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## **Press Releases: Commemoration of International Day of UN Peacekeepers**

By [Newsroom America](#)

Press Statement

John Kerry

Secretary of State

Washington, DC

May 29, 2016

Today the United States joins the world in honoring the courageous men and women serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions. For nearly 70 years, UN peacekeepers have come to the aid of countries torn by conflict, charged with helping create conditions for lasting peace.

Currently, more than 120,000 UN peacekeepers from 123 countries serve the cause of peace. These brave men and women are asked by the international community to facilitate the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, ensure order during elections, protect civilians from atrocities, and bolster stability in countries emerging from brutal civil wars.

President Obama has made clear the importance of U.S. leadership in strengthening and reforming UN peacekeeping so it can meet the challenges of this century's armed conflicts. Last year's Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping generated significant new commitments to UN peace operations by 49 countries and 3 international organizations from around the world, including the United States, and to press for urgent UN reforms and modernization. Ten additional countries have made pledges of support since the Summit. Concurrently, the President issued a new Policy Memorandum on U.S. Support to Peace Operations, which charts expanded U.S. efforts to bolster the pool of high-quality peacekeepers, including through the Global Peace Operations Initiative, the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, and the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support program.

As the United States reinforces its decades-old commitment to UN peacekeeping, we remain deeply concerned by the recurring and widespread instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, military and civilian. Every effort must be made by all relevant parties to end all such instances, which only further harms communities suffering from the scars of conflict, and tarnishes the accomplishments of all those blue-helmeted personnel who serve with distinction.

The United States remains firmly committed to the indispensable role of UN peacekeeping, and salutes the service and the sacrifice of the men and women who serve as UN peacekeepers.