabnam Khan who served in a civilian capacity with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

In a video message to mark the Day, the Secretary-General said: “Every day, peacekeepers help bring peace and stability to war-torn societies around the world. On the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, we pay tribute to the more than 3,500 peacekeepers who have given their lives in the service of peace since 1948.”

He further said: “Their sacrifice only strengthens our commitment to ensuring that United Nations peacekeepers continue protecting civilians in harm’s way, promoting human rights and the rule of law, removing landmines, advancing negotiations and

securing a better future in the places they are deployed. Now, more than ever, it is essential that we continue investing in peace around the world.”

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said: “We pay our greatest respects to the committed and courageous peacekeepers who are no longer with us today. I offer my deepest and most sincere condolences to the families of those we honour and to the bereaved. It’s critical that we continue to invest in peace and make every effort to carry forward their noble work, and that we continue to pursue reform efforts to make United Nations peacekeeping more efficient and effective. That is the best way we can honour the memories and sacrifices of our fallen peacekeepers.”

Today, more than 96,000 uniformed personnel from 124 troop-and-police-contributing countries serve under the blue flag, alongside more than 15,000 international and national civilian staff and nearly 1,600 United Nations Volunteers.

Pakistan is the 3rd largest contributor of military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping. It currently deploys more than 7,100 uniformed personnel to the UN peace operations in the Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan, Sudan and the Western Sahara.

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002, to pay tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The Assembly designated 29 May as the Day because it was the date in 1948 when the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the world body’s first peacekeeping mission, began operations in Palestine.

While the Day will be marked in New York on the 24th, UN Peacekeeping operations and UN offices around the world will commemorate the Day on or around the 29th.

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