

The Blue Beret



Over 27,000 mines cleared

The UNFICYP Magazine
December/January 2011

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Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

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Public Information Office
United Nations Force in Cyprus
HQ UNFICYP
PO Box 21642
1590 Nicosia
Cyprus

Editorial Team

Netha Kreouzos
Ersin Öztöycan
Rolando Gomez
MSgt. Gabriel Zelei (Photographer)
Capt. Tomas Daño

Unit Press Officers

Sector 1 Capt. Marcelo Alejandro Quiroz
Sector 2 Maj. Susan L. Aitken
Sector 4 Capt. Ivan Lassut
MFR Maj. Adrian W. Patrick
UNPOL Cmdr. Phil Spence
UN Flt Lt. Councillor Martin
FMPU Capt. Jozef Bolecek

Tel: 2261-4553/4416/4408 - Fax: 2261-4461
E-mail: unficip-blue-beret@un.org - blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com
Website: www.unficip.org

Editorial

With the current year-end-/opener edition of the Blue Beret in hand, it would be remiss to some of the more memorable events of 2010. While you'll read later in this issue about the various accomplishments made over the course of the year (see pages 10-12), I think you'll agree that a bit of nostalgia is required to put things in perspective as we spring forward to a new, hopefully even more promising, year and future. Let's rewind to just over a year ago to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's visit to Cyprus. Mr Ban's three-day visit to the island (31 January to 2 February 2010) was significant in and of itself as his first to Cyprus as head of the world body, but also as it provided a much-needed boost to the peace process, and, as time would tell, as the first of three encounters with the Cyprus leaders over the course of a 12-month period. The second of these encounters arrived towards year-end – on 18 November to be exact – when Mr Ban invited the two leaders to New York for what proved to be a game changing pep talk. The UNHQ meeting was sparked by an evident need to inject some momentum into the lingering process, and, to a large extent, proved worthwhile. The third of these tri-partite meetings came just two months later on 26 January, an encounter which served to gauge the progress reached by the two sides since the two leaders revitalized their efforts to reach a solution to the Cyprus problem. The Secretary-General's personal involvement in Cyprus over the

past year has also taken the form of three reports with another one on the way in the first weeks of March. Adding to all this, the UN's efforts in Cyprus have over the course of the year amounted to a number of laudable achievements worth highlighting here. Among them, the opening of the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing point on 14 October in the northwest of the island, which now witnesses some 2,000 additional crossings in both directions on a weekly basis and has helped sparked an economic revival in the region. Another milestone was reached in 2010 when UN de-miners surpassed the 27,000 landmines cleared mark springing us closer to a mine-free Cyprus. Another noteworthy achievement was the launching of the Joint Communication Room in July, a bi-communal initiative with UNFICYP backing set up as a round-the-clock operation where Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot law enforcement experts share information on a host of criminal-related matters. These accomplishments, and others like them, provide good material for the production history book of UNFICYP. As the mission approaches its 47th birthday one can easily wonder how many more pages can be added to this book, when the final words will be written, and what those words will tell. As evidenced by the accomplishments chronicled above, our sentiments are clear – that this book, when topped off, includes a happy ending, that which can be enjoyed by readers island-wide.



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UN Photo

Secretary-General meets with Cyprus leaders in Geneva

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with the Cyprus leaders on 26 January 2011 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, his second meeting with the two in less than ten weeks, to hear from them about the steps they've taken towards reaching a solution to the decades-old Cyprus problem.

The UN chief lauded the two leaders – Demetris Christofias and Dervis Eroglu – for the progress reached since his last meeting with them on 18 November, noting that both have since "worked energetically to take the negotiations ahead".

Speaking to reporters following the meeting, Mr Ban said he and the leaders had been able to identify "a number of elements designed to maintain momentum and to address more directly the details of a workable, mutually beneficial solution". He added that "the meeting's spirited and substantive discussions contributed to clearing the air on several key issues".

"Two months ago, I called the leaders together in New York because I felt the negotiations were losing momentum. During our meeting, I asked the two leaders to identify the core issues in all of the chapters yet to be resolved, and they have done this. I also asked them to agree on a practical plan. Both sides have worked energetically to take the negotiations ahead. Despite Mr Eroglu's heart surgery, the two leaders held four meetings, while their representatives have met a further 13 times," he said.

Mr. Ban noted that there has been progress since they last met in November 2010 and that it is clear that the two leaders worked to move closer together through a range of bridging proposals, notably in the chapters of Economy, EU matters, and Governance and Power-Sharing.

"Nonetheless, more work must be done to reach further convergences on the outstanding core issues." The Secretary-General pointed out that a number of elements designed to maintain momentum and to address more directly the details of a workable, mutually beneficial solution were identified and "the

meeting's spirited and substantive discussions contributed to clearing the air on several key issues." The leaders have discussed the outstanding key issues in a more interrelated fashion, since a settlement proposal will need to consist of an integrated package across chapters, he said and encouraged both sides to talk to experts that he can make available on the technical aspects of the property issue.

"The sides have also agreed to intensify the negotiations through a series of additional meetings in the coming weeks and I have pledged to make myself available to them again soon to continue to take stock of progress and to encourage the parties in further narrowing the differences," the Secretary-General said.

He pointed out that as recent surveys have shown, both communities in Cyprus want more than talks they want a solution. "The leaders have heard that message and they are acting. I welcome the steps that the leaders have taken today which give a clear indication of their commitment to reunifying Cyprus as soon as possible," the Secretary-General said.

As for next steps, the Secretary-General announced that at the end of February he would be providing the Security Council with a report on the state of the talks, at which time he expected to "have a positive report to submit". Mr Ban also pledged to make himself available to the leaders "again soon" in order "to take stock of progress and to encourage the parties in further narrowing the differences".



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UN Photo

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (fifth from right) poses for a group photo with participants in a luncheon for Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu (fourth from right) and Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias (fifth from left) in Geneva, Switzerland. From left: Elizabeth Spehar, Director of the Europe and Americas Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs; Kim Won-soo, Mr. Ban's Deputy Chef de Cabinet; B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; George Iacovou, Representative for Mr. Christofias; Kudret Ozersay, Representative for Mr. Eroglu; and Alexander Downer, Mr. Ban's Special Adviser on Cyprus and Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus Lisa Buttenheim.

26 January 2011

Security Council extends UN mission in Cyprus



On 14 December 2010 the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping mission that has been in place in Cyprus since 1964 following an outbreak of inter-communal violence by a vote of 14 to 1, with Turkey casting the lone negative vote. In the resolution extending the mission (UNFICYP) until 15 June 2011, the Council called on the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to "intensify the momentum of negotiations" aimed at reunifying the Mediterranean island. The 15-member body also called on them to develop a practical plan for overcoming the major remaining points of disagreement in preparation for their meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon next month.



Mine Action Day Event

The UN Mine Action Centre in Cyprus (UNMACC) held an open day event for the media and invited guests on 20 January 2011 inside the UN Protected Area to mark six years of successful work on the island, having cleared more than 27,000 landmines once strewn along the 180-kilometre long buffer zone.

The UN-contracted de-miners, who will shut down their current operations on the island in February 2011, put on demonstrations for local and international media at the UNMACC training grounds within the UNPA, giving them a glimpse of what it was like to be a de-miner for the day.

Speaking at the event, UNFICYP Chief of Mission Lisa M. Buttenheim paid tribute to the work carried out by the de-miners working under the supervision of UNMACC, recalling the risks and dangers they have faced in carrying out their duties. "Landmine removal and disposal is a painstaking and hazardous business involving precision, patience and, above all, expertise. Here in Cyprus, it has involved the expertise, skill and bravery of de-miners from Mozambique and Zimbabwe working with G4S Ordnance Management who have dedicated years of their lives far away from their own homes to make Cyprus – your home – a safer place", she said.

Having removed over 27,000 landmines on the island, since launching their operations in November 2004, the de-miners have managed to clear 74 minefields throughout the buffer zone, amounting to over 9.7 square kilometres of land. However, according to UN estimates some 15,000 landmines could still remain on the island.

As noted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in his report to the Security Council of November last year (S/2010/605), "all minefields within the buffer zone, with the exception of one remaining Turkish Forces minefield south of Varosha and three National Guard minefields in the Laroujina pocket, have been cleared". In absence of an agreement with the two sides to extend their

de-mining operations to areas outside the buffer zone, UN de-miners will shut down their field operations next month.

Representing the European Union, the key financial donor to the UN's de-mining project in Cyprus, was Androulla Kaminara, Head of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus, who stressed that there was still much work to be done to rid the entire island of landmines. "I would like to encourage all parties to continue their efforts in continuing to de-mine Cyprus not only for the benefit of all Cypriots and all citizens on this island but also in accordance with international obligations to do so".

Also attending today's event were representatives of the National Guard and the Turkish Forces whose presence was acknowledged by the UNFICYP Chief who noted that through their cooperation and support to the UN the work of the de-miners has been facilitated and has in turn been able to "yield positive results for the benefit of all Cypriots."

Addressing participants this morning, UNMACC Chief Max Dyck highlighted that although the current project would end next month, "UNMACC however stands ready and looks forward to the opportunity to continue working both with the two sides as well as with other implementing partners to make Cyprus a mine-free country for the safety and benefit of all its citizens".

Ms. Lisa M. Buttenheim concluded her speech by expressing "hope that today's event will instill an even stronger commitment on the part of both communities to rid the island completely of its lethal landmine heritage and open a new door in reaching a mine-free Cyprus".

At the conclusion of today's event, the UNFICYP Chief of Mission detonated the latest group of anti-personnel landmines removed by UN de-miners marking the end of their six-year successful project in Cyprus.



Deminers happy to have contributed to peace

Deminer Joao Queniate Bissie was among the first deminers to arrive in Cyprus in March 2005 to begin the huge task of clearing the 180km buffer zone of all mines.

He says now that they have completed their job he is happy to leave Cyprus and spend time with his sons aged 5 and 2 in Mozambique, although he will not be home for long as he has another job lined up in Afghanistan. He admits that his line of work holds risks, and although he is afraid at times, he says he does it because he has a family to feed.

Over the last six years on the island he says there were times when it was very difficult to get up in the morning and go into the minefield and he experienced the shock of the accidents that occurred as he knew all the deminers involved. "This made me feel bad," he says, noting that the accidents are always a sad reminder of the dangers they have to face on a daily basis.

Team leader Ishmael Muchato arrived in Cyprus in November 2005. He notes that although the conditions in Cyprus are good with no war or violence ongoing, the minefields remain a serious threat, particularly as they are so old and any mistake could cost you your life. He was injured when he tried to remove a fuse and it exploded, but he was fortunate to come out of the incident unscathed. He originally trained to become a deminer in Zimbabwe in 1998 in a project to clear the Zimbabwean- Mozambiquan border. He notes that this job has still not been completed and people are still being injured in his country, but sadly there is little funding to clear the remaining minefields.

It's always difficult after an accident to go back into the minefield, but he says it is his job and he has to do it. One of the difficulties of demining in Cyprus is the summer heat where temperatures can surpass 40 degrees centigrade, and together with the suits they wear, the temperatures for them can go up to 50 degrees centigrade. He would eventually like to stop demining and return home to open up his own supermarket

business where he would have more time with his twin girls aged 10 and 6-year-old son. Christopher Gunzwenzwe who is a medic assigned to one of the teams notes that it's difficult when there are accidents because it is as if he is treating a member of his family.

But he says he needs to be strong in order to manage the situation and help the members of his team at the time of an accident. "It's your family you are taking care of and you want to do the best you can for them." He has four children - 3 girls aged 12, 5 and 3 - and one boy aged 8. He finds it very difficult to be away from them for such long periods of time but tries to speak to them on the phone, via internet and every six to eight months he goes home on leave for three weeks. "It's too long to be away. When your child is sick you feel helpless and can only comfort them over the phone," he says.

It's good that we have completed our job in Cyprus he says, expressing the hope that the international community will acknowledge how difficult a job it is that they do. He notes that one memorable occasion in Cyprus was on the very day they were packing up their tents from a minefield they had just cleared, a farmer went in to plough the land and prepare it for planting. This he says is a positive contribution they have made towards the community and is a contribution towards peace. Other significant achievements were the clearing of areas that subsequently became crossing points like Ledra Street. "I hope Cyprus will one day be completely mine free with the two sides continuing their negotiations so they can build a common future together.



UNFICYP Marks World AIDS Day

UNFICYP marked World AIDS Day on 1 December with the distribution of T-shirts, caps, condoms and AIDS ribbon pins as staff arrived for work. Staff showed their support by donating generously with their loose change and cash in the donation boxes and wearing their T-shirts and caps and pins throughout the day. At UNFICYP headquarters a mini-marathon and walk around the United Nations Protected Area was held with all sectors, police and civilians sending teams of walkers and runners to participate in the event. A total of 19 teams completed the competition, including the Force Commander and Senior Police Adviser. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of Mission Lisa Buttenheim opened the event by

reading out the Secretary-General's message for World AIDS Day. The event culminated in a candle lighting ceremony where all participants laid candles on a giant poster in the shape of a red ribbon in memory of the 20 million victims as well as to indicate that there is hope for the future and positive living free of discrimination against those affected by HIV/AIDS. Local artist Ioanna Philippou designed the poster and T-shirts especially for UNFICYP's event and World AIDS Day campaign. Approximately €900 was raised from donations made by staff. The money was given to Cypriot charities that support people living with HIV and AIDS on the island.



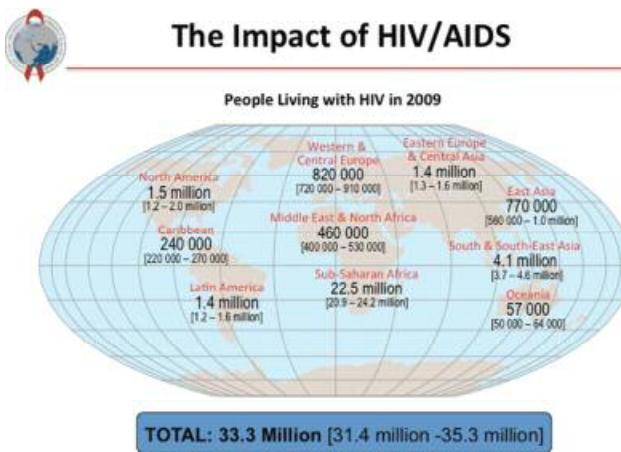
Technical Committee on Health Matters Marked World AIDS Day

On Tuesday, 30 November, and Wednesday, 1 December, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot medical doctors serving on the United Nations-supported Technical Committee on Health Matters and on the Cyprus Joint Committee on Health launched the "Cyprus Against AIDS" initiative through the distribution of leaflets on HIV/AIDS at the Ledra Street/Lokmaci crossing between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm as part of a global campaign to promote World AIDS Day observed each year on 1 December. The leaflet, in both Greek and Turkish, aims to raise awareness in the two communities on HIV/AIDS prevention, modes of transmission, and treatment. The doctors encouraged awareness and better understanding of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at this public event. On World AIDS Day, 1 December, a conference was held at Chateau Status in Nicosia with the participation of medical doctors from across the island who exchanged views on the current situation of HIV/AIDS diagnosis and treatment and on local

trends and experiences in Cyprus. International experts from USAID and the World Health Organisation also participated in the conference delivering presentations on their recommendations for management of HIV from a public health perspective and on trends and developments on HIV/AIDS diagnosis and treatment. The conference was launched by the Technical Committee on Health Matters with welcome addresses by Committee team leaders Mr. Mustafa Akcaba and Dr. Chrysanthos Georgiou. Serving as a confidence-building measure between the island's two communities, the event took place with the involvement and participation of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot specialized medical doctors. The Technical Committee on Health Matters has been active since its establishment by the two leaders in April 2008. The Technical Committee has successfully put in place the measures for the crossing of ambulances in emergency cases and the establishment of a Cyprus Joint Committee on Health.



The latest figures on the number of people living with HIV globally as reported by UNAIDS in December 2010.



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2010 in review

The year saw strong interest in negotiations on peace talks by the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon who visited the island at the beginning of the year to meet with the Cyprus leaders. He also met with the Cyprus leaders again on two separate occasions in New York encouraging them to "dedicate significant efforts" to overcome their differences and reach a settlement agreement.

Another significant confidence building measure included the opening of the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing point helping breathe new life into the region and strengthening relations between the two communities. On average around 2000 people are using the crossing point on a weekly basis. The following is a month by month account of the year's highlights for the United Nations in Cyprus:

January

Negotiations intensified in January with two rounds of full-day talks (11-13 and 25-27) held at the newly refurbished Chief of Mission's residence in the UNPA. The talks received a further boost from a visit by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on 31 January.



The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters held a bi-communal seminar on 13 January at Ledra Palace Hotel to begin work on an island-wide project to help children at risk. This was the first meeting of the law enforcement community to enjoy formal participation from both sides. Special Representative of

the Secretary-General for Cyprus and Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun lauded the commitment shown by the two Cyprus leaders in the negotiations process for a solution to the Cyprus problem. Addressing the Fifth Annual Session of the Mediterranean Model United Nations (MEDIMUN) on

15 January, Zerihoun said: "The two leaders have shown great commitment and determination in the peace effort despite considerable challenges and criticism of the process. The SG has commended the leaders on several occasions for their effort and the progress achieved so far.

February

The Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on an official visit to Cyprus met with Cyprus leaders Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat individually and jointly on 1 February 2010. On arrival he said his visit was a reflection of the importance he attached to the current efforts of the Cyprus leaders. He said he was "confident that a solution is possible and within reach" and commended the leaders on the enormous personal commitment they have shown. UNFICYP staff also had the opportunity to see the Secretary-General at a Town hall meeting where he spoke about developments in the organization and his plans for improvement of working conditions for all staff. During his visit the Secretary-General and his wife



were conducted on a walking tour of the "Green Line" section of the buffer zone. The Secretary-General attended the inauguration ceremony for the Ledra-Lokmaci Street stabilization work. The Secretary-General said he was pleased that after a long interval following the opening of the crossing, work on the façade of the buildings could now continue. On 11 February the UN family in Cyprus held a memorial service in honour of colleagues who died in the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January. Staff also participated in a charity effort raising €5,606.05 to be paid into the UN's Central Emergency Relief response Fund for Haiti.

March

UNFICYP staff marked International Women's Day on 8 March 2010 with a reminder that the significant progress made cannot obscure the obstacles women still face in realizing their rights and full potential. SRSG Zerihoun read out the SG's message on the occasion stressing that the fight for women's rights is central to the UN's global mission. Ground was broken on 29 March on a stretch of road linking the towns of



Asagi Pirgo and Limni/Yesilirmak in the northwest of Cyprus, paving the way to the eventual opening of a new crossing point between the two communities. Around 100 people gathered in the presence of the two leaders at an event located at the actual construction site to mark the beginning of the work to be done on the road, which runs through the UN buffer zone.

April

The UN-backed Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal matters launched an initiative on 13 April to increase road safety for all drivers across the island. At an event attended by representatives of the two communities



and UNFICYP, the TCCM distributed a new road safety leaflet – in Greek, Turkish and English at the Ayios Dometios/Metehan crossing point in Nicosia to commuters travelling in both directions.

May

Approximately 150 Greek Cypriots participated in a pilgrimage to the abandoned Ayios Georgios village in the buffer zone area of Sector 1 on 9 May. UNFICYP facilitated the religious service held in the Orthodox chapel located in San Martin camp before escorting the pilgrims to the abandoned village. On 13 May UNFICYP bade farewell to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, who served as Chief of Mission from May 2008 to April 2010. Zerihoun departed from Cyprus to take up the position of Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the Department of Political Affairs. The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was celebrated in UNFICYP on 29 May honouring fallen peacekeepers and



those that continue to serve in the cause of peace with a showing of photographs of peacekeepers at work in Cyprus and in Haiti. The peace process resumed on 26 May after a short hiatus that saw the election of a new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. Dervis Eroglu was chosen over Mehmet Ali Talat in polls held on 18 April. The Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council on the work of his Good Offices for the period 25 November 2009 to 30 April 2010 notes that Talat had made an important contribution in advancing the solution between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and looked forward to Eroglu continuing on that constructive path.

June

Isa M. Buttenheim was appointed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNFICYP Chief of Mission. The Representatives of the two Cyprus leaders George Iacovou and Kudret Ozersay travelled with United Nations officials to the northwest of the island on 25 June to witness first-hand the progress being made on the Limnitis/Yesilirmak road project. Pope Benedict XVI, in a historic three-day pilgrimage to Cyprus from 4–6 June was accommodated at the Roman Catholic Holy Cross Church located in the buffer zone area of Nicosia. The Holy Cross Church is a Franciscan monastery,



which falls in the civil use area of the Nicosia buffer zone and is wedged between the Greek and Turkish sides of the capital. UNFICYP uniformed and civilian peacekeepers worked closely with Cypriot authorities to ensure the security of the Pope while in the buffer zone. The Security Council extended the mandate of UNFICYP for an additional six months to 15 December 2010. As part of the resolution the Council welcomed the progress made in the talks between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and encouraged them to reach a comprehensive, durable settlement.

July

The Cyprus peace talks continued in July with three meetings between the leaders focusing exclusively on the property issue, one of the six chapters under discussion in the negotiations aimed at reunifying the island. In support of efforts to combat crime across Cyprus, the United



Nations backed Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters (TCCM) on 29 July launched the 'Joint Communications Room' (JCR, a bim communal initiative set up to exchange information between the island's two communities on crimes and crime-related matters.)

August

On 8 August UNFICYP's military, police and civilian personnel worked together to facilitate the visit to the cemetery in Kokkina where Turkish Cypriots carry out their annual pilgrimage to honour their fallen. Cyprus



problem talks continued throughout August with the Cyprus leaders Demetris Christofias and Dervis Eroglu only taking a short two-week break in the middle of the month before resuming their discussions.

September

The Cyprus leaders held three meetings in September including two intensive all day meetings on 7 and 10 September where they focused on the property issue following an exchange of papers by both sides containing a list of their proposals on the property question and how to resolve this issue. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon held separate meetings in New York with the two Cyprus leaders towards the end of September where he encouraged them to redouble their efforts to seek convergences on the issue of property. He met Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias on 21 September and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu on 25 September. On 29 September, in observance of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Cyprus,



peace process on the island.

International Day of Peace was celebrated by UNFICYP with two main events – a peace concert performed by the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra and staged on the abandoned airstrip in front of the terminal building of old Nicosia Airport and a solemn candlelight ceremony held in front of Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone area of Nicosia in honour of 24 Greek and Turkish Cypriot war veterans in attendance who fought together during the Second World War.

October

The Cyprus leaders opened a new crossing point in the northwest of the island on 14 October linking its two communities, providing a boost to the ongoing UN-backed negotiations and marking the end of a long wait for residents of the region. The opening of the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing point, the seventh such access road linking the two sides, is the culmination of more than two years of concerted efforts by the leaders, which will significantly reduce travel time across the region and allow for a more direct route for travellers to Nicosia. The Secretary-General welcomed the opening of the



crossing point, which he said would hopefully "lead to increased interaction and cooperation between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and "help strengthen the climate of trust and goodwill necessary for the negotiations to achieve a mutually acceptable and lasting settlement as soon as possible."

On 21 October the UN deminers in Cyprus achieved a significant milestone surpassing 25 000 landmines cleared and destroyed on the island, taking a major step towards a mine-free buffer zone and ultimately a mine-free Cyprus.

November

The peace talks took an upward swing with the leaders of the two communities agreeing to intensify their contacts and advance the process with the aim of reaching a lasting settlement. Following their meeting with the Secretary-General on 18 November, the Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu agreed to take a new approach in their negotiations by identifying further convergences and "core issues" which still need to be resolved, across all the chapters. The Secretary-General, in his report assessing the state of the peace process in Cyprus since the current round of negotiations were initiated in March 2008, warned



that talks to reunite Cyprus could "flounder fatally" if substantive agreement is not reached within the next few months, and called on the Cyprus leaders to prepare a practical plan by January to overcome major differences.

In a separate report on UNFICYP, the Secretary-General called on the Security Council to renew its mandate for another six months citing its work with his Special Adviser Alexander Downer and other UN agencies "actively engaged in promoting an atmosphere conducive to the negotiations."

December

The Security Council extended the mandate of UNFICYP by a vote of 14 to 1, with Turkey casting the lone negative vote. In the resolution extending the mission until 15 June 2011, the Council called on the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to "intensify the momentum of negotiations" aimed at reunifying the island.



UNFICYP personnel celebrated World AIDS Day by holding a mini-marathon and walk around the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia with all sectors, police and civilians sending teams of walkers and runners to participate in the event. SRSG Lisa Buttenheim inaugurated the event and read out the Secretary-General's message for the day.

UNFICYP welcomes new Force Commander

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Major General Chao Liu of China as the Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on January 14.

Major General Liu succeeds Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi of Peru, who completed his assignment on 31 December 2010. The Secretary-General is grateful for Rear Admiral Debernardi's dedicated and effective service in UNFICYP over the past two and a half years.

Major General Chao Liu brings with him over 35 years of military experience at the national and international level. He has served as the Military, Air and Naval Attaché at the Embassy of China in India since 2008. Prior to this position, he had served as the Deputy



Commander of a mechanized infantry division in Shen Yang Military Region since 2006. He held various positions in the Ministry of National Defence, including as the Section Chief in charge of planning and coordination, Staff Officer, as well as a Regimental Commander in Shen Yang Military Region. During 1993-1994, he served in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara as a military observer.

Major General Chao Liu has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Shijiazhuang Military Command Academy and a Master of Science degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Born in Liaoning, China, on 6 March 1959, Major General Liu is married to Dai Yubin. They have one daughter, Yiyang.

Farewell to UNFICYP Force Commander

Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi officially departed from UNFICYP on 30 December 2010 after having served as Force Commander since April 2008. He and his family return to their home city of Lima, Peru. To mark the conclusion of his tour of duty, the Force conducted a march-out parade where the Force Commander had the opportunity to formally bid the Force and mission farewell. A large number of troops and civilian staff from all sectors and components of the mission paraded outside UNFICYP



UN staff in Cyprus remember their colleagues in Haiti



United Nations staff in Cyprus observed the one year anniversary of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in a commemoration service outside of UNFICYP headquarters on 12 January. The quake which killed more than 200,000 people and left more than two million homeless also saw 102 United Nations staff members perish in the rubble constituting the highest loss of life from a single event in United Nations history. To celebrate their lives and honour their friends and colleagues who perished on 12 January 2010, a formal commemoration was held at the MINUSTAH headquarters in Port-au-Prince and at United Nations headquarters in New York where Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon conducted a wreath-laying ceremony and invited guests to observe 47 seconds of silence at 16.53 to mark the time and duration of the earthquake. In his statement, the Secretary-General recalled that "following this tragedy, one of the largest natural catastrophes in recorded history, the world responded

with much sympathy and assistance for the people of Haiti. The UN and international response was one of the largest of its kind ever mounted and continues to this day to help survivors of this tragedy." Let the memories of our fallen friends and colleagues inspire and encourage us to renew our commitment to our work and redouble the efforts in support of the people of Haiti and all those around the world who are most in need. We remember their sacrifice and we pay tribute to their courage and dedication in the service of peace."

In Cyprus some 70 staff members working with UNFICYP and the Good Offices mission on the island gathered outside the peacekeeping force's headquarters in Nicosia to honour their 102 colleagues. After laying a bouquet of flowers at the base of the UN flag hoisted outside the force's headquarters, UNFICYP Chief of Mission Lisa M. Buttenheim led the group in the designated moment of silence.



Medal Parade in Sector 1

Sector One held its medal parade on 3 December 2010 in San Martin Camp to pay tribute to the peacekeepers that served in Cyprus over the past six months. Over eighty men and women belonging to Argentina Task Force 36 and associated peacekeepers from the Republics of Brazil, Chile and Paraguay received their medals.

The ceremony, held in San Martín Camp, where the Argentine Task Force Command Post is located, was chaired by the Force Commander, Rear Admiral Mario Sanchez Debernardi, and was attended by the senior mission leadership and special guests, including the Argentine Defense Attaché in the Republic of Israel,

Colonel Alberto Luciano Corvalan whose responsibility extends to Cyprus. Lieutenant Colonel Marcelo Adrián Calvo addressed the assembled peacekeepers noting that the medals reflect the recognition of the United Nations Secretary-General for their contribution to peacekeeping efforts in Cyprus. The Force Commander expressed his appreciation for the professionalism and operational capacity of the personnel of the Argentine contingent.

Following the parade a reception was held where refreshments were served to guests who were also treated to a display of traditional folk dancing and singing.



On Human Rights Day, UN shines spotlight on role of rights defenders

The United Nations marked Human Rights Day on 10 December 2010 by shining the spotlight on the hundreds of thousands of "largely unsung heroes," the human rights defenders who risk dismissal, harassment, torture, jail and even death for their activities. "Laws to protect and promote human rights are indispensable," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a message. "But quite often, progress comes down to people, courageous women and men striving to protect their own rights and the rights of others, determined to make rights real in people's lives." Far too often, their work entails tremendous risk. Defenders are harassed, stripped of their jobs and wrongfully imprisoned. In many countries, they are tortured, beaten and murdered. Their friends and family members are also subjected to harassment and intimidation," he said, calling on all States to ensure the freedom of expression and freedom of assembly that makes their work possible. "Let us remember that everyone – no matter their background, training or education – can be a human rights champion. So let us use that power. Let us each be a human rights defender." It was a plea echoed by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. "We can all be human rights defenders, and – given how much we owe to others for the rights many of us now take for granted – we all should be human rights defenders," she said in a message. "At the very least, we should do our utmost to support those who do defend human

rights." General Assembly President Joseph Deiss noted in his message that the 192-member body "strongly benefits" from the work of human rights defenders. "They bring a grassroots perspective to our debates, they galvanize action, they advance issues and they play a pioneering role; they thus lay the ground for the intergovernmental processes that take place at the General Assembly," he stated. A group of 55 UN independent human rights experts used the day to call on States to recognize and respond to the continued targeting of rights defenders by non-State actors, which have lead to the deaths of community leaders, lawyers, journalists, women defenders, social activists and many others working to stop discrimination and injustice. "They do not bear arms, they do not use violence, defenders use only their voices and persistence to challenge injustice peacefully," said Naiyat Maalla M'jid, Chair of the Committee representing the UN experts. "However, too often it is human rights defenders themselves who require protection from human rights abuses." In a joint statement to mark the day, the experts – who report to the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council in an independent and unpaid capacity – praised all those individuals and organizations that reveal injustice, discrimination and human rights violations that would otherwise remain hidden, stating: "We could not function without them."



Winter Fire Safety

Home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season. This is due in part to an increase in cooking and heating fires. Holiday decorations and winter storms that can interrupt electrical service and cause people to turn to alternative heating sources also contribute to the increased risk of fire in winter.

All fires can be prevented and the following winter fires prevention guidelines should be remembered.

- Gas heaters or cookers are NOT to be used within the sleeping accommodation buildings.
- When using a gas heater (other than sleeping accommodations), make sure that they are checked / serviced by the Engineering workshops and the area is well ventilated.
- Never leave your heater / electric equipment unattended.
- Never use electric heaters with bars or rods/elements on a carpet.
- Never dry your clothes near or over a heater.
- Never move a heater when it is on/working.
- Keep your heater at least 1.25 meters away from any combustible material.
- Empty or full gas cylinders must not be stored within buildings. Store them in the designated areas/stores. The only gas cylinder that can be inside the building is the one in use in your gas heater.
- All electric heaters / electric connections must be installed only by the Engineering Section workshop electricians
- Don't overload your electric sockets. Extension leads should not to be on the floor, secure them along the wall or table.
- Don't use a two-pin un-earthed plug in a three-pin socket, use an adapter.
- Smoking should only be allowed in the designated areas.
- All electric appliances and fixtures should be checked monthly and any fault reported immediately. Simple services, change of lights and their covers or repair work on cracked/damaged sockets etc can prevent fire and save lives as well as and properties.
- All personnel should seek advise from the Engineering Section or Sectors engineers about the capacity of their electric network (how much electric equipment can be used in the area).
- Fire/smoke alarms should be fitted in all accommodations on to the ceilings. Report immediately for any damaged / not working / low battery or faulty self-operational 9 volts or hard-wire fire system.
- Fire and earthquake drills to be carried out regularly. Check your emergency alarms weekly to be sure that they are serviceable.
- Don't light candles close to the curtains or table cloth.

In the event of domestic fire, following steps should be taken:

Evacuate the building.

Call fire crew UN tel. No. **22-61-4777**

Cut off the main electric / gas supply / switch (if safe to do so, otherwise, reach for your main isolation switch).

- If it is safe, then fight the fire with fire extinguishers (for electric fires use carbon dioxide (co2), or dry powder fire extinguishers only).
- Never use water or foam fire extinguisher on live electric fires (conductible/shock hazard).
- If fuel is leaking then cover the area with foam / fire blanket / sand / soil (care should be taken when electric is involved, see 1C)

NOTE:

In case of a fire, never move the equipment involved in the fire unless it is necessary for safety reasons. Always wait for the investigation to be completed.

Contact the UNFICYP engineering section / fire unit (ext 4453/4) for your fire training course.

Fire Officer Qadir Paul Nadeem

National staff retiree's honoured

The National Staff Union, ULESO held a reception on 17 December 2010 where civilian (national and international), military and police members of UNFICYP gathered in honour of three retired national staff members, Mrs. Irene Antoniou, Mrs. Panayiota Christou and Mrs. Petroulla Christoforou.

ULESO Chairperson, Netha Kreouzos, pointed out that between them the three staff members contributed over 100 years (106 years to be exact) of dedicated service to the United Nations in Cyprus.

Irene, who was first employed by UNFICYP in 1974, retired after 36 years of service in October 2010. Her colleagues describe her as hard-working, well organized and punctual with a wealth of knowledge who could always be relied on to assist in any task required. She displayed an exemplary character throughout her many years in UNFICYP where she worked in a number of sections including what was then the Support Regiment, Engineering and finally Procurement. A well-loved and respected colleague that set an example of how the core values of the organization should be fulfilled.

Panayiota or "Toulla" began working with this mission in 1976. Having previously worked for the RAF Nicosia Station, Mrs Christou joined the then UN MP Company as a clerk. She soon became a key member of the UN MPs with her friendly personality and strong sense of integrity and loyalty making her ideal to work in a Police environment. Mrs Christou worked her way to become the Relations and Liaison assistant which gave her a wide ranging set of duties translating reports and liaising with the Cypriot Police. She developed close personal ties with the police hierarchy and was a source of advice and assistance to all in the FMPU. She had



the historical record for the unit and served alongside 24 different Provost Marshals. Her memories, knowledge, honesty and friendship will be missed by all those who served with her.

Petroulla Christoforou was the third staff member that was honoured. She joined UNFICYP in 1974 and retired from the Communications Section in September 2010. The always friendly and helpful Petroulla was known for her meticulousness in carrying out her tasks. She was very customer orientated and tried to ensure good service was offered to everybody. A well-liked and respected colleague who would often be seen either alone or with a friend walking around the camp during her lunch break.

Plaques were presented to the three staff members in recognition of their service. On behalf of all UNFICYP staff, we wish them a very happy and healthy retirement!

Christmas carols strengthen the mission

There are certain events in the year that serve to bring all the elements of the Mission together and the UNFICYP Christmas Carol Service held on 16 December certainly achieved that. More than two hundred people packed into The Church of St Columba, UNPA to celebrate this annual event.

The Carol Service brought together people from across the Mission; personnel from many countries, representative of different languages and customs, both military and civilian. Senior figures in the Mission read passages from the Bible which foretold the coming of the Messiah and choirs from the four main Contingents performed a selection of their own festive songs. These were held together with Christmas carols and prayers. The rich mix of language and culture created a wonderful sense of the joy of Christmas. Under the twinkling lights of the Christmas trees and the candles it was possible to re-envision the hope of a world at peace and people free from want.

Of the carols that were sung that evening 'Silent Night', or 'Stille Nacht' as it was originally written, is perhaps the most well known. The intention was to find a carol in which all four of the major contingents; Argentinean, British, Slovakian and Hungarian, could sing in their own language. And so it was, the carol was sung seamlessly with each choir singing a verse in their own



language. This epitomised what UNFICYP is all about: a passionate commitment to cooperation in order to achieve the greater good.

There is a board above the arch in the church which lists the names of the men and women who have lost their lives on this Mission. The Carol Service was a fitting way, as the greater family, of remembering their contribution to the Peacekeeping Force, continuing the task of assisting in the effort to make lasting peace on this island a reality.

New faces

Chief Security Officer



Said Jannoun arrived in UNFICYP on 20 December 2010 and assumed the post of Chief Security Officer and Security Adviser to the Designated Official for Security. He joined the UN in 1996. Prior to his appointment as civilian staff he served in the

civilian police (CIVPOL) of UNPROFOR in 1993/1994. From 1996 he has served with DPKO, the UN secretariat and the World Food Programme in Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Yemen, Sudan and Lebanon. During the last four years Said served in Lebanon as the Deputy Chief of the Security and Safety Section. He is married to Haifa Zarhreddine and they have two twin daughters Lyla and Leen (7) and a newborn son Mohamad (6 months). His hobbies include walking, sports, hiking and horse riding.

Officer in Command of UNFLIGHT



Col Enzo Claudio Bressano arrived in UNFICYP on 06 January 2011 and took up the post of Officer in Command of UNFLIGHT. Born on 21 June 1967 in Rosario City, located 300 km north of Buenos Aires, he graduated from the Military Aeronautical High School in 1989 and received his "Military (Fixed) Wings" in 1990. He was appointed to the VII Air Brigade in 1990 and became Helicopter Pilot in 1992. He is a Staff Officer graduate from AAF Air War High School. During his career he has served in a number of appointments including VI Air Brigade as a Search and Rescue Pilot, VII Air Brigade as a Helicopter's in Flight & Simulator Instructor / Bell 212's Squadron Leader,

Air War High School (Argentinean Air Force) as a student, Armed Forces Joint Staff (Operational Command) as a Command & Control Division Chief (U 3), Argentinean Air Force Headquarters (Operational Command) as a Aircrafts Division Chief (A 3) and Marambio Antarctic Air Base (Antarctica) as a Bell 212's Squadron Leader.

He has flown helicopters such as the Hughes 500, Bell UH-1H, Bell 212 IFR, Bell UH-1 N IAF / IFR and CH-47 C Chinook, reaching 3000 flown hours and has experience flying helicopters in different regions throughout Argentina, Antarctica, Brazil and Puerto Rico.

This is his fifth tour of duty with UNFICYP and has also served in MINUSTAH in the Argentinean Aviation Unit as a 2IC / Bell 212's Squadron Leader (2008 - 2009). He is married to Mariela; and they have two children, Juan Manuel (15) & Julieta (12). His interests include running, swimming and playing tennis.

Visits

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Cyprus on 11 January for a five-hour official visit which included a stopover at Ledra Palace Hotel for a 20-minute tour accompanied and briefed by SRSG Buttenheim and SASC Downer. While at Ledra Palace, the Chancellor was escorted to the building's rooftop where she benefitted from a panoramic view of the "green line" in Nicosia's old town. Mrs Merkel's visit, the first ever of a German Chancellor to Cyprus, included a meeting with President Demetris Christofias and a stop at the Goethe Institute where she met with Greek and Turkish Cypriot students.



Visits

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission Lisa Buttenheim and Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi received the following guests during December/January



The Minister of Defence for the Slovak Republic Mr Lubomir Galko visited UNFICYP headquarters on Monday 20 December 2010 where he met with the Chief of Mission and Force Commander. He then had the opportunity to meet with soldiers of the Slovak contingent.



Brigadier Robert M. B. Nitsch, Commander 102 Logistic Brigade met with UNFICYP Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes on 30 January 2011.



Dr Zoltan Jozsef Toth - Deputy State Secretary for Legal Affairs - Ministry of Defence for the Republic of Hungary visited UNFICYP headquarters on Friday 10 December 2010 where he met with Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi.

World AIDS Day celebrated

