



**UNA-UK**

# **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

**Wreath-laying Ceremony  
The Cenotaph, Whitehall, London**

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**Marking 76 years of  
United Nations Peacekeeping  
1948 – 2024**

**23 May 2024**

## The Ceremony

**Address:** David Wardrop, Chair, Westminster United Nations Association

**Prayer:** Reverend Mark Perry, Chaplain to the Royal Air Force

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

The bugler sounds Reveille.

### Wreaths will be laid as follows:

#### On behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Colin Stewart, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

#### In memory of Count Folke Bernadotte

Astrid Bernadotte, granddaughter

#### In memory of Commandant René de Labarrière

Vice Admiral Hervé Hamelin, Defence Attaché in the UK, Embassy of France

#### On behalf of former UN servicemen and women

Kieron Ryan, UN Veterans Association

#### On behalf of serving UK Contingent Deployments

Lt. Col. Ben Parkyn, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

#### On behalf of His Majesty's Government

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for the United Nations

#### On behalf of His Majesty's Armed Forces

Air Vice-Marshal Rich Pratley, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff for Support Operations

#### On behalf of His Majesty's Police Forces

Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council

#### Followed by Members of the Diplomatic Corps in London

#### On behalf of Widows of UN peacekeepers

Chris Dziuba, Chair, War Widows Association

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

Tekeste Tekie

#### On behalf of the United Nations Association of the UK

Frances Chambers

#### On behalf of UNA Groups

Mozmil Hussain, Eastbourne UNA

#### On behalf of the Children of the World

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

**Prayer:** Acharya Krishan Attri, Defence Hindu Chaplain

**Closing address:** David Wardrop

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 62,000 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 4,370 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***

He led the Swedish Red Cross expedition to German concentration camps in early 1945 and was credited with liberating thousands of prisoners from many countries. After the war, the United Nations appointed him its Mediator in Palestine. Shortly after he tabled his peace plan in 1948, he was assassinated in Jerusalem, becoming the first member of the United Nations staff to be killed in the line of duty.

## ***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***

Participating today are contingents from the Household Cavalry Regiment and Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, recently returned from UN peacekeeping operations. The UK currently contributes 268 troops, experts and observers to UN peacekeeping missions, and is the sixth largest financial contributor to peacekeeping deployments.

## ***Band of the Royal Air Force College***

Formed in 1920 at RAF Cranwell, the Band of the Royal Air Force College has forged a reputation of musical and military excellence. It performs nationwide throughout the year, raising funds for Service charities. The Band played at the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla and its Fanfare Trumpeters performed in the Honours of Scotland Service for Their Majesties. Alongside musical duties, RAF musicians regularly support RAF operations around the world and were deployed across the UK responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

## ***The United Nations Association of the UK***

We are the only charity in the UK devoted to building support for the UN. We believe 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. We have coordinated this annual ceremony since 2004, working closely with the UK's UN Peacekeeping Joint Unit and the Westminster United Nations Association.