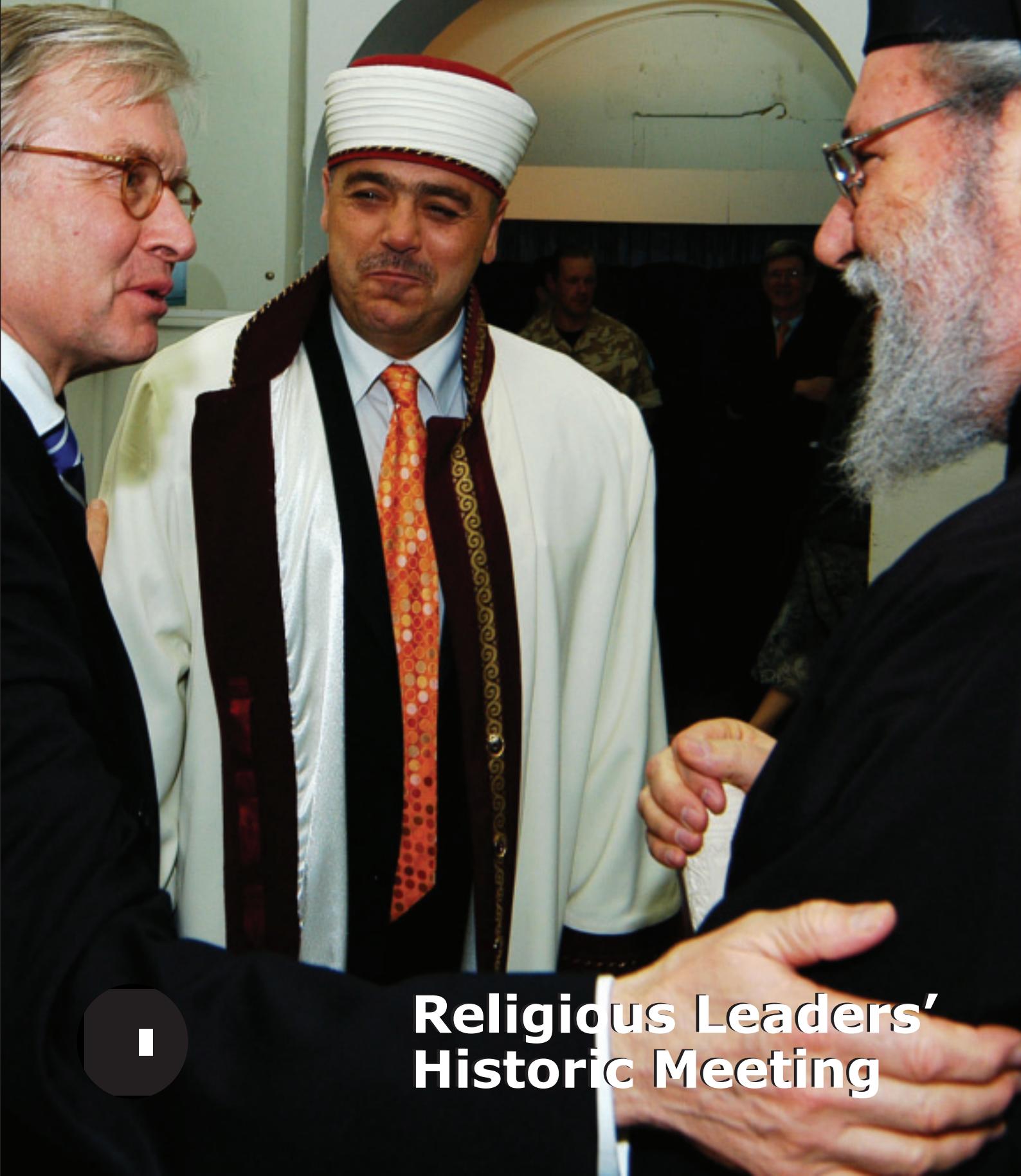


The Blue Beret

February 2007



Religious Leaders'
Historic Meeting

THE BLUE BERET

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Buffer Zone Perspectives

The Greek Cypriots call it "nekri zoni" ("the dead zone"). The Turkish Cypriots talk about "arabölge" ("an expanse of territory between ceasefire lines"). To UNFICYP, it is our place of work – the buffer zone.

Most do not see it as a conflict zone. Yet, some shortsightedly complain that it is the zone where their singular pursuit of a livelihood clashes with UN peacekeepers' broader mandated duty of care.

True, some do view the area as a comfort zone, a reassuring buffer between them and painful memories from a receding but not forgotten past.

Today, almost four years on, some have taken so for granted the reality of crossing opportunities that they forget these buffer zone transit-ways traverse what was once a combat zone.

They fail to see that the buffer zone originated and remains a blue security blanket thrown down between the respective frontline positions of Opposing Forces, delineating the zone's sometimes disputed margins.

More and more, people look to the buffer zone's developmental potential. Understandably, they want to capitalize on the appreciation of land and property values after 33 years!

As spelled out in the profile of UNFICYP's Civil Affairs Branch (pages 4 and 5), three determining principles underscore efforts to promote normal conditions in the buffer zone – security, property rights and operational effectiveness. SRSG Møller, addressing the Integrated Medal Parade (page 7), made clear that security considerations cannot be put aside to suit individual convenience. Such is the price Cypriots must pay until they agree on how to end the island's division.

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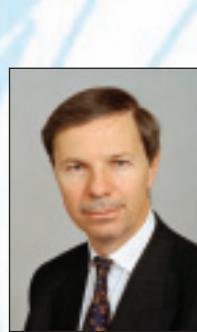
SG's Senior Management Team

On 16 February, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Chef de Cabinet Vijay Nambiar announced that the SG's senior management team of USGs and above. The new team includes:

- Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro of Tanzania as Deputy Secretary-General;
- Ms. Alicia Barcena of Mexico, USG for Management;
- Mr. John Holmes, U.K., USG for Humanitarian Affairs;
- Mr. Lynn Pascoe, U.S.A., USG for Political Affairs;
- Mr. Sha Zukang, China, USG for Economic and Social Affairs;
- Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka of Japan, USG for Public Information;
- Nicolas Michel, Switzerland, USG for Legal Affairs;
- Jean-Marie Guehenno, France, USG for Peacekeeping Operations;
- Mr. Muhammad Shaaban, Egypt, USG for General Assembly Affairs;
- Mr. David Veness, U.K., USG for Safety and Security;
- Ms. Inga-Britt Ahlénius of Sweden, USG of Internal Oversight Services;



*Nicolas Michel,
Under-Secretary-
General for Legal
Affairs, and the
Legal Counsel of
the United Nations*



*Jean-Marie
Guehenno, Under-
Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping
Operations*



*Thoraya Obaid,
Executive Director
of the United
Nations Population
Fund (UNFPA)*



*Mrs Alicia Barcena,
Under-Secretary-
General for
Management*



*Radhika Coomaras-
wamy, Special
Representative of
the Secretary-
General for
Children and
Armed Conflict*



*Lynn Pascoe, the
new Under-
Secretary-General
for Political Affairs*

- Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sri Lanka, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict;
- Mr. Antonio Maria Costa of Italy, Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna;
- Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Russia, Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva;
- Mr. José Luis Machinea of Argentina, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC);
- Mr. Aboule Janneh of the Gambia, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA);
- Mr. Marek Belka, Poland, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE);
- Mrs. Thoraya Obaid, Saudi Arabia, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund; and
- Mr. Ad Melkert of the Netherlands, USG and Associate Administrator of UNDP.

Mr. Nambiar also said the SG had decided as a matter of policy that terms of appointment at senior levels should not normally exceed five years.

SG outlines plans for restructuring peacekeeping work

Faced with an "explosive growth" in demand for United Nations peacekeepers around the world, coupled with a "dramatically strained and overstretched system," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is proposing to split the current peacekeeping office into two to provide better planning, faster deployment and a more responsive process.

The recommendations, detailed in a letter the SG sent to the General Assembly as part of his ongoing consultations on his restructuring initiative, call for splitting the current DPKO into a Department of Peace Operations and a Department of Field Support, both headed by an Under-Secretary-General, the managerial level of the current DPKO chief.

"The number of peace operations is at an all-time high with almost 100,000 personnel in the field. It appears that the figure will rise still further in 2007," the SG said, noting that reforms in 2000 had aimed to equip DPKO with sufficient capability to launch one new multi-disciplinary mission per year. "Yet, the past 36 months alone have seen the

start-up or expansion of nine field missions, with three additional missions currently in active start-up. Over the course of the next year, the number of personnel in UN peace operations could increase by as much as 40%," he added.

The SG stressed that the new arrangement would be resource-neutral and that the two new departments would consolidate operations that are now spread among various offices and departments.

Under the plan, the new Department of Peace Operations would consolidate all factors dealing with strategy, planning and deployment while the Department of Field Support would take on the responsibility of the current "impossibly overstretched" management.

"Taken together, these measures would bolster and improve the assistance that Headquarters provides to field missions and to field personnel contributed by Member States," Mr. Ban said.

"It would mean more and better policy guidance from a dedicated department of Peace Operations; enhanced responsiveness from a Department of Field Support, properly equipped and specialized to address mission support needs; and, by equipping the department expeditiously with the human, material and financial resources they need to do their jobs, a better way to ensure the safety and security of personnel and the prospects of successful mandate implementation."





Civil Affairs – Care and Responsibility

Shiotani notes that in recent years, the Turkish Cypriot community living in the south has seen an increase in immigration issues. "Turkish Cypriots who have married mainland Turks who obviously have no diplomatic ties and representation often fall under the illegal immigrant category and are deported. We try to intervene in those instances but we are not always successful. There are also third nationals, like Sri Lankans and others, married to Turkish Cypriots, who get caught up in this web and are also deported. Normally, it wouldn't come to us as it's not a UN issue, but by virtue of the fact that they are married to a Turkish Cypriot, we become involved and the government accepts this."

In the north, humanitarian deliveries and home visits adjusted and adapted over the years as the community aged and individual needs changed.

A priority right now is to establish a better delivery system for pension transfers from the south to the elderly Greek Cypriot community in the villages of the Karpas.

In the past, the military component used to have humanitarian officers dedicated to civilian activities in the buffer zone. They were responsible, by and large, for the part in the UNFICYP mandate dealing with a "return to normal conditions". In doing so, they dealt primarily with farmers, either brokering agreements or unilaterally agreeing to allow farming to in certain areas. The present farming situation derives from those agreements, mostly made on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis.

However, the CCAO notes that since 2004, when Cyprus joined the EU and the Annan plan was rejected, followed by the first UNFICYP review and the reduction in troops, there has been a change in mentality and perception as far as the buffer zone is concerned. The opening of the crossings in 2003 was another major contributing factor.

This shift in attitude placed the whole question of the buffer zone in a new light. No longer was it perceived as

It is UNFICYP's task to maintain peace and stability in the buffer zone and to ensure that there is no alteration of the status quo along the two ceasefire lines drawn up on 16 August 1974. The UN-patrolled buffer zone is 180 km long, and covers around 3% of the island's surface area. It varies in width from less than four metres in old Nicosia to some seven kilometres near Athienou.

Far from being a dead zone, which is the literal translation of the Greek "nekri zoni" used to describe the buffer zone or simply the "expanse of territory" between the two ceasefire lines as the Turkish "Arabölge" suggests, it is alive with activity from farming to light industry, a mainstay for members of the communities who work and reside in it.

There are six inhabited villages, and around 8,000 people who live and work in the buffer zone.

UNFICYP's Civil Affairs Branch is charged with providing humanitarian support to these buffer zone residents, as well as to Greek Cypriots living in the north and Turkish Cypriots living in the south. With just 28 members on its team, Civil Affairs deals with issues as diverse as farming, community and environmental concerns. Civil Affairs, the only mission component truly integrated in structure, draws on military, police and civilian personnel to carry out these tasks.

Chief Civil Affairs Officer (CCAO) Kyoko Shiotani notes that Civil Affairs evolved as the mission evolved from 1974 when there were real humanitarian needs in the buffer zone, but primarily in assisting communities left behind or those who chose to stay behind in the north and south. "The UN was supposed to be there to help them return to normality to the extent possible," Shiotani says.

Outside the buffer zone, this entails scheduled humanitarian deliveries and home visits to Greek Cypriots living in the north. In the south, we make contact with the Turkish Cypriots and facilitate their integration into the community by e.g. making sure their documents are in order if they can't speak or read Greek.



primarily or solely a protective buffer between two armed forces. The normalcy and familiarity induced by frequent crossings meant that people increasingly began to view it for its developmental potential.

Shiotani notes that UNFICYP was unprepared for the greater demand by Cypriots to claim and use their property. "All the operational military tools used up until now to manage the buffer zone were suddenly being called into question because of the critical issue of property. Everything we do, every OP we have and every farming security line we draw cuts across someone's property. People were starting to say, 'Wait a minute. I have rights, I am an EU citizen, we are legitimate, so why am I being punished for something that the international community cannot solve?'"

The CCAO concedes that it is natural that people should want to access and use their property after 32 years. The paradox is that however peaceful the buffer zone may be, it exists for a specific reason which, until it is resolved, precludes a return to the normal conditions envisaged in the mandate. "We can't have an unresolved Cyprus problem and normal conditions in the buffer zone," Shiotani says.

Three principles determine the role of Civil Affairs in the buffer zone. "First and foremost is security – the belief that even civilian activities can elicit a military response. Second is property rights – making sure the people who want to use the property are the legitimate owners. Third is our own operational effectiveness – ensuring that what a civilian wants to do there is not going to obstruct us in our operations, or in carrying out our mandate."

The recurring problem arises from the interpretation of UNFICYP's mandate, particularly the part that says "... and as necessary restore to normal conditions".

As Shiotani allows, nothing could be more normal than an individual wanting to build an hotel or a school in the buffer zone. Ever since the buffer zone was drawn up in 1974, UNFICYP undertook to restore normal conditions by assisting farmers and shop-owners to get back to their lives as quickly as possible.

Some would argue that that was 1974 and now it's 2007. So what is wrong with interpreting it in the modern way? Building a school is normal. However, as Shiotani points out, the UN was explicitly **not** given administering powers in the buffer zone. The administration of villages and people living in the buffer zone was left entirely to the Cypriot authorities.

"We have no administrative authority. When we talk about UNFICYP's authority, we talk about it in a mandated sense, which is to make sure there is no recurrence of fighting, and that there is no heightening of tensions between the two sides. And one of the ways that we do that is to ensure that civilian activities are verifiably civilian. So if someone starts to build something that could be a cowshed, but could also be used to hide a military installation, we are able to say we have seen the plans for this we have made an assessment and can verify that it is, in fact, a cowshed."

"The other reason we look at the details of what someone wants to build is to verify property deeds. We also make sure it's not going to cause tension. A school, however innocuous, built too close to the northern cease-fire line, can cause tension. We control access to the buffer zone for the same reason through a permit system whereby civilians are given access to farm in the buffer zone. At any given time, we have 2,000 permits active throughout the buffer zone and this has never really been challenged."

"People who have been born and raised in the buffer zone don't even question this system. It's those who have acquired land recently who want to come in and use it. They have no real sense of the buffer zone or living in it, so they tend to question these things and the government understandably has to protect its people's interests. However, this really shouldn't be at the expense of the UN



carrying out its mandate. This tends to lead to discussions about authority and what authority the UN has.

"The UN has no legal authority, but we do have a legal basis for our presence here which resides in SC resolutions and the fact that we are here at the invitation and with the consent of the government of Cyprus. We also have a mandate which spells out what we should be doing. So this is the legal basis and what we mean when we talk about 'authority'. We don't have any claim to land – it is the people's land and when the UN says sorry, it is not a good idea to build that here right now, what we mean is at the present time, as long as the Cyprus problem remains unresolved. Once the Cyprus problem is resolved, then we will pack up and leave. I don't think that there is anyone here who doesn't hope for the day when we can return the buffer zone to really normal conditions – to become an integrated part of the island, and not a yellow line across the map."

Shiotani notes a tendency on the part of the authorities to see the UN in a negative light. Perhaps this is because they only engage with one another when problematic cases become contentious, since most are resolved by Civil Affairs without difficulty following long-established routine procedures. "So we seem unnecessarily obstructionist to them, but I point out that there are many other civilians whom we deal with on a day-to-day basis whose lives and projects we facilitate – actions that occur in an obscure fashion, but which don't raise interest because they take place without a fuss."

Netha Kreouzos



Pyla Tragedy

An explosion on a cattle farm in the buffer zone village of Pyla on 26 January at around 17:40hrs resulted in the death of two people and the serious injury of a third.

UN personnel and Sovereign Bases Area police immediately contacted UNPOL at Pyla and the Fire and Ambulance services at Dhekelia after hearing the explosion at Pyla Plato farm, which is situated in the area between Pyla and Pergamos. Personnel from UNPOL Pyla, UNPB 126, SBA Police and Fire Service Dhekelia all immediately went to the scene to render assistance. The explosion, heard all the way to Larnaca's northern suburbs, caused a fire which sent seven-metre high flames into the air. Dhekelia Fire Service managed to extinguish the blaze.

A UN patrol from OP 126 was the first to arrive at the scene and Slovak peacekeepers Pte. Ivo Kukuruc and Pte. Rastislav Pajtás immediately provided medical assistance to the two men they found at the site of the explosion. Their colleagues LCpl. Peter Čech and Sgt. Miroslav Mišlán, who were close by, assisted in providing first aid to the victims and securing the scene of the incident until further reinforcements arrived.

The injured men, Mr. Murat Elagor, owner of the farm, and Mr. Husain Göçerili, both sustained severe burns. Mr. Elagor was removed from the scene and taken to hospital by relatives, while Mr. Göçerili was evacuated from the scene by emergency ambulance. Both were taken to Larnaca General Hospital. Due to the severity of his injuries, Mr. Göçerili was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit of the Nicosia General Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries four days later.

Before leaving the scene, Mr. Elagor informed the emergency services that a four-year-old boy had been on the farm at the time of the explosion and was missing. A subsequent search of the area located the body of the child near the rear of a burnt-out vehicle. Four-year-old Dogay Kızıl was pronounced dead by Dr. Maj. Burley, MRS Dhekelia.

Mr. Göçerili, who had been delivering fuel to the farm, had brought two of his neighbour's children along for the ride – the deceased boy and a six-year-old girl who escaped unharmed. The explosion occurred as the men were pumping the diesel fuel.

UNPOL Deputy SPA Col Speedie speculated that the explosion could have been a result of inadequate venting in the fuel tank and that the ensuing pressure build-up caused the fuel to explode, spilling onto the hot generator.

Chief of Mission Michael Møller and Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni personally met up with the four soldiers when visiting Sector 4 a little later.

The CM thanked the soldiers for the job they did in Pyla. "We are grateful for the immediate assistance you provided," he said. Maj. Gen. Barni said he was proud of how quickly the soldiers responded. "You reacted in a way expected of soldiers in a dangerous situation."

The FC noted that no amount of training could prepare someone for the first time they had to deal with such a horrific scene.

Recounting the incident, the four Slovak soldiers who had been on duty at OP 126 and OP 129 at the time, said they heard the blast and immediately went to the scene. They were there within a matter of minutes and could see from a distance that a car was in flames. Assessing the situation and possible sources of danger, the soldiers spotted two seriously injured men. One was almost completely naked, his clothes having been blown off by the force of the blast. They could see that he had burns to 80% of his body. The soldiers immediately reported about the situation on the ground and a second patrol arrived to help secure the area. The soldiers provided first aid assistance to the injured men – trying to stabilize their condition and prevent them from going into shock. They also kept civilians away from the scene.

The soldiers said it was the first time they had seen anything like it, yet they had to put aside their feelings of horror and get on with the job. One of the injured men was



crying about a child. Initially, they could not understand what he was saying, then, with the assistance of relatives, they began to search for the children. The little girl was found unharmed behind a building, but the body of the boy was found under the burnt-out vehicle only after the flames had been extinguished.

Deputy SPA Col Speedie said the cooperation between all the components was exemplary. "Often, people not trained for such situations will take themselves away from a scene of such trauma. However, the soldiers' training kicked in and they did an outstanding job."

The UNPOL officers who then took over to investigate the circumstances of the explosion also did a great job with the assistance of the SBA.

The circumstances surrounding the explosion have raised a number of issues regarding health and safety hazards on farms and businesses within the buffer zone. Of special concern is whether safety standards are being adhered to. It also raises the issue of third party liability insurance to cover such accidents and whether farms and businesses operating in the buffer zone have such coverage. These issues would be taken up with the local communities, Speedie said.

He noted that a proactive approach would be taken by UNPOL to inform buffer zone residents on health and safety hazards with possible inspections carried out in conjunction with the relevant authorities.

"The people need to cooperate to prevent tragic accidents like this happening in the future, for their own and their families' safety."

Senior Police Adviser Carla van Maris praised the efforts of all concerned, saying it was an excellent example of cooperation across the board. "From the first moment when the incident occurred, people of different disciplines were seen working together, cooperating as if they had done so for a long time, regardless of who they were, where they came from or their background.

"UNFICYP soldiers who arrived at the scene of the incident first and who provided immediate support to the victims, UNPOL officers, who undertook to safeguard the scene of the incident, the FMPU, who concluded an excellent forensic investigation, the interpreter from the PIO, who offered her day off to come to Pyla, and the liaison officer, who had to maintain contact with all parties involved. Also, non-UNFICYP staff like the SBA police, the ambulance service and the Dhekelia Defence Fire Brigade worked tirelessly, many throughout the night, to render support."

Netha Kreouzos

Mr. Nejdet Ermetal, the Turkish Cypriot Muhtar of Pyla, sent a letter of thanks to UNFICYP on behalf of the grieving families of the victims killed in the explosion. "I sincerely write to thank you and all UN personnel, especially Sgt. Kevin O'Hagan and Comd. Col Speedie, for the superb service at Pyla Plato Farm during the tragic incident on 26 January 2007," he wrote.

BZ Security Outweighs Individual Convenience – SRSG

More than 200 United Nations peacekeeping medals were awarded to members of the Argentinian, British, Hungarian and Slovak contingents when Chief of Mission SRSG Michael Møller and Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni presided over UNFICYP's fifth integrated medal parade on 15 February. The well-attended ceremony took place in the hangar adjacent to the UN Flight helicopter hangar, a welcome and dry indoor location on what proved to be a windy and rain-swept evening.

As usual there was a large turnout from the diplomatic community in addition to many UNFICYP staff members and friends. The Ambassadors of Hungary and Slovakia joined the British High Commissioner and the CO Sector 1 in helping the CM and FC award medals to contingent recipients.

Chief of Mission Møller noted how the peacekeepers came from the northern and southern hemispheres to work as one force in the service of the UN, and in the service of the people of this island, "to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to ensure the integrity and security of the buffer zone."

Their task is not that straightforward, just as maintaining the integrity of the buffer zone is not always easy, he added.

"For example, our peacekeepers have to balance the need for overall security against the competing and sometimes conflicting demands of farmers who see the buffer zone as simply a place to cultivate and harvest. Or they have to deal with eager landowners anxious to

develop their property and reap the benefits of the island's current development boom.

"In such circumstances, people conveniently forget the buffer zone's root cause and origins. They often seek to override the UN's role and primary responsibilities in this area, asserting that the right to a livelihood outweighs security considerations and all the other complicating factors that, much as they might like, cannot be pushed aside to suit individual convenience."

"Yet the irritation and frustration that results from these encounters only serves as a reminder of the price Cypriots still pay for the island's division."

The SRSG said that those being honoured with the award of the UN Peacekeeping Medal in the name of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had demonstrated compassion and the highest standards of fairness, impartiality, tolerance, patience, cooperation, tact and diplomacy in the course of their tour of duty. He thanked them for a job well done. "Your performance here in Cyprus is a credit to you, your country, and to the military units you belong to."

In his remarks, Maj. Gen. Barni commended the Military, UNPOL and Civil Affairs for their intensified efforts and hard work in furthering the three-pillar concept of joint coordination across the mission. "I believe that recent challenges we have faced in the buffer zone have demonstrated that we are developing genuine synergy." It was important, he said, to "develop our ability to work together, as a team, on joint solutions" since it was clear that when a determined, professional few combine and synchronise resources, it "is possible to accomplish the mission with ever greater effectiveness".

Integrated Medal Parade



Island's two religious leaders' historic meeting in Ledra Palace

Ledra Palace Hotel was the site of an historic meeting between the two religious representatives on the island on 21 February 2007. Archbishop of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus, Chrysostomos II, and Mr. Ahmet Yonluer, Turkish Cypriot Director of Religious Affairs, met under the auspices of the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly René van der Linden as part of a series of bicultural meetings the PACE President participated in during his visit to the island.

A PACE statement issued following the Ledra Palace meeting noted that the two religious representatives were delighted to meet for the first time, and warmly welcomed Mr. van der Linden's initiative in bringing them together. There was goodwill on both sides, and the exchange of views had been positive and sincere.

According to the statement, the two leaders discussed ways that they could contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and tolerance, to set an example to the people and politicians of Cyprus. They agreed to meet again soon as well as take practical steps to promote respect for places of worship in all parts of the island, including efforts to ensure their



restoration. As a first step, they planned to work towards the goal of enabling worship at the Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque in Larnaca and the Apostolos Andreas Monastery in the Karpas Peninsula. The religious leaders hoped this would mark the beginning of a long relationship of mutual trust, which would contribute to a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem. Speaking at the end of the meeting, PACE President van der Linden emphasised that inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue was a priority of his Presidency, and stressed that this historic first meeting had been an excellent example.

Earlier, the Secretary General's Special Representative in Cyprus, UNFICYP Chief of Mission Michael Möller, received Mr. van der Linden in his office in the UNPA. The PACE delegation was greeted on arrival by the Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni and the Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell.

Afterwards, Mr. van der Linden was escorted on a tour of the Nicosia buffer zone area by UNFICYP peacekeepers.

Party Leaders' Meeting

On 2 February, Chief of Mission SRSG Michael Möller addressed the bicultural meeting of political party leaders held at Ledra Palace each month under the auspices of the Slovak Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Ján Varšo.



3 Pillars into Sector 1

As every member of UNFICYP is aware, the success of our mission here depends upon cooperation between the three main pillars - the military component, UNPOL and Civil Affairs. This system was introduced several months ago, but it is only recently that the results are beginning to show through in Sector 1.

The integration process included the organisation of weekly briefings, attended by members of the three pillars. These take place every Monday at San Martín Camp, and are a very useful tool in the exchange of information and analysis of common problems. CO Sector 1, Lt. Col. Justo Treviranus, chairs these meetings and is mainly responsible for the integration process.

One of the improvements made by Sector 1 is the addition of one SCAT and one UNPOL member on daily patrols monitoring the most sensitive and problematic areas. These joint patrols have resulted in many daily incidents being solved more quickly and efficiently, particularly those involving civilians inside the buffer zone.

Sector 1's military component, SCAT 1 and UNPOL 1 have taken part in joint field training exercises and "sand table" rehearsals, a scenario which envisages possible



Checking permits

violent and hostile demonstrations by large numbers of civilians. This training was developed as a result of the situation which arose last November in Avlona near OPT 38.

This integrated three-pillar cooperation has also proved very effective during the hunting season. Sector 1's military, along with SCAT 1 and UNPOL 1, deployed twice a week on Wednesdays and Sundays (hunting days). The expertise and knowledge of the handling procedures during difficult situations involving civilians in the buffer zone was invaluable to Sector 1's military component.

Mission tasks have been significantly eased through the integration process. Sector 1 personnel have also had the opportunity to form great personal relationships among peacekeepers from many different nations spread around the world, including soldiers, policemen and policewomen from Australia, Bosnia, Croatia, India, Ireland, El Salvador, the Netherlands and more.

Apart from completing a successful mission, surely the most valuable and important experience that we gained from our time with UNFICYP was meeting with comrades from all over the globe, teaching each other about ourselves and learning our strengths and capabilities.

Capt. Mauricio Silvestre



Three-pillar Monday meeting in San Martín Camp

Force Commander visits FMPU

On 2 February, Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael José Barni conducted a formal visit to the Force Military Police Unit.

This was FC's first visit this small but diverse UNFICYP sub unit. Comprising personnel from each of the Sectors, FMPU is not subject to the criminal law procedures of the Republic of Cyprus. It does, however, follow UN regulations for all nationalities, as well as specific legislation in relation to the contributing nations.

The FC was given an initial brief by the Force Provost Marshal, Maj. Iain Watt, Royal Military Police on the operational capability of the unit. Afterwards, the FC carried out a tour of the unit including police display stands on the vehicles and equipment used.



The Buzz at the Nicosia HIVE

somewhere that you think other people may find interesting – a tourist attraction, restaurant or hotel/apartment/villa, please pick up a leaflet or business card and drop it in to us. We can then include it with our other information, extending what we have on offer for our customers.

HIVE Regional Manager (Cyprus)



You ask, we answer!

Your HIVE Information Officer at Nicosia is Lynetta Cook-Hannah. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 8.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Lynetta can also be contacted by telephone 22-359316 or by e-mail: unitednations@hivegb.co.uk.

The Nicosia HIVE is located in the community centre and here our information is also open to members of the international community. Most of the enquiries at Nicosia are about travel, places of interest and things to do in the area. We also hold information on relocation, the local unit and civilian facilities, schools and further education, housing, healthcare, employment and training opportunities.

We aim to provide correct and up-to-date information but we are only as good as the information we have. So this is where you can help! We would like to invite all units, clubs and organisations (for children or adults) to provide the HIVE with their up-to-date literature. This should include contact details, opening times and costs. In addition to this, if you have found

New All-Female Police Unit in Liberia

For the first time in the history of United Nations peacekeeping, an all-female Formed Police Unit (FPU) has been deployed. The Unit has arrived in Liberia to help strengthen the rule of law and maintain peace in the West African country.

The new officers serving with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) are "very confident, they are trained, and I think they will perform well out here," said their commander, Seema Dhundiya.



Indian Peacekeepers (mostly women) arriving in Liberia

She emphasized that the Indian Unit, which consists of 103 women performing operational tasks and 22 men doing logistics work, is well-prepared to meet the challenges ahead. "Our contingent has been carved out from a paramilitary force and as far as training is concerned, it is almost on the same line of what army recruits get."

Ms. Dhundiya pledged that the officers, who are armed with sophisticated weapons, will carry out their work with utmost professionalism. "We are definitely going to perform to the best of our abilities and raise the expectations of our senior authorities and our own country."

UN spokesman Ben Dotsei Malor emphasized that the Indian blue berets would help the Liberian National Police (LNP) while supporting the work of the UN in the country.

"We hope that the presence of this all-female contingent will serve as an incentive and an attraction to encourage young Liberian women to join the Liberian National Police," said UNMIL Police Commissioner Mohammed Alhassan.

Ms. Dhundiya was optimistic that her officers could function as role models. "I think the Liberian people are going to welcome us with open arms and more of the local population will get inspired seeing these girls properly dressed, well equipped and probably they will get motivated to join the UN police officers, especially the girls."

The new Unit joins 82 female UN police officers serving with UNMIL in various capacities.

Goat Handler to a Mascot

After four weeks into my Op TOSCA tour, I was sat at the desk in Sector 2's MT office, booking vehicles out, when in walked Sgt. Ellaby (Civil Affairs sergeant) looking for a vehicle. He had been tasked to find a goat.

A few weeks passed and Sgt. Ellaby returned to the MT. "Ah, Goat Major" he says to me! I later discovered that I had been chosen from a cast of thousands to be the Regimental Goat Major – handler of our first Regimental mascot. This honour had been bestowed on me because I was deemed "animal-friendly". I also had flexible working hours that would accommodate the demands of this new responsibility.

It was only a year ago that 39th Regiment Royal Artillery adopted the mantle of "The Welsh Gunners", so leek-eating and goat-parading was to be the future. Recruiting drives were beginning in earnest by our rear party in the Welsh valleys. From that moment on, all Regimental parades for visitors to Ledra Palace Hotel would involve our four-legged friend, buffed and polished to a standard rare among the common flocks.

An elite team of the Regiment's finest was formed to collect the goat. The team consisted of Sgt. Ellaby and his look-alike, Sgt. Gough (aka the Mitchell brothers). Also on the team was Sgt. Oliphant (was a bombardier at the time, well done sarge), and not to forget myself.

On the morning of the first parade, we all gathered on the car park at early o'clock and headed out to the goat farm. How Sgt. Ellaby found the place I will never know. He must have a thing for finding goats. When we arrived at the farm, the farmer's son led the way to the goat. After splitting my head open on a metal girder, I realised that the farmer's son had told me to watch my head. Unfortunately, I don't understand Greek!

The farmer (Costas) let us use his goat for free; all he wanted was a picture of the goat all cleaned up. Sgt. Ellaby also had a coat made with the Welsh dragon on one side and the RA crest on the other, designed and measured up by Sgt. Oliphant and Sgt. Gough. Mr. Osman (our much-loved local tailor) made this for free.

The goat had to be named. We couldn't have a Regimental mascot without a name. The RSM, being Welsh, thought of some Welsh names and put them on the white board for everyone to vote. By an overwhelming majority, the decision was made to call the goat "Gunner Gwyn".

During the tour, I have been on a number of parades with Gwyn for visitors and inspecting officers such as the Force Commander and Members of Parliament. Notably, this duty has earned me a meal and some free wine in the Sgts' Mess – as you can imagine, I made the most of the free wine.



During the parades, Gwyn has behaved himself, apart from trying to eat MPs' suits and my uniform, then the odd pee down my leg in front of the Force Commander, (don't think he noticed though!). We have been quite lucky with Gwyn with him being just an ordinary goat from a farm. Usually, a Regimental mascot is from a special herd, owned by the Queen and reared from birth.

Gunner Gwyn won't be coming back to the UK with us, but will still be remembered as the first Regimental Mascot of 39th Regiment "The Welsh Gunners" Royal Artillery.

Goat Major, LBdr. Allen

UNPA Sauna

In September 2005, as one of its parting gestures, the Finnish Contingent handed over its much-beloved sauna to the Dolphin Swimming Pool Committee.

Based on the British Retained Site near Maple Leaf Camp, it is a facility primarily for the benefit of the military members of UNFICYP. However, all police and civilian staff as well as other UN organisations and embassy staff are welcome to use the facility. This offer extends to their families and friends.

The self-funding sauna is maintained through hire fees and managed by a committee under the chairmanship of the CPLO, Lt. Col. Paul Warwick. Since it is situated on the BRS, it must comply with current UK health and safety legislation, under the watchful eye of the Property Manager, Maj. Fred Reid.

The wood-burning sauna is ready for use approximately 40 minutes after lighting. There is a recreational area and a well-stocked kitchen inside the complex, complete with DVD and TV facilities. The outside area offers wooden tables, chairs, cooker and BBQ.

The sauna is for the benefit of all. It is an excellent facility. For enquiries, please contact Maj. Fred Reid at 2261-4418.



Note to readers: The Dolphin Swimming Pool opens on 16 March at 1100 a.m. More news on this in the next Blue Beret – watch this space!

From training ...

Exercise Blue Drive – Driver Safety Training

UNFICYP is committed to the improvement of driving standards and a reduction in the total number of traffic accidents (RTAs) in the mission. Statistics show that RTAs remain the greatest cause of accidental death and injury in the mission. It is, therefore, paramount that a proactive approach be taken to reduce the RTAs.

This year's Exercise Blue Drive, held between 26 and 28 February, was part of this initiative. Organised in the UNPA, six stands were set up to challenge the teams on their driving skills and road safety knowledge.

All participants embraced the competition with a very enthusiastic and determined approach. Many teams were seen on the weekend prior to the exercise practising driving and reversing skills in the UNPA. The first day of the event was opened at the HQ BRITCON Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. This is where the Exercise Control (EX-CON) was established for the duration. At the EX-CON, teams were subjected to a colourful road safety poster campaign and video presentations on driver skills. This generated a lot of interest among all contingents who seemed to absorb the information, discussing between themselves their own driving standards.

During the competition, it was evident that teams were serious about winning as they progressed through the stands. By the end of each day, the results and scores reflected on those teams who had practised. It



MFR Strongman Competition

On 9 February, LBdr. Stuart Spencer of the Mobile Force Reserve organised an MFR strongman competition at the UNPA. The day turned out well with 15 peacekeepers ready to compete. There were six events in all, including the farmer's walk; vehicle push; tyre flip; loading and squats.

All were demanding, but seemed to pose no problem for LCpl. L'udovit Vereš from the Slovakian Contingent, who won the day with a respectable score of 89 points, followed in second place by 2/Lt. Tom Jamieson with 79 points AND MCpl. Molnár Antal in third place with 77 points. All competitors gave a 100% performance, and competitors and spectators alike enjoyed the competition thoroughly. Next up, many are already in training for the UNFICYP Strongman Competition, scheduled for 9 March.



to the Sporting Scene

With extensive advertising across Cyprus, not only over the airwaves courtesy of BFBS Radio, but by many e-mails, posters and simply by word of mouth, the UNFICYP Charity Boxing Dinner Night, which took place on 3 February, was a complete sell-out.

The night started off in real style with the drummers and pipes of the Royal Regiment of Wales providing a thrilling performance in the ring. With eight bouts interspersed with a four-course dinner, for those seated, and just enough room for standing at the back, the evening turned out to be truly memorable.

With valiant displays of physical determination and sportsmanship in the ring, the night concluded with an auction of rare sporting memorabilia. The amount collected was just short of £5,000 to be shared between three charities, "Elpida", a Republic of Cyprus Children's Cancer Charity, the North Cyprus Dyslexia Charity and the Army Benevolent Fund.



Charity in the Boxing Ring

For almost a year now, Evrikos (Rick) Demetriou, has been the driving force behind the football club at HQ UNFICYP. Rick organises the football training sessions at the UNPA pitch on a weekly basis, where civilian staff members, alongside the military, UN Flight and police personnel, regardless of their playing abilities, gather together to practise. So successful has this effort been, that Rick has organised many matches, including a very successful tournament on UN staff day, 26 October.

In mid-January, Rick was surprised to receive a call from Ibrahim Diran, a Turkish Cypriot journalist working with TAK News Agency in the north, challenging UNFICYP to a match against Turkish Cypriot premier league team Yenibogazici F.C. A football enthusiast himself, Ibrahim had heard of the UNFICYP football activities, so he made the move and a date was fixed.

On 27 January, footballers from both teams warmed up at the UNPA pitch before starting the game at 1.00 p.m. From the beginning and throughout the entire match, all team members put on an exhilarating performance, enjoyed immensely by players and spectators alike. The



UNFICYP footballers give Yenibogazici F.C. a run for their money

final score was 4-4, but this was not a game about winning – it was about good sportsmanship. Refreshments were served afterwards.

Yenibogazici F.C. have invited HQ UNFICYP's team to a return match in their village of Agios Sergios. We look forward to it!

Football

The phrase "Sport joins men, and so it unites soldiers", was put to the test on 10 February during a run organised by Sector 1.

The 26-km route stretched along the buffer zone track, starting at PB 32 and finishing at San Martín Camp. Just over 80 runners from Sectors 1, 2 and 4, the MFR, UN Flight and HQ UNFICYP arrived for the event, which started at approximately 9.30 a.m. Each team was made up of six runners who ran two-by-two, carrying a pole, each pair covering a distance of approximately 8 km. Fourteen teams participated altogether, arriving at St. Martín Camp after two tough and challenging hours.

Running

At the prize presentation, Sector 2 (A Team) was awarded the gold medal with a time of 1 hour, 53 minutes. Sector 1 (B Team) gained second place and MFR (A Team) came in third. The event was planned, organised and supported by Argentinian Contingent members, who provided medical assistance, water stations and air coverage along the route.

Sector 1 was delighted to host the event. High spirits and good sportsmanship of all runners contributed to a very successful run.



WO II Inigo took over the pole for Sector 1 at OPT 23. This team gained second place in the competition.

Squash

Five teams competed in an UNFICYP squash tournament held on 30 January. UNFICYP HQ were the overall winners with a line up of (left to right) Lt. Col. Paul Warwick, Mick Raine, Maj. Tom Moon, Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell and Maj. Stan Stanton.

A special award was made to LCpl. L'ubomír Hazuga from the MFR as most improved player (inset).



Fond Farewells

On 25 January, UNFICYP bade farewell to Mr. Gianfranco Longo, Chief Integrated Support Services, who retired on 31 January after 31 years of United Nations service.

Gianni arrived in Nicosia from Sarajevo in 2001 as UNFICYP Chief Information and Technology Section. Quickly he managed to turn around the whole communications network, converting the CITS into a most efficient and productive integrated section within UNFICYP.

Appointed Chief Integrated Support Services in June 2004, Gianni successfully managed to engage military and civilian personnel in ISS' planning and decision making, through team spirit, cooperation



and dedication. No task was too challenging for Gianni to achieve, from creating high quality presentations, to producing outstanding diagrams, to writing ACABQ justifications, or leading complex logistics projects.

Every time Gianni served as Officer-in-Charge, Administration, for one reason or another, unforeseen incidents occurred, most recently the Lebanon Evacuation. Gianni's calm demeanor and wise approach were instrumental in the successful completion of such a complex operation.

Gianni will certainly be missed by his friends and colleagues in UNFICYP, who wish him a long, happy and fulfilling retirement.



Until the end of December 2006, the only male on the UNPA CESSAC staff was Maroni Hanna, a Cypriot Maronite who hails from Kormakiti in the north west of the island.

After 45 years of service with the NAAFI, Maroni retired from their service in 1996 and started immediately with CESSAC. Now, even though many customers will miss his smiling face, time has come for Maroni to sit back and take life a little easier.

Maroni is succeeded by Gina, whom we all welcome to the UNPA.



key and valued member of the mission's media monitoring team, notably during the period of the Good Offices talks and at the time of the referendum.

Although she will be missed, her colleagues and friends wish her well in her new endeavours.

Welcome



Anthony Charlton has recently taken up the position of Chief Communications Officer in the CITS section, dealing with mainly communications-related matters within UNFICYP. He takes over from Gianni Longo who left the mission last month.

Anthony arrived from UNMOGIP (Pakistan). Prior to his last posting, he has worked in UNDOF (Syria), UNLB (Italy), UNPROFOR (former Yugoslavia) and also a term with the WFP in Rome.

He is a New Zealand national and recently married Snjezana, a Croatian national. They have four young children.



Political Affairs Officer Tim Alchin and Miriam Ryan are overjoyed to announce the arrival of their son Caleb Alexander who joined us a week ahead of schedule on the afternoon of 19 December, weighing in at a healthy 3.3 kg and 50 cm at full stretch.

Sharapova – UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

Maria Sharapova, the top-ranked woman tennis player in the world, has been officially appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNDP. The appointment was announced on 14 February during a Press Conference held in the headquarters of UNDP in New York.

Maria Sharapova's main mission is to rally global support for the fight against poverty. She has already donated \$100,000 for UNDP's community-based projects in Chernobyl-affected areas, including projects in Gomel, Belarus, where her family comes from.

Mr. Ad Melkert UNDP Associate Administrator presenting Maria Sharapova with her letter of appointment



Visitors to UNFICYP



Visiting Swedish Parliamentarians from the Defence Committee being welcomed by SRSG Møller – 7 February



Members of the European Commission and the EU Programme Support Office based in Nicosia being welcomed by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni – 12 February



Bishop Pedro Candia, Chaplain General of the Argentinian Armed Forces, visited UNFICYP from 21 to 24 February on a routine visit to Argentinian peacekeepers in Sector 1. He met with Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni in this HQ on 21 February.



Brother officers from UNDOF – Capt. Tsutomu Nemoto, Deputy Military Public Information Officer (second left) and Maj. Naoyuki Taura, SSO LOG, both from the Japanese Contingent, on a familiarization visit to Sector 2 on 21 February

UNPOL Newcomers



On 21 February, 26 police officers from Australia, Bosnia, Croatia, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands arrived at HQ UNFICYP for an induction course, facilitated by UNPOL's Training Officers, Garda Michael Hickey and Federal Agent David Batch.

The new UNPOL officers were briefed by key mission personnel including the CM, FC, SA, CAO, SPA and SpksPsn. All aspects of mission life, governance and operations are

covered in the course including UN Flight and helicopter safety training, Gender and SEA policy awareness and police powers and functions in the buffer zone. Also included in the course were presentations from representatives of the island's police authorities.

The week-long induction course is designed to provide UNPOL newcomers for subsequent deployment to BZ patrol, SCAT teams and other specialist UNPOL functions.

Dalaras – UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador



Greek musician and singer George Dalaras wrapped up his first overseas visit as a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador in mid-February with a pledge to raise awareness about the work of the refugee agency and the people it helps in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

"Words can't express the pain I feel when I see uprooted people," Dalaras told UNHCR staff and other aid workers in Liberia's Lofa county. He said he would continue looking for ways to help refugees and others of concern to UNHCR, including lobbying governments for help and staging benefit concerts.

During his visit to Sierra Leone, Dalaras met with President Ahmad Tejan Kabah and spoke to Liberian refugees in two camps. Sierra Leone hosts an estimated 27,365 refugees, including 21,696 Liberian refugees living in eight camps across the country.



**Slovak Soldiers
Commended**