

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REMARKS AT WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY
New York, 29 May 2014**

Excellencies,
Secretary-General,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to be here with you today as we recognise and pay tribute to our brothers and sisters who have paid the ultimate price while serving in distant lands under the blue flag of the United Nations.

Last year, 106 UN Peacekeepers lost their lives. This year, already we have lost 36 of our colleagues.

On behalf of the entire United Nations Peacekeeping family, I offer my heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of our fallen colleagues. We honor their memories and their sacrifices.

We mourn and honor the contribution of our eight Peacekeepers killed in July in an ambush by an armed group as they patrolled in North Darfur. We also pay tribute to three Peacekeepers, serving as part of the Force Intervention Brigade in our Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who were killed in North Kivu last year as they fought the M23. Their brave efforts resulted in the group's eventual military defeat. The DRC is a safer place because of their efforts.

Today, we also remember the sacrifice of the two Blue Helmets who perished defending our base in Akobo in South Sudan in December last year and protecting civilians who were sheltering in it, as it was overrun by nearly 2,000 armed elements. They died protecting those under their care.

We honor our fallen colleagues in our Missions in Mali, in Haiti and in Afghanistan. They may not be with us today, but there is not a day when we do not remember their sacrifices.

UN Peacekeeping operates in hostile conditions around the world—difficult areas where few want to go, taking risks that few wish to take. We currently have 17 operations in which 85,000 military personnel, 12,000 police and 17,000 civilian staff serve in various theatres, each with their own unique challenges.

One of those challenging places where our peacekeepers are now operating under very difficult circumstances is South Sudan. I would like to congratulate our Peacekeepers and civilian staff serving with UNMISS, who have shown tremendous courage and moral responsibility during the current difficult period. At the start of the crisis, the peacekeepers chose to open the gates of our compounds. Their actions saved the lives of tens of thousands of civilians who are now protected by our Blue Helmets. Not far away, our peacekeepers in Darfur operate in different but equally difficult circumstances. Only last week, we lost a Rwandan peacekeeper in North Darfur while he was mediating a dispute between two disputing tribes. Since 2008, 58 peacekeepers have been killed in hostile action in Darfur alone.

The demand for UN Peacekeeping grows inexhaustibly, but it does so in an environment of increasing fiscal austerity with global taxpayers demanding value for their money. So we continue to work with Member States to ensure that we have the means, resources, and the latest tools so that our peacekeepers can succeed in carrying out their duties.

We are working tirelessly so that UN Peacekeeping can be A Force for Peace, A Force for Change, A Force for the Future.

Before I end, let me send a message of solidarity to all our Peacekeepers – military, police and civilians – that are serving around the globe. Your continued dedication and service for the cause of peace and humanity, in countries that are not yours and for people you do not know, is the greatest honor we can pay for your fallen colleagues. Thank you for all your dedication and your service.