

BLUE BERET

Autumn 2022



**First Local Conference of Youth
takes place inside the buffer zone**

**SRSG Stewart speaks
at the Cyprus Forum**

**UNFICYP says no
to plastic waste**

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Editor's note

Dear readers, with the arrival of Autumn in Cyprus we have the pleasure to launch the latest edition of the Blue Beret magazine covering the highlights of the Mission from July to September this year.

In this edition, we cover SRSG Colin Stewart's meetings with key stakeholders, including his meetings with the diplomatic community, his speech delivered at the Cyprus Forum in September and his interactions with young Cypriots who are working on climate action from across the divide. UNFICYP's efforts to engage with civil society groups from both sides of the island continue to grow with more in person activities as the pandemic seems to subside. We are happy to see more new faces and collaborators in events and meetings organised with our partners.

In this issue, you will also find how we marked World Clean-up Day in September with efforts we are taking along with civil society organisations from both sides of the island to protect our shared environment. On this note, we are also proud to report the launch of the 'Say yes to less' campaign spearheaded by the Mission's environmental committee to reduce plastic waste.

You will also find several stories on the work of our

military and police colleagues to prevent fires in the buffer zone, flag raising ceremonies for newly arrived Police Contributing Countries, the 28th anniversary celebration of UNFICYP's Flight Unit and more.

In this edition, we also include information about our most recent medal parades, transfer of authority ceremonies and the work our peacekeepers are doing daily inside the buffer zone. We also pay tribute for the passing in August of Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara from Argentina, who served as UNFICYP's Force Commander from 1997 to 1999.

Finally, you will also find the great work being done by our colleagues from Inside the Blue team, who worked hard to put together this year's #BeActive campaign to motivate staff to engage more regularly in physical activities. In addition, we are proud to share a story on the coverage of Cypriots who were featured by UN Peacekeeping in an Instagram live conversation to mark International Youth Day. In the next few pages, read about how UNFICYP continues to implement its mandate inside the UN buffer zone, and much more.

Enjoy reading!

BLUE BERET

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A live conversation on inter-generational peace

On 12 August, to mark International Youth Day, the UN in New York held a live Instagram conversation with four Cypriots: Aysenur Talat Zrilli, Burak Berk Doluay, Gaston Neoecleous and Evgenia Chamilou, about their efforts and inter-generational peace. During the conversation, the also spoke about how young people on the island are building bridges, bringing communities together and standing on the front lines of climate change. Solidarity across generations is key for sustainable development. As we navigate the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially important to recognize and address these age-related barriers to "build back better" in a manner that leverages all generations' strengths and knowledge.



SRSB meetings with diplomatic community



On 6 September, SRSG Colin Stewart welcomed the Ambassador of Switzerland, Christoph Burgener.



On 22 September, SRSG Colin Stewart, welcomed the Deputy State Secretary for Development of European Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Krisztina Varju and her delegation to the buffer zone.



On 9 September, SRSG Colin Stewart welcomed the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, to Ledra Palace Hotel.



On 28 September, SRSG Colin Stewart welcomed the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic in New York, Dr. Michal Mlynár, to the UN Protected Area. Dr. Mlynár also met with UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, and visited our Slovak peacekeepers serving as Force Engineers and in Camp of General Stefanik.

SRSG Stewart speaks at the Cyprus Forum



On 29 September, SRSG Colin Stewart spoke at the Cyprus Forum at the Municipal Theater in Nicosia. He stated that “the Technical Committees are building a foundation of bicomunal achievements that will lay the groundwork for future settlement talks. Together with confidence-building measures they are the path towards settlement talks.”

In his remarks he also mentioned that “expanding trade and business links, and ensuring the infrastructure to support them, is the surest way to rehabilitating confidence in an agreed settlement,” and that “interdependence is the glue that can hold the island together.”



On 26 September, SRSG Colin Stewart, accompanied by UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser, Assistant Police Commissioner Satu Koivu, welcomed the National Police Commissioner of Finland, Seppo Kolehmainen, and his delegation to the UN Protected Area for a briefing on UNPOL's contribution to UNFICYP and the UN's work on the island.



On 21 September, SRSG Colin Stewart attended the bicomunal political parties meeting organized by the Slovak Embassy in Cyprus at Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone. This was their first meeting after summer.

Force Commander meetings



Force Commander welcomed Austrian delegation

On 13 July, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, welcomed the Austrian Federal Chancellor, Karl Nehammer and the Minister of Defense, Klaudia Tanner to Ledra Palace in the buffer zone for a briefing on the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts on the island.



Armed Forces Parliamentary Select Committee

On 27 July, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, welcomed members of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Parliamentary Select Committee to the United Nations Protected Area and Ledra Palace for a brief on the Mission's peacekeeping efforts in Cyprus.



Sector Commanders meeting in sector 2

On 28 July, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, met with sector commanders from Argentina, Slovakia and United Kingdom at Ledra Palace Hotel. They also visited part of the buffer zone in Nicosia.



Women, Peace and Security

On 8 August, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, welcomed Dr. Juliet Colman, the Director of the organization Security Women and Barbara Cleary, the Chairperson United Kingdom Trustees, to the United Nations Protected Area to discuss the inclusion of more women in security sector institutions, including the military and police forces. More women in peacekeeping means more effective peacekeeping. Women peacekeepers improve overall peacekeeping performance, have greater access to communities, help in promoting human rights and the protection of civilians, and encourage women to become a meaningful part of peace and political processes.

Peacekeepers in action

Flag raising ceremonies held at UNFICYP

On 4 August, UNFICYP held a flag-raising ceremony for Nepal at the UN Protected Area. UNPOL Senior Police Advisor, Assistant Police Commissioner Satu Koivu, welcomed Nepal as a Police Contributing Country with the arrival of UNPOL officer, Mohan Adhikari.



On 25 August, UNFICYP held a flag-raising ceremony for the Czech Republic at the UN Protected Area. SRSG Colin Stewart, accompanied by UNPOL Senior Police Advisor, Assistant Police Commissioner Satu Koivu, welcomed the Police Contributing Country with the arrival of UNPOL officer, Major Leona Skarkova. The Deputy Head of Mission of the Czech Embassy, David Hrdousek also attended the ceremony.



Risk analysis and risk management

On 12 August, UNFICYP military personnel attended a briefing about risk analysis and risk management, held by Major Vibeke Sefland from Norway.



Fire fight training

On 18 August, with high summer temperatures, UNFICYP continues to prepare and respond to any fire inside the United Nations buffer zone. The Mission's Fire Unit conducted a training on fire fight, rescue, and control to newly arrived Argentinian peacekeepers at Flight Unit.



Search and rescue training

On 8 September, Argentinian peacekeepers from UNFICYP's Flight Unit held a search and rescue training to quickly respond in case of emergencies. The Mission's Flight Unit conducts daily patrols along the buffer zone and provides logistical support for United Nations Peacekeeping operations; as well as emergency assistance, such as medical evacuations, if needed.



Peacekeepers awarded UN peace medals

Argentinian medal ceremony

On 10 July, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, awarded medals to 143 peacekeepers from Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Brazil, who are based in sector 1, for their service for peace in Cyprus.



UN Flight medal ceremony

On 22 July, UNFICYP's flight commander, Lieutenant Colonel Ariel Enrique Maison, awarded medals to 7 UN flight peacekeepers from Argentina for their service for peace in Cyprus. The mission's flight unit conducts patrols along the buffer zone and provides logistical support for United Nations Peacekeeping operations; as well as emergency assistance, such as medical evacuations.



Mobile Force Protection Unit medal ceremony

On 23 July, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, awarded medals to 22 peacekeepers from Argentina, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, and United Kingdom, deployed at the mission's Force Protection Unit for their service for peace in Cyprus. The unit's main role is to preserve the operational effectiveness of the force and safeguard its personnel.



UNFICYP peacekeepers of Sector 4 awarded by peace medal

On 9 September, UNFICYP's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, accompanied by the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic, Martin Bezak, awarded United Nations medals to 232 peacekeepers from Slovakia for their service for peace in Cyprus.



HQ peacekeepers awarded by peace medal

On 16 September, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, awarded medals to 10 peacekeepers deployed in Cyprus and thanked them for service for peace.



Sector 2 Transfer of Authority

UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, thanked peacekeepers for their contributions and commitment to serving for peace in Cyprus during the Transfer of Authority ceremony was held on 29 September with the Mission's British contingent based in sector 2 to welcome newly arrived troops and bid farewell to those leaving after completing their tour of duty on the island.



UNFICYP says no to plastic waste

On 19 September, SRSG Colin Stewart launched a campaign to reduce plastic waste by encouraging UN staff to use reusable water bottles, shopping bags and other useful information on avoiding the use of plastic. At UNFICYP we say no to plastic waste, and we protect our shared environment.



UNFICYP marks World Clean-up Day

On 17 September, UNFICYP's Environmental Committee, together with the NGO Friends of the Earth gathered for a clean-up of part of the Limassol's Aktaia Odos, between Limassol Marina and Karnagio area to mark World Clean-up Day. The clean-up is supported by #breakfreefromplastic network.

Friends of the Earth in Cyprus aims to raise awareness on the importance of preserving the natural environment and to campaign for solutions to environmental and social problems by promoting sustainable policies.



MFR removes barbed wire from UNPA

In September, UNFICYP peacekeepers from the Mobile Force Reserve, together with the Force Engineers, joined hands to remove old barbed wire and debris from the United Nations Protected Area as a commitment to clean the area and protect our shared environment.



#BeActive campaign kicks off in UNPA

On 28 September, more than 200 United Nations staff from UNPOL, military and civilian components joined the #beactive campaign organized inside the UN Protected Area.

“Sports play a crucial role in influencing people’s lives as it helps promote a culture of fitness. People who participate in sports events like the #BeActive have good health and strength and can perform more, which also inspires others. UNFICYP Welfare Committee encourages an active and healthy lifestyle,” says Renalyn Natural, from UNFICYP’s FTS section.

Participants gathered with family, friends, and their pets in the sunny afternoon to walk 3 kilometres, run 5 kilometres or cycle 10 kilometres in the area.

Christa Christides, from UNFICYP’s Security Section, states that “it is so important to stress the benefits of being active in our daily lives and that we all, collectively with our families, come together to support this message”.

The campaign, now organised annually by UNFICYP Inside the Blue team in conjunction with the Mission’s Welfare and Recreation Committee, celebrates and promotes the fun and importance of physical activity, as part of the European Week of Sport which is 23 to 30 September every year.

For Lora Megerditchian, from UNFICYP’s FTS section, “participating in the event is an opportunity to get out of our routine and exercise with our friends and colleague. Inside the Blue creates this opportunity for us and brings UNFICYP staff together.”

Athena Georgiou, also from FTS, also talks about the importance and fun of promoting physical activities in the workplace: “It is a great opportunity for us all to meet face to face especially after the difficult COVID times. Not only we get the privilege to exercise and spend quality healthy time with our colleagues and families, but it also breaks our daily routines.”

Athena Georgiou, Christa Christides, Lora Megerditchian, Renalyn Natural and Diana Bridger are also members of the Inside the Blue team.



Cyprus youth in conversation with UNFICYP's Chief of Civil Affairs Section, Fay Woolley



On 19 July, Fay Woolley, UNFICYP's Chief of the Civil Affairs Section joined the second edition of the event series "Youth in conversation with..." at the intercommunal room in Ledra Palace, in the buffer zone. The conversation gave an opportunity to the youth in Cyprus to ask Fay anything about her work, experiences, life and the work of UNFICYP. Something that may have surprised the audience, is that Fay has a background in education and "was a teacher in a previous life".

However, after 10 years of teaching, it was time for a change. Fay left the education sector and worked in Albania and Kosovo for the NGO World Vision, through which she got in touch with the UN. Since then, Fay has worked for the United Nations Civil Affairs

Sections in Kosovo, Nepal, Liberia and Cyprus. These Missions have quite different contexts and circumstances, but her job in Cyprus she said that it is "the busiest and most stressful job of all the places I've worked with the UN", so the question raised was: "why?". Fay explained that it is the busiest, because almost a decade into the job, within Mission that has been present on the island since the 60s, there are still many small issues that can become big overnight."

For Fay, "a larger presence of Civil Affairs Section is important, as it is much easier for locals to speak with civilians than with people in uniform and the section promotes a sense of comradery and community through interactions such as dialogues and conversations, which allows Cypriots to see other's perspective and create empathy for the other side."

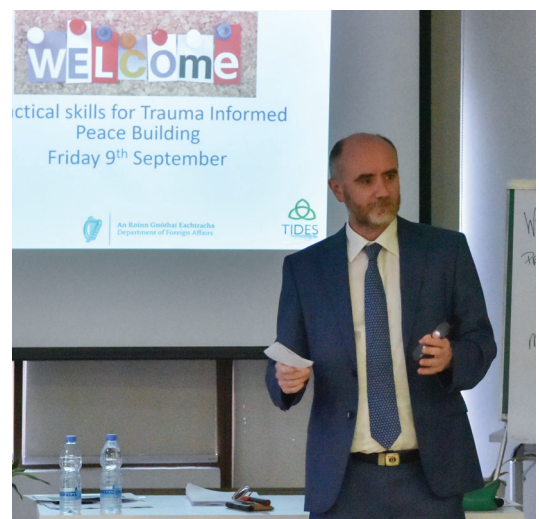
"I don't know how many of you know each other in this room, but the more meaningful interactions people have, the more they have faith and awareness to be together," she stated. As Fay pointed out, building intercommunal bridges can also be simply about connecting people through their shared interests, such as food, arts and music. Fay Woolley ended the conversation with a piece of advice for the young people: "I think there are a lot of challenges, but we have a life of opportunities; to be more, to have more, to live more". So, to all the youth reading this: if you find yourself in a position where you think "I do not want to do this", take action on your own life and change its course. As Fay Woolley has demonstrated, a rich career, with valuable experiences and wonderful things can come from it.

UNFICYP's Civil Affairs Section aims to connect Cypriot civil society organisations and helps build bridges for communication, to break barriers of mistrust and misunderstanding. It also facilitates civilian use of the buffer zone for peaceful purposes such as agricultural work or access to religious sites.

Workshop on practical skills for trauma informed peace building

On 10 and 11 October, UNFICYP, in collaboration with the Embassy of Ireland Cyprus, held a 2-day workshop of practical skills for trauma informed peace building at the Home for Cooperation with 21 participants from across the island to understand intergenerational trauma, build resilience, and learn practical steps to help achieve sustainable peace.

The workshop was facilitated by women mediators from the TIDES Training Network in Northern Ireland. (a Belfast based organization that designs and delivers programs to empower people with practical skills for peacebuilding.)



First Local Conference of Youth takes place inside the UN buffer zone



SRSG Colin Stewart speaks at the first Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) on climate change in Cyprus, which took place on 1 and 2 of October.

In his opening remarks, he stated: "Protection of the environment can bring youth, civil society, and experts across the divide together and increase collaboration," and added that "the environmentalist movement in the island is perhaps one of the most promising channels to help bridge the divide between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and build an open dialogue." The youth of Cyprus is organizing an intercommunal youth conference to contribute to the global COY process, where young people all over the world provide their views and actively participate into the policy making process just before the COP27 (Conference of Parties) happening in Egypt this year.

The Local Conference is supported by UNFICYP, in cooperation with the British Council and the British High Commission in Nicosia.

UNFICYP Outloud podcast

Launched in October 2020, UNFICYP's "Out Loud" monthly podcast offers a glimpse into UNFICYP's work and mandate.

In the latest episode marking International Day of Peace, you can hear from an UNFICYP Civil Affairs Officer, a Military Observer, and a Police Commissioner on the importance of not fueling hate but fueling the debate and dialogue between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to find common ground and restore peace in Cyprus.

According to UNFICYP's Civil Affairs Officer Muneiko Harada: "We provide networking opportunities, seed funding for intercommunal projects to kickstart, and linguistic support to enable communication between the communities. We believe that by convening, connecting and ideally amplifying these intercommunal linkages in sustainable partnerships, we can help build trust between the communities."

In our August edition, we marked International Youth Day and interviewed two young Cypriots who collaborate with UNFICYP in different projects. Victorias Antreas, one of our United Nations Youth Champion's for Environment and Peace, and Hanife Serin took part in the Young Leaders in Action initiative and the Mindful leadership project organized by the Mission earlier this year.

Since its inception, the podcast featured interviews about the collaborative work UNFICYP is doing with UNHCR on irregular migration inside the buffer zone, how the Committee of Missing Persons works on the island and the contributions of the UN Development Programme in Cyprus on cultural heritage. Every month, the conversations also give a glimpse on different topics and areas covered by UNFICYP's military, civilian and police components. The podcast is presented by Ersin Oztocan, from UNFICYP's Public Information Office.

You can listen to the podcast on [UNFICYP's SoundCloud account](#).



28th anniversary of UNFICYP's Flight Unit

On 30 September, UNFICYP's Flight Unit marked the 28th anniversary since it has been under the responsibility of the Argentinian contingent. In addition, with the latest incorporation of specialized personnel in the fight against fire, not only add to the capacity of aerial operations of the mission, but also can provide a quick response in case of any fire emergency within the United Nations Protected Area or outside, if necessary. The Argentinean UN Flight peacekeepers regularly demonstrate the skill and flexibility that are derived from working back home in wide-ranging and difficult terrains, such as Antarctica, the Patagonia region, and the warmest areas of northern Argentina. We thank them for their contributions and commitment to serving for peace in Cyprus.



Women in peacekeeping

On 5 September, UNFICYP welcomed Garda Síochána Superintendent Maria Conway, Ireland's first female contingent commander in 58 years of UNFICYP presence.



Annual Kokkina crossing

On 8 August, UNFICYP Civil Affairs, UNPOL and military component work closely together to facilitate access of pilgrims to the buffer zone during the annual Kokkina crossing in Cyprus.



United Nations Ethics Office visits UNFICYP

From 26 to 28 September, the United Nations Ethics Office came to Cyprus and conducted an outreach visit in person to UNFICYP, the Good Offices and the Committee of Missing Persons. The team consisted of Ms. Elia Armstrong, Director of the Ethics Office and Mr. Cornelius Andres Justin Fischer, Ethics Officer. The visit was to update the United Nations staff members on the island on policies concerning ethics and integrity and the services provided by the United Nations Ethics Office, as well as answer any ethics-related questions they might have.

During the visit, the United Nations Ethics Office conducted two hybrid workshops on protection against retaliation and conflict of interest. The two workshops were well attended by staff members in person and via MS Teams. The United Nations Office was also available for confidential one-on-one consultations for interested staff.

Information about the UN Ethics Office, including its mandate and services and other relevant resources, is available at its website: <http://www.un.org/en/ethics>.



Loss of Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara

UNFICYP is deeply saddened by the loss of Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara of Argentina, who served as the Mission's Force Commander from February 1997 to December 1999. Major General de Vergara passed on 17 August 2022. At this sad time, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends. We will remember him. In UNFICYP, Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara succeeded Brigadier General Ahti Toimi Paavali Vartiainen of Finland.

Vergara graduated from the Argentine Military Academy and held a range of military appointments in the service of his country, including instructor at the military academy (1978), Argentine War College (1979), Staff Officer to the Command of the 11th Mechanized Infantry Brigade (1981), Army Staff Planning



Command (1985), Staff Officer at the Argentine Military Academy (1987), Commander of the 2nd Airborne Infantry Regiment (1988), Staff Officer to the Army General Staff Command (1990), National Defence College (1991), Staff Officer, Armed Forces Joint Staff (1992), and Staff Officer at the Operations Centre, Army Headquarters (1996).

As a Major, in 1983, Major-General de Vergara served as a military observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East. As a Colonel, from 1993 to 1995, he was Deputy Commander, Sector West, in the

United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Born in 1946, Major-General de Vergara was married to Marta Susana Pedernera, and they have four children.

UN Day

24 October



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