

Statement on the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, 2021

Tomorrow, 29 May, marks the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect pays tribute to all UN peacekeepers deployed around the world and recognizes the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the service of peace and the protection of civilians.

The theme of this year's commemoration, "the road to a lasting peace: leveraging the power of youth for peace and security," acknowledges the positive contribution young people have made to UN peacekeeping. There are currently tens of thousands of peacekeepers between the ages of 18 and 29-years-old who are deployed to various UN missions around the world. UN peacekeeping operations are also actively collaborating with local youth groups to build sustainable peace.

By adopting landmark Resolution 2250 in December 2015, the UN Security Council also recognized the significant role that youth can play in contributing to justice and reconciliation. In countries affected by conflict and atrocities, young people can be crucial agents of change, contributing to the prevention of atrocity crimes and the promotion of universal human rights.

Today's commemoration pays tribute to the more than 1 million men and women who have served in 72 UN peace operations since 1948. We also honor the 4,089 peacekeepers who have died while serving the United Nations. Last year, 130 peacekeepers lost their lives while on active duty, including 14 killed in malicious acts in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Mali. Sadly, 15 peacekeepers have already been killed in malicious acts so far this year. Attacks on peacekeepers can constitute war crimes and undermine the ability of the UN to protect populations at risk.

During these unprecedented times, amidst a deadly global pandemic, unparalleled levels of human displacement, and escalating levels of conflict and violence, the international community must strengthen its commitment to UN peacekeeping. As we honor UN peacekeepers around the world, we remain committed to ensuring that the world's most vulnerable populations get the effective protection that they need and deserve.