



UNA-UK

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

Wreath-laying Ceremony

The Cenotaph, Whitehall, London

22 May 2025

The Ceremony

Address: David Wardrop, Chair, Westminster United Nations Association

Prayer: Reverend Angus MacLeod, Minister, St Columba's, Church of Scotland, Pont Street

The bugler sounds Last Post. The United Nations flag is lowered.

The bugler sounds Reveille.

Wreaths will be laid as follows:

In memory of Count Folke Bernadotte:

Count Edward Bernadotte

In memory of Commandant René de Labarrière:

Rear-Admiral Luc Raynal, French Defence Attaché

On behalf of former UN servicemen and women:

Kieron Ryan, UN Veterans Association

On behalf of serving UK Contingent Deployments:

Captain Tom Barlow 5 Regt Royal Artillery

On behalf of His Majesty's Government:

Lord Collins of Highbury, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

On behalf of His Majesty's Armed Forces:

Colonel Carl Harris Royal Marines, Military Adviser, UK Mission to the UN

On behalf of His Majesty's Police Forces:

Assistant Chief Constable Sam Millar, Vice-Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council

Followed by Members of the Diplomatic Corps in London

Reflection: Major (retd) Neil Weddell, Humanists UK.

Closing address: David Wardrop

On behalf of widows of UN peacekeepers:

Chris Dziuba, Chair, War Widows Association

On behalf of the British Association of Former UN Civil Servants:

Hannah Shabathai and Carole Harris

On behalf of the United Nations Association of the UK

Angie Pankhania, Chief Operations Officer & Interim CEO

On behalf of UNA Groups:

Mozmil Hussain, UNA Eastbourne

On behalf of the Children of the World:

Pupils from the Grey Coat Hospital School for Girls and the Westminster City School for Boys.

Students from the Grey Coat Hospital School for Girls and the Westminster City School for Boys will serve as marshals throughout the ceremony.

United Nations Peacekeeping



More than 61,000 UN peacekeepers are currently deployed around the globe in some of the most fraught regions. They stand between civilians and the forces of violence, between crisis and peace. Their bravery and commitment exemplify the UN's mission "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The UN's 11 current peacekeeping operations cost around \$6 billion a year, about a half percent of global military spending. UN Peacekeeping has a proven history of preventing conflict and atrocity crimes. Studies show that the presence of peacekeepers significantly reduces the risk of renewed warfare and the number of civilian deaths.

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

On this day, we remember the 4,433 UN peacekeepers from 120 nations who have lost their lives serving in the cause of peace. Of these, 106 were British. This International Day was first observed in 2003 on 29 May, the date in 1948 when the first peacekeeping mission began operations in Palestine.

About those we remember

Count Folke Bernadotte

In 1948, the United Nations appointed Count Bernadotte as its Mediator in Palestine but shortly after he tabled his peace plan that same year, he was assassinated in Jerusalem. He was the first member of United Nations staff to be killed in the line of duty. The wreath in his memory will be laid by his grandson Count Edward Bernadotte and his son Leonardo.

Commandant René de Labarrière

The French officer, Commandant de Labarrière, serving as a Military Observer in Palestine in 1948, was killed by a landmine, becoming the first United Nations peacekeeper to lose his life.

About the ceremony

The UK in UN Peacekeeping

Members of 5 Regt. Royal Artillery join us today having recently returned from Operation TOSCA, serving with the United Nations peacekeeping contingent in Cyprus. The UK currently contributes 263 troops, staff officers and experts on mission to UN peacekeeping missions and is the sixth largest financial contributor to peacekeeping deployments.

The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines, Portsmouth

Royal Marine Drummers date back to 1664, upon the formation of the Royal Marine Corps. The Band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth, directed by Captain Matt Weites, is one of five bands in the Royal Marines Band Service. Musicians and Buglers are fully trained operational military personnel, performing when required in medical support, driving ambulances and in logistics.

Youth Production Network

The Youth Production Network (www.ypn.international) set up in 2010, helps young change makers learn event skills to amplify their voices and make a difference in their communities. Providing our sound system today, the YPN teams have worked on global events such as the Olympics and World Cup, in countries like South Africa, India, Brazil and Zambia. In partnership with Attitude is Everything (www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk) and Britannia Row (www.britanniarow.com) , today's YPN members can show that disability is no obstacle to providing top-class service.

The United Nations Association of the UK

We are the only charity in the UK devoted to building support for the UN, believing that a strong, credible and effective UN is essential if we are to build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. We push for government support for the UN, find ways to make it work better and demonstrate why it matters to people everywhere. Since 2004, we have coordinated this annual ceremony, the largest worldwide to mark this UN anniversary.