

PRESS RELEASE

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UN Observes International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on 29 May

**UN Secretary-General to commemorate fallen peacekeepers,
and honour Military Gender Advocates of the Year**

UN Headquarters will observe the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on Friday, 29 May 2020. Secretary-General António Guterres will lay a wreath to honour all UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives since 1948 and will preside over a ceremony at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal will be awarded posthumously to the 83 military, police and civilian peacekeepers who lost their lives in 2019.

The Secretary-General will also award the ‘2019 Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award’ to Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian naval officer serving with the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and Major Suman Gawani from India who served in UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Created in 2016, the Award “recognises the dedication and effort of an individual peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security”. This is the first year the award has gone to more than one peacekeeper.

In a video message to mark Peacekeepers Day, the Secretary-General said: “Today we honor more than one million men and women who have served as United Nations peacekeepers and the more than 3,900 who have lost their lives in the line of duty. We also express our gratitude to the 95,000 civilian, police and military personnel currently deployed around the world. They are facing one of the greatest challenges ever: delivering on their peace and security mandates while helping countries to address the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“The theme of this year’s observance – Women in Peacekeeping – highlights their central role in our operations. Women often have greater access in the communities we serve, enabling us to improve the protection of civilians, promote human rights and enhance overall performance yet, women continue to represent only 6 per cent of uniformed military, police, justice and corrections personnel in field missions. As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we must do more to achieve women’s equal representation in all areas of peace and security,” the Secretary-General added.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, said: “As our peacekeepers continue to carry out their essential work amidst the constraints presented by COVID-19, ensuring women’s meaningful, equal and full participation in peace operations, as well as in peace and political processes, is key to protecting civilians and building durable peace.”

“Women who serve in peace operations play an essential role in helping communities in the fight against COVID-19. They must be a central part of all international, national and local responses,” he added.

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 General Assembly designated 29 May as the International Day of UN Peacekeepers in commemoration of the day in 1948 when the UN’s first peacekeeping mission, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began its operations.

Schedule of Events at Headquarters on 29 May

9:30 a.m.: The Secretary-General will lay a wreath in honour of all fallen peacekeepers will be held at the Peacekeepers Memorial Site in the North Lawn. The ceremony will be covered by UN Photo only.

10 a.m.: The Dag Hammarskjöld Medal and Military Gender Advocate of the Year award ceremonies will be held virtually and will be shown live on UN Webcast:
<http://webtv.un.org/>

12:00 p.m.: Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix will be the guest at the noon briefing. It will be webcast live at: <http://webtv.un.org/>

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