

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
UN Peacekeeping Ministerial National Statement
UN General Assembly Hall
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I want to begin by thanking the most important contributors to the UN's proud history of peacekeeping: the peacekeepers themselves.

The brave men and women that we send far from home.

Often into considerable danger. For months at a time. In the service of peace, and the security of others.

Let us put on record our appreciation of their commitment, their professionalism, and their sacrifice.

We send our peacekeepers because they are a tangible demonstration of the commitment of UN Member States to defend the rights and freedoms contained in the United Nations Charter.

We want our peacekeepers to be the best they can. It would be a dereliction of our responsibilities to our peacekeepers, and to those they protect, if we did not give them the very best guidance and training.

So we arm them, not just with rifles and rules, but also with knowledge and know-how.

That is why our discussions here are so important and why the UK Government backs the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

Successful implementation of the Peace and Security Architecture reforms is essential to bring about both a structural reorganisation, and a cultural change in working practices.

If our peacekeepers are to be the best they can they must better reflect those they serve and protect.

Yesterday I announced a £1 million contribution to the Elsie Initiative, which will bolster women's participation globally.

I am also pleased to be able to report that the UK has 7% female representation in our peacekeeping deployments. But we are under no illusion: we must, and will, do better.

If our peacekeepers are to be the best they can we must get their training right, and we must identify and hold to account those who betray our values and trust by abusing those they are sent to protect.

UK forces currently train around 11,000 peacekeepers annually, and we provide capacity building support to peacekeepers from a number of countries.

Last year Vietnamese peacekeepers demonstrated what is possible through these partnerships, when they deployed a Level Two Field Hospital in a UN mission for the first time in their history.

We plan to develop and launch a new prospectus of training support, and we look forward to engaging with some of you who may be interested in future training partnerships.

To conclude ladies and gentlemen, I pledge the United Kingdom's commitment to work with you, today and in the future, to make UN peacekeeping the best it can be.