

Bundesminister Dr. Johann Wadephul

Rede

Peacekeeping Ministerial

Sperrfrist Redebeginn.

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.

Berlin, 13.5.2025

Secretary General António Guterres,

Minister Pistorius,

Colleagues,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Eighty years ago, representatives from 50 nations gathered in San Francisco, united by a common vision:

to create an organisation dedicated to preserving peace and building a better world.

They did so on the ashes of the Second World War –

a war that left deep scars on many of the nations and regions represented here today.

A war that was unleashed by my country in Europe.

In the preamble to the United Nations Charter, the delegates set out the goal

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

Eighty years later, it is this determination that needs to guide us as we come together here in Berlin.

I am honored to welcome you all today, at the very start of my tenure, less than a week after taking office as Germany's Foreign Minister.

Bilateral partnerships and our commitment to peace in the world are at the core of my approach to diplomacy.

I'm convinced that Germany has become the country it is today thanks, in no small part, to you:

our partners and friends.

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And yet, eighty years after San Francisco, we must also face a sobering reality: peace around the world remains fragile –

perhaps more fragile than at any point since the end of the Cold War.

Conflicts are raging from the Middle East to Myanmar and Haiti, threatening the livelihoods of far too many people around the world.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Sudan, violence has displaced millions and left them in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

And here in Europe, we are confronted with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

– a blatant violation of the UN Charter.

As new German Federal Government, our highest priority is to preserve peace and security on our continent.

That is why we are investing in our security in an unprecedented manner.

It is why we will do whatever it takes to keep our citizens safe.

And why we will leave no doubt that Germany is a reliable ally to its partners around the world.

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At the same time, we will make it our priority to strengthen international cooperation and the multilateral system – because we know that

no nation can achieve peace and security for its citizens on its own.

In an interconnected world, it is in our shared interest to prevent conflicts and invest in peace.

That is why Germany will remain a steadfast supporter of the United Nations.

But we all know that multilateralism and the UN are under strain

– financially and politically.

Mr. Secretary General, you can count on Germany's support to reform and modernise the Organisation

so that it delivers tangible results for more people in all of our countries.

One area where the UN has consistently delivered is United Nations Peacekeeping.

For nearly eighty years, brave men and women from every corner of the globe have worked together to stop violence and contain conflicts.

From infantry soldiers to aid workers, from police officers to legal experts.

– they have all served with dedication in complex missions around the world.

While peacekeeping operations are no one-size-fits all solution for every conflict,

these men and women have saved millions of lives.

The 'Blue Helmets' are symbols of peace –

and they risk their lives to uphold it.

Far too many have made the ultimate sacrifice:

In January, UN peacekeepers from South Africa and Uruguay were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In February, a peacekeeper from Tunisia,

and in March a peacekeeper from Kenya

lost their lives in the Central African Republic.

Also in March, a Ukrainian crew member of a UN helicopter was killed in South Sudan.

These attacks remind us just how dangerous the environment of modern peacekeeping missions can be

– and how hard-won peace truly is.

Today, I would like to honor their memory.

And I would like to offer our condolences to the loved ones of 4423 [Blue Helmets who gave their lives in the line of duty.

We owe them our deepest respect and gratitude!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Peacekeeping brings the best of all of us together - expertise from around the world,

diverse cultural backgrounds, languages,

and a profound understanding of local contexts.

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But we all know that peacekeeping must adapt to a changing international environment.

Over the past decade, the number of conflicts has increased, wars have grown more complex,

major peacekeeping missions have ended prematurely, and in some cases, they have lacked crucial local support.

And we all know that the financial challenges for peacekeeping missions may increase in the months to come.

The following key question should therefore guide our discussions over the next two days:

How can we make peacekeeping more effective, more efficient, and fit for the future?

Allow me to offer three points for our consideration:

First, agility and adaptability.

Peacekeeping operations must be designed to respond swiftly to rapidly changing conflict dynamics.

This requires Security Council mandates that are not only realistic but also flexible.

To help achieve this, we should discuss a modular approach to peacekeeping

– designing more flexible, tailor-made missions that can adjust to specific contexts.

We also need clear transition and exit strategies. Missions should develop defined transition plans from the outset.

Second, local ownership.

Peacekeeping missions can only succeed if they earn the trust and support of host governments and local communities from the very beginning.

That is why close engagement with all relevant actors on the ground is essential.

We must counter disinformation campaigns and attacks on UN personnel with determination and transparency.

That's why we need to invest in strategic communication.



Third, we must face the implications of diminishing resources.

UN peacekeeping remains a sound investment and a powerful example for global burden sharing.

Consider this: the entire annual budget for UN peacekeeping is less than the cost of the most recent Olympic Games.

Germany, like many countries represented here today, is prepared to pledge additional resources.

Because Peacekeeping needs more and sustainable funding!

However, more funding is only one part of the solution.

Together, we should aim to make missions more efficient and more focused

– by providing clearer mandates,

by cutting back on bureaucracy

and by avoiding duplications.

With major contributors reconsidering their payments, the pressure is high.

Let's be honest: there have been easier times for peacekeeping.

That is why we will need to prove that we can find pragmatic and ambitious reforms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Eighty years ago, on the ashes of the Second World War, the United Nations was born with the aim to preserve peace.

Today, as 80 years ago, it is our responsibility to invest in peace and ensure that peacekeeping is ready for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

To borrow the words of the UN Charter,

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

I am looking forward to working with all of you in that spirit.

Thank you.