



## Kenyan Peacekeeper wins United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year 2020 Award

**New York, 24 May 2021** - A Kenyan peacekeeper, who recently completed her assignment in Darfur, Sudan is selected to receive the 2020 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

Military Gender Advisor Steplyne Nyaboga, 32, who served in the recently ended United Nations - African Hybrid Union Operation in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)), will receive the award during a virtual ceremony presided over by Secretary-General António Guterres, marking the International Day of UN Peacekeepers on Thursday, 27 May 2021.

Created in 2016, the United Nations “[Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award](#)” recognizes the dedication and efforts of an individual military peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in a peace operation context, as nominated by Heads and Force Commanders of UN peace operations.

Upon receiving the award, Major Nyaboga expressed happiness that her work in mainstreaming gender dimensions was recognized. Reflecting on her role as a peacekeeper, she says: “I am so elated that our efforts in serving humanity have impact and didn’t go unnoticed. Peacekeeping is a human enterprise: placing women and girls at the center of our efforts and concerns will help us better protect civilians and build a more sustainable peace.”

Major Nyaboga deployed to the UNAMID mission in February 2019. Throughout her two-year deployment in Zalingei, she worked diligently to mainstream gender in military components by bringing awareness to gender dynamics in the field.

Major Nyaboga specifically encouraged gender-sensitive outreach to local communities, in an effort to enhance the protection of civilians. She also focused on gender training for her fellow military peacekeepers, training nearly 95 per cent of the UNAMID’s military contingent by December 2020. She also advised the Force on how to better identify and integrate the needs of men, women, boys and girls groups in vulnerable contexts into UNAMID’s analysis, planning and operations, a move that greatly

improved the mission's understanding of and response to protection needs. Working together with human rights, gender and communications colleagues, Steplyne also organized campaigns and workshops for staff and civil society activists to address issues affecting Darfuri women and girls.

Secretary-General António Guterres commended Major Nyaboga for her award. "Peace and security can only be achieved and sustained if all members of society have equal opportunities, protection, access to resources and services and can participate in decision-making," he said. "Through her efforts, Major Nyaboga introduced new perspectives and increased awareness of crucial gender dimensions across the Mission and helped strengthen our engagement with Darfuri women. The United Nations remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that women sit at the political table and make their full contributions to peace, and Major Nyaboga's dedication has advanced the vital clause," he added.

This is the first time that a Kenyan peacekeeper has received this prestigious award.

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**About the awardee:**

*Staff Officer Major Steplyne Nyaboga began her military career in 2009 as a Signal Radio Troop Commander, reaching the Brigade level in 2011 at age 22. In 2013, she was in charge of managing and instructing Kenya's Defence Force recruits, eventually reaching the level of Senior Instructor in 2017. As a Senior Instructor, she commanded the Communication wing; she held this post until she was nominated for deployment in UNAMID as a Gender and Child Protection Officer.*

**Note to the editors:**

*The Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award is underpinned by the principles outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and follow-on resolutions on women, peace and security. The resolutions call on actors to mainstream a gender perspective in all aspects of peacekeeping and peacebuilding and to ensure women's participation in peace and political processes. They also call for the protection from and prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and for an expansion of the role and contribution of women in UN operations, including of uniformed women peacekeepers. Find out more about the previous award winners here: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender-advocate-of-year-award>*

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