

2025 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, Berlin

14 May 2025

Statement by H.E. Natasha Smith, Australian Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany

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Thank you Chair, and can I thank Germany for hosting this important meeting.

This Ministerial comes at such a pivotal time for the United Nations.

The global environment is more complex and uncertain than ever.

Rules, which are always important but never more so than in times of conflict, are under increased strain.

This makes both the UN – and the need to reform it – more critical than ever before.

Australia has a long and proud history in the UN.

We were a founding member and for over 75 years we have contributed tens of thousands of personnel to more than 50 UN peacekeeping missions.

Australian peacekeepers are currently deployed in the Middle East and Africa.

And in New York, Major General Cheryl Pearce is serving in the UN's most senior military position, acting as the Military Adviser.

We are proud of her leadership and unwavering dedication to helping UN peacekeeping navigate current and emerging challenges.

And it is great to see her here in Berlin this week.

Australia's current membership of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2029-30, reflect our deep commitment to building and sustaining peace.

Today, I am pleased to pledge Australia's continued support for UN peacekeeping. In particular:

- We will triple our voluntary contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund to \$15 million per year.
- We will support the creation of voluntary guidance to support the development of effective National Prevention Strategies, to help address the root causes of conflict.

- We will work closely with partners in the Indo-Pacific to ensure regional perspectives are reflected in UN peacekeeping.
 - This includes collaborating on world-class training, strategic airlift, and the provision of equipment.
 - And cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea to deliver training through the UN Triangular Partnership Program.
- We will also take forward new initiatives with our Pacific family to support their desire to make greater contributions to global peace and security.
 - We will provide additional accredited training for Pacific police to ensure they deploy safely and successfully.
 - In fact, as we meet in Berlin today, 90 Pacific Island police officers are undertaking UN peacekeeping training in Brisbane, alongside Australian colleagues.
- Finally, and very importantly, we will continue to champion the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

- This includes continued support for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace operations, through the work of the Elsie Initiative Fund.
- And partnering with Southeast Asian countries and UN Women to deliver the Women's Military Peace Operations Course.

Chair, Australia remains committed to a strong and effective multilateral system.

We will be a trusted and active partner in delivering the reforms needed to make peacekeeping and peacebuilding – efficient, effective and fit for the future.

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