

THE FORCE OF PEACE



THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS



Honouring 60 Years of
United Nations Peacekeeping



SPECIAL EDITION

Department of Field Support
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Department of Public Information



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message on International Day of UN Peacekeepers and the 60th anniversary of UN peacekeeping operations (29 May 2008)



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

This year, the annual International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers also marks the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping. Six decades ago today, the Security Council established our first peacekeeping mission.

Most of the peacekeepers came from a handful of European and American countries and they were mostly unarmed military men observing and monitoring ceasefire lines.

Since then, peacekeeping has developed into a flagship enterprise of our Organization. Today, we have more than 110,000 men and women deployed in conflict zones around the world. They come from nearly 120 countries -- an all-time high, reflecting confidence in United Nations peacekeeping.

They come from nations large and small, rich and poor -- some of them countries recently afflicted by war themselves. They bring different cultures and experiences to the job, but they are united in their determination to foster peace. Some are in uniform, but many are civilians and their activities go far beyond monitoring.

They train police, disarm ex-combatants, support elections and help build State institutions. They build bridges, repair schools, assist flood victims and protect women from sexual violence. They uphold human rights and promote gender equality. Thanks to their efforts, life-saving humanitarian assistance can be delivered and economic development can begin.

In the past year, I have visited peacekeepers in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean. I have seen refugees returning home, children heading back to school, citizens once again secure under the rule of law. I have seen whole societies moving, with the help of the peacekeepers, from devastation to rejuvenation. In Haiti, in Liberia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the "Blue Helmets" have provided breathing space for a fragile peace to take hold.

We could not do this job without our partners in regional organizations. The African Union and the United Nations are deploying our first hybrid force in Darfur. And we are working with the European Union in neighbouring Chad and the Central African Republic.

More than half of all our Member States contribute troops and police to peacekeeping operations. We are grateful to every one of them. Our special thanks go to the top contributors: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Nepal. Together, these nations of the South contribute nearly half of the United Nations peacekeepers.

This anniversary is an occasion to celebrate, but also to mourn our fallen colleagues. Over these six decades, more than 2,400 men and women have died serving the cause of peace. Just last year alone, we lost 87 brave individuals. Each one is a hero. Today, we recommit ourselves to ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten and the vital work of the Blue Helmets continues as long as they are needed.

UNOCI : WORKING FOR PEACE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE



For the past 60 years, the United Nations has established 63 peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. There are currently 17 peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Since its deployment on 4th April 2004, UNOCI peacekeepers have significantly contributed to preventing the escalation of the Ivorian crisis. UNOCI's Force has been particularly successful in maintaining the ceasefire between the two exbelligerent forces, the Government forces and the Forces Nouvelles. It has also mana-

ged to re-establish confidence between the two armed parties.

The 8,029 peacekeepers from 42 countries, including 188 Military Observers can rightly be proud of their achievements. Supported by 1,139 members of the UN Police (UNPOL) from 25 countries and about 1000 civilians, half of whom are Ivorians, UNOCI peacekeepers continue to monitor the situation with determination and vigilance in order to preserve the irreversibility of peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

With the advances made in the Ivorian

peace process with the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement in March 2007, the Force has been called upon to support the implementation of the Agreement with the same devotion and professionalism it has always shown.

On the occasion of the 60 anniversary of UN peacekeeping operations, it is fitting to pay homage to these dedicated peacekeepers whose contribution to peace is often overlooked and to the 40 soldiers, UNPOL and civilians who have made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in the service of peace in Côte d'Ivoire.



BANBATT

UNOCI's Bangladeshi battalion (BANBATT) is deployed in the north and west of Côte d'Ivoire. In order to support the peace process, Bangladeshi peacekeepers continuously carry out a variety of operational activities like domination and special patrols, provide security escort to arms embargo inspection teams, Mobile Court hearings and to Ivorian and foreign VIPs.

In addition to their operational duties, the Bangladesh battalions also carry out extensive humanitarian activities to help the local population. To this end, some of its peacekeepers have organized a pre-school programme in the Zouan Hounien area to teach local children and distributed free school bags and educational materials to them.

The contingent's Level 1 hospitals in Man, Daloa and Zuenoula remain busy all year round providing free medical treatment to thousands of local people. BANBATT medical personnel also regu-



Bangladeshi soldiers on parade © UN / UNOCI

larly organize mobile clinics to treat people in remote villages. And when dry weather conditions result in a shortage of drinking water in their areas of responsibility, Bangladeshi peacekeep-

ers jump to the aid of the local population by providing them with drinking water. In the villages of Petit Gbepleu and Kassiapleu, BANBATT peacekeepers have left a lasting impression by replacing the hand operated crop grinder previously used by villages with the Dheki system, originating from their country, which makes crop grinding much easier and saves a lot of time. In addition, the peacekeepers also distributed clothing to the villagers.

Always ready to stand beside the local population in times of crisis, BANBATT peacekeepers, on 28 February 2008, immediately dispatched a special fire fighting team to the scene, when authorities of the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) sought their help when fire broke out at their local headquarters in Man. The peacekeepers successfully brought the fire under control without any significant damage to life or property. They have also donated 20 chairs to a local dispensary in Man and together with Licorne troops carried out renovation work in an orphanage in Danané.



BENINBATT

Taking part in the maintenance of international peace and security by contributing to UN peacekeeping operations has been one of the fundamental elements of Benin's foreign policies.

In the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the Beninois Contingent comprises 428 soldiers, 27 police officers and seven Military Observers (Milobs).

The contingent also includes a peacekeeping battalion which was initially deployed in Daloa and then sent to Korhogo and Daoukro for operational reasons before finally settling in Guiglo in 2006.

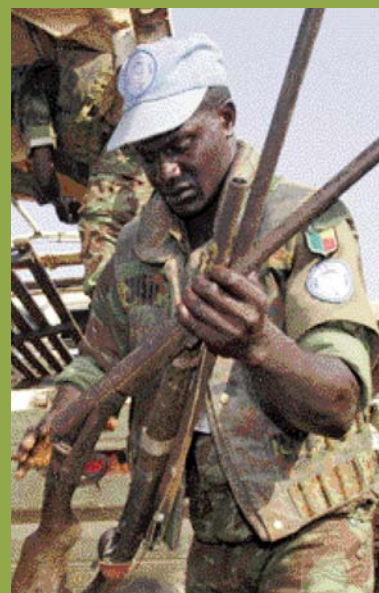
There are also several Beninois staff officers at the Mission's headquarters in Abidjan. The Mission's Force Commander, General Fernand Marcel Amoussou is from Benin.

Benin has soldiers, police officers and Military Observers (Milobs) in six UN peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world.

There are six police officers serving in the UN Stabilising Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and one soldier in the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB). Benin also has military personnel in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

The largest number of Beninois troops is in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) where there are 751 soldiers, 8 UNPOL and 20 military observers. Benin also has seven Milobs in the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).

The number of Beninois troops in UN peacekeeping mission is systematically renewed each year. A total of nine Beninois peacekeepers have died while serving with the United Nations and a dozen have been severely injured.



A BENINBATT soldier checking weapons during the DDR process © UN / UNOCI



GHANBATT

The Ghana Contingent, which joined UNOCI in 2003, maintains an Infantry Battalion in the Zanzan Region in eastern Côte d'Ivoire, as well as a Level II Hospital and an Aviation Unit in Bouaké.

The Ghanaian Battalion (GHANBATT), whose mission like the other battalions is to maintain peace and security in its area of responsibility (AOR), also has a Detachment in Abidjan with the Sous Groupement De Securite (SGS) for VIP escort duties. As part of its regular duties, it carries out day and night patrols and interact with members of the local authorities and the population. In addition, the battalion also provides free medical treatment and drinking water to local people in the Bondoukou and Bouna areas.

The Ghana Medical Unit in Bouaké runs a Level II Hospital in Sector East, which provides medical care for all military and civilian personnel within the Sector. Since its inception, the hospital has



A GHANBATT medical staff checking a patient's blood pressure © UN / UNOCI

treated over 5,000 out-patients, admitted 190 patients, carried out 521 operations and medical evacuations. The Hospital also provides free medical treatment to the local population.

The Ghana Aviation Unit in Bouaké is the first ever Aviation Unit to be deployed by Ghana in a United Nations peacekeeping mission. The Unit

provides long-term helicopter support for UNOCI Operations and has flown 251 missions from October 2007 to March 2008 and logged over 859,07 hours.

In addition, the battalions within the Ghana Contingent have been providing humanitarian assistance to orphanages in Bondoukou and Bouaké.



JORBATT

UNOCI's Jordanian contingent, like other peacekeepers in the Mission's have a variety of operational duties which include, performing day and night patrols in and outside Abidjan to provide security.

In addition they also carry out joint

patrols and military exercise with Force Licorne as well as providing security escorts for VIP's in Abidjan. The battalion also regularly carries out evacuation exercise in readiness for any situation.

Jordanian peacekeepers are familiar faces in a number of schools in the

Koumassi area of Abidjan and in the Grand Bassam area where they regularly distribute food parcels, school bags and stationery. The Jordanian special forces company, which arrived in Côte d'Ivoire in March 2008 is a highly trained unit which specializes in the handling of weapons, hand to hand combat, anti-riot and anti-terrorism control among other accomplishments.

The Jordanian armed forces have been participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions since 1989 and have served in Angola, former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Georgia, Liberia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Sudan.

They were responsible for running the UN hospitals in countries like Sierra Leone and Eritrea.



Jordanian soldiers offering school supplies to an Ivorian pupil © UN / UNOCI



MORBATT

Since its deployment in the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 5 December 2007, the eighth Moroccan Contingent has always done all it can to help Ivorians, particularly with regard to providing medical care.

Based in Moyen cavally, Western Cote d'Ivoire, the Moroccan battalion (MORBATT), like the rest of the Mission's troops also carries out a number of operational activities in its area of responsibility (AOR), which covers five sites and one observation posts.

Moroccan soldiers deployed in the field carry out day and night patrols aimed at providing a secure environment and restoring confidence among the population. They also carry out air reconnaissance at least three times every month and provide security escorts for UNOCI staff, Ivorian officials and VIPs.

Their security escort activities involves

arm embargo inspections which are done along with Military Observers, personnel from the Electoral Assistance Division during their missions to check pollings stations and personnel from humanitarian organizations. They also provide protection for UNOCI staff and buildings.

Along with their operational duties, MORBATT troops also carry out human-

itarian and civil-military activities by helping sections of the population that are most in need. MORBATT medical personnel have treated 2,560 Ivorian patients free of charge, so far and continue to organize clinics for the benefit of the people.

Their civil-military action consists of the distribution of food, potable water and medicines to those in need.



Moroccan soldiers on parade © UN / UNOCI



NIGERBATT

The Nigerien Battalion (NIGER-BATT), based in the north of Cote d'Ivoire provides assistance to several groups including NGOs, and UN agencies who help needy members of the population.

In addition, NIGERBATT also helps UNICEF and the World Food Programme to transport medicines, food and other useful products from Bouaké to Korhogo, and the local public health personnel to transport vaccines and the vaccination teams during the Ivorian Government vaccination campaign in 2007 and February 2008.

The troops also provide food and medicines to children in Korhogo and participated in cleanup campaigns organized by the local authorities in Ferkessedougou.

The troops' medical personnel also provide free medical help to the local population and regularly distribute potable water in Korhogo and Ferkesse-



Nigerien soldiers on parade © UN / UNOCI

dougou. One of the recent activities carried out by NIGERBATT was the distribution of 120 meals for schoolchildren during UNOCI's School Caravan organised by the Public Information Office in Korhogo in May 2008.

The Nigerien Contingent, through its

daily activities, such as day and night patrols, long range patrols, security escorts, providing security for UNOCI events and security escorts for VIPs, contribute to reassuring the Ivorian population in general and people based in the Savanes region in particular.



PAKBATT

The Pakistani battalion (PAKBATT), based in Bouaké, has been serving with UNOCI's force for the last six months. Previously based in the western town of Duékoué (Sector West), the battalion moved to Bouaké (Sector East) in November 2007.

PAKBATT has been instrumental in maintaining law and order and carrying out UNOCI's military mandate to provide security in the mission area. The battalion's duties include carrying out regular day and night patrols, providing assistance to the DDR process, providing security to Ghana Aviation and UNOCI assets at Bouaké airport, escorting and giving close protection to various delegations and dignitaries in its area of responsibility (AOR). To win the hearts and minds of Ivoirians, the battalion regularly provides humanitarian assistance to the poor and helpless. This includes holding free medical camps, providing drinking water, carrying out clean-up campaigns in Bouaké and

Dabakala and organizing inter-schools and clubs sports competitions in a number of towns and villages.

A PAKBATT soldier's day usually begins with physical training in the morning followed by a morning brief on the duties of the day. During the brief, a critical analysis of the previous day's activities is made followed by a discussion on the day's operations.

Special attention is always paid to ensuring that all units are maintained in operational readiness to meet with any

unforeseen incident. A dedicated Quick Reaction Force (QRF) is maintained in each camp to respond for any law and order situation.

In addition to its peacekeeping duties, PAKBATT also carries out a number of humanitarian actions to the benefit of the Ivorian population, including providing cooked meals on a daily basis for a group of handicapped people working in a local centre in Bouaké as well as free medical treatment and medicines to the sick.



Pakistani soldiers display their weapon skills © UN / UNOCI



SENBATT

A total of 11, 791 patients treated, 90% of whom are local civilians ; a total of 901 patrols resulting from the 100 carried out each month; 260 security escorts for UNOCI personnel and other dignitaries ; 9 mixed patrols in conjunction with UNMIL on the Liberian/Cote d'Ivoire border ; 20 routine long range patrols ; providing security in sensitive areas in the Bas-Sassandra region – these are some of the activities which occupy UNOCI's eighth Senegalese Battalion (SENBATT) based in San Pedro and Tabou in the south of Cote d'Ivoire.

Deployed in June 2007, Lieutenant Colonel Cheikh Omar Tamba's team carry out several activities in their area of responsibility (AOR), including protecting UNOCI staff, equipment and buildings, supporting the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and monitoring the Cote d'Ivoire/Liberian border in collaboration with troops from the UN Mission in Liberia in order to secure sensitive areas.



Senegalese soldiers during a ground operation © UN / UNOCI

To better serve Ivoirians, SENBATT with its 315 men and women including 58 gendarmes based in Abidjan, carries out quick impact projects (QIPs) such as rehabilitating local health centres and building school desks and chairs. According to the Commander of Operations, Meissa Sarr: "We receive a lot of requests for help from the population during our patrols but we cannot respond to all of them because we do not have the resources or the capacity to do so. SENBATT usually finds itself in

an impossible situation in this regard". The Senegalese troops are already doing their best to provide medical support and carry out social, cultural and educational activities to the benefit of the population. Commander Sarr regrets that his battalion can only do so much for Ivoirians.

With SENBATT, it is more than the battalion which is working for peace in Cote d'Ivoire and other countries, it is the whole of Senegal.

MOUMINATOU : A VOCATION FOR PEACE

“The desire to help others is essentially the reason why I chose the vocation that I did and it is also the reason for my presence in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire”. These are the words of one woman who is far away from homeworking for others and for peace.

Since her arrival on 15 December 2007, some 11,791 patients have benefitted from her experience of those of her colleagues. She is Mouminatou Mbaye Sagna, a Senegalese working as Deputy medical officer with UNOCI's Senegalese Battalion in Tabou.

Lieutenant by grade, the doctor, who is married without children, confirms with a broad smile that practicing medicine and being in the army are her reasons for living. For her, qualities such as discipline and rigour, which are part and parcel of being in an army are also what helps her to help the sick and perhaps even save lives on a daily basis.

Lieutenant Mouminatou Mbaye Sagna is

truly obsessed with the desire to work hard in order to bring joy to those around her – just like her boss, Chief Medical Officer, Lieutenant Aissatou Omar Bâ



Lieutenant Mouminatou Mbaye Sagna, deputy medical officer with the Senegalese battalion in Tabou © UN / UNOCI

N'diaye. That is why, instead of feeling “the monotony of the barracks” she is

happy to spend the majority of her time in the clinic, chatting to her patients, diagnosing their illnesses and trying to come up with cures.

But before doing so, she is just as happy to follow the daily routine of saluting the national flag each morning at 7.30 and sharing breakfast with 130 male colleagues. She is now used to being the only or one of the few women among many men. It started when she was in military health school in Senegal which she joined as a student in 1998.

Today, as a result of her work and a dream which she has had since she was in school, she has been able to encounter first hand the realities and harmful consequences of war on the innocent.

Having learnt so much in her first UN mission, Dr. Mouminatou says she is ready to repeat the experience in some other country in order to widen her knowledge.



TOGOBATT

Since 2004, Togo has sent eight battalions as well as military observers and staff officers to Côte d'Ivoire to serve with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

The Togolese Contingent, which covers the Abidjan districts of Cocody, Abobo and Youpougon is strictly concerned with providing security. In this regard, the Togolese Battalion (TOGOBATT) carry out daily mixed patrols along with troops from the French Force Licorne. Between October 2007 and April 2008, TOGOBATT carried out 850 patrols, 44 of which were mixed.

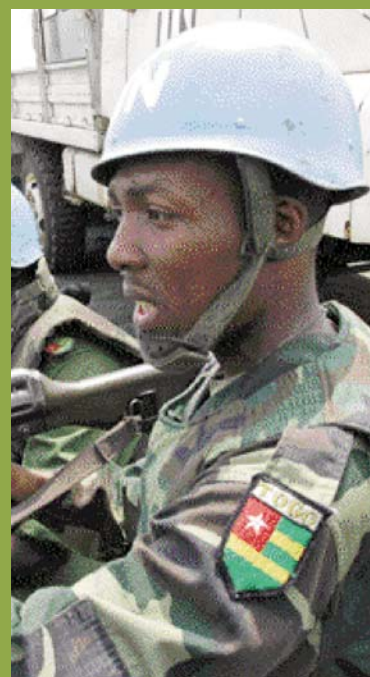
The Togolese troops also provide security on a permanent basis at the Golf Hotel where Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro lives together with several ministers of the Forces Nouvelles. TOGOBATT also protects equipment and other goods belonging to

the Mission at Félix Houphouët Boigny international airport.

In addition to its main duties, TOGOBATT also provides security escorts to military and UN Police colleagues who carry out arms embargo inspections as well as civilian and military authorities travelling between Abidjan and Yamoussoukro.

As well as to their operational activities, TOGOBATT troops also carry out social and humanitarian activities to benefit Ivorians. In this regard, the contingent provided 1,500 people with free medical treatment between October 2007 and April 2008. It also organises recreational activities for local people.

Togolese troops became involved in UN peacekeeping missions in 1989 when it deployed 25 Military Observers in the UN mission in Namibia and then in 1994 in Rwanda.



Togolese soldiers in action © UN / UNOCI



UNPOL, SERVING PEACE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE



Colonel Pierre Andre Campiche, acting Commissioner of UNPOL presents the UN Medal to UNOCI police officers in recognition of their dedication to serving Ivorians © UN / UNOCI

The mandate of the UN Police (UNPOL), deployed in Côte d'Ivoire under Security Council Resolution 1528, includes contributing to the security of the Ivorian territory, providing training for police officers and gendarmes, and supporting the reform of the National Police and Gendarmerie.

UNPOL's mandate took on added dimensions with the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement in March 2007, which led to the removal of the zone of confidence, replaced, from April 2007, by the green line.

UNPOL is directly involved in mixed brigades comprising the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) and the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) set up by the Integrated Command Centre (ICC) in the former zone of confidence (ZOC): four UNPOL officers participate in each brigade, alongside ten soldiers each from the FDS and FAFN.

Within this framework, UNPOL, in conjunction with the FDS and FAFN, conducts joint patrols to safeguard borders, monitor road traffic, carry out surveillance in towns and villages, and ensure the coverage of public mobile court hearings. They share their professional expertise and experience with the Ivorian forces in the execution of daily police tasks, such as reporting on penal offences, hearings and the interrogation of suspects.

The deployment of the mixed brigades enabled UNPOL to carry out some of the functions contained in its mandate, namely the re-establishment of a police presence throughout the country, the free participation of citizens in the electoral process (mobile courts, identification etc). The result has been an improved security situation, and a noticeable reduction of criminal activity in the former zone of confidence.

Today, UNPOL is tasked by the

Ouagadougou Political Agreement to help the national police and gendarmes to ensure the safety of goods and persons, and monitor their free movement in the former ZOC, which includes the localities of Kopingué, N'gattadolikro, Famien-kro, Bangolo, Bonoufla and Zealé. This mission was initially conferred upon the Impartial Forces.

UNPOL is headed by Acting Commissioner Colonel Pierre André Campiche. It comprises 394 police officials, including 19 women, from 25 contributing countries, along with 750 elements of the Formed Police Unit (FPU), specialised in maintaining order. The FPU members come from Bangladesh, Jordan and Pakistan.

The deployment of the UN police is done in accordance with the division of the Ivorian territory into geographical zones : Abidjan Sector, Sector West (Daloa) and Sector East (Bouaké).

CAPTAIN VIRGINIE MORIN : A FEMALE DOCTOR WORKING FOR PEACE IN YAMO USSOUKRO



Captain Virginie Morin treating patients © UN / UNOCI

As head of the medical unit comprising seven nurses and nurses' aides, Captain Virginie Morin provides medical care for the soldiers of the French Engineering Detachment and civilian staff of UNOCI. But the people in Yamoussoukro are her main "clients".

Everyday, some 20 people from in and around Yamoussoukro form an orderly queue at the entrance of the regional headquarters of the Mission in Yamoussoukro. They come to get free medical treatment. Men, women and children, everyone counts here.

Jabi Souleymane, aged 35 was a victim of a road traffic accident. For the past one month, he has been coming to the clinic for treatment. "I'm really pleased that we have a clinic like this here because I don't have the money that I need to get treatment elsewhere".

Captain Morin welcomes each patient with a broad smile. She listens atten-

tively while they try to explain their symptoms. Malaria, parasite infections, childhood ailments, ulcers, wounds, cuts and bruises due to various road accidents are just some of the complaints she regularly has to deal with.

For specific complaints such as eye problems, Captain Morin sends patients to the general hospital in Yamoussoukro.

In addition to her work at the UNOCI clinic, Captain Morin makes regular visits to building and constructions sites where the French engineers work because accidents can happen and often do.

"I'm happy to have this opportunity to actually work in Côte d'Ivoire because I meet people who live a completely different life from mine and that makes me learn a lot.

Despite her busy scheduled, Captain

Morin still finds time to offer her services at a health centre in Kongouanou, situated 35 km north of Yamoussoukro. Managed by the Sisters of Providence, it offers free treatment to people suffering from Buruli ulcers.

Dr N'Zi Dizoé, who also works at the health centre, appreciates Dr. Morin's contribution: "Dr Morin helps us a lot. In addition, to the help that she gives us every week, our respective health centres share pharmaceutical products as well as our experiences on a regular basis". Captain Morin is one of nine women among 170 men serving with the ninth engineering detachment.

Some evenings, Virginie Morin also lends an ear to her colleagues problems. She tries to console those missing their families in France.

Soldier, doctor, and a woman of conviction, Virginie Morin is married and mother to twin daughters aged five.

DAY IN THE LIFE OF LAZAKRO VILLAGE

BANBATT peacekeepers carry out hundreds of day and night patrol every month, some are memorable while other are easily forgotten. One patrol, which will forever remain vivid in the memories of a group of BANBATT peacekeepers is a patrol which spent the day in Lazakro village...

Lazakro, a small and beautiful village located approximately 25 km from Yamoussoukro city. The villagers are very simple and peace loving. Most of the people earn their living from small scale farming. On the scheduled day, we started from our camp towards the village very early in the morning. It was 14 January 2008. Our patrol composed of doctors, soldiers and some technicians. We were warmly received by the village chief and his entourage.

Knowing that like most small villages, Lazakro did not have a health centre, we decided to start the day with a medical camp. People had started lining up even before the doctors had time to set up their equipment and medicine and it seemed as if everyone in the village was suffering from one kind of illness or the other.

Their illnesses varied from stomach aches to quite serious cases of malaria. The BANBATT doctors worked carefully diagnosing illnesses, giving advice on nutrition and hygiene and handing out



Humanitarian action ...© UN / UNOCI

free medicines. Approximately 300 patients were treated on that day and I will never forget the happiness on some of their faces.

It is said that sport does not need a language – especially one like football. BANBATT believes that it is an effective

of bridging whatever gaps may exist between people, so in the afternoon a friendly football match was organized between peacekeepers and villagers. The match, which was attended by almost everyone in the village, ended in a draw to everyone's delight. Despite the result, our contingent commander decided to hand out presents to the young villagers who played in the match.

After the fun of the match, it was time for more work. We knew that malaria was a problem in the village so we came prepared. Experts from our contingent sprayed mosquito repellent throughout the village. The villagers were delighted and representatives of the local authority expressed their heartfelt thanks to BANBATT.

By this time, the sun was setting and the day was coming to an end. So we said our goodbyes and headed back to our camp with a deep feeling of satisfaction.



...is an important part of BANBATT peacekeepers' activities © UN / UNOCI

PAKTRANSPORT : ON THE ROAD TO PEACE



A convoy of Paktransport trucks © UN / UNOCI

1 00,000 km every week, 40 trucks, 12 tanks, 4 tow trucks, 2 buses, 2 ambulances and 200 men dedicated to one important task : transporting goods and materials for the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Seven days a week these are the statistics of the transport unit of the Pakistan contingent known as PAK-

transport, working for peace in Cote d'Ivoire.

Based in Yamoussoukro, the men (for they are all men) of PAKtransport known every corner of Ivorian territory. From Abidjan to Ferkessedougou, from Abengourou to Duékoué, the men of PAKtransport are everywhere. Whether

its office furniture, containers, building materials, communication equipment, school kits for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). It is the job of PAKtransport to take them to their respective destination. When a UNOCI contingent finishes its tour of duty, its PAKtransport which transports the troops and their luggage.

But their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Aslem Bajwa painstakingly explains that his men are not just "transporters". They also provide valuable help to the Ivorian population.

The "transporters" provide medical care for at least 450 people a month. In addition, the men of PAKtransport share their food rations with the hungry and the needy in their areas. Their hospitality is legendary, as UNOCI colleagues would readily testify.

A DAY IN IVORIAN AIR SPACE

It normally starts with an Air Tasking Order the previous day but if it is one of those impromptu flights (MEDEVAC or CASEVAC), then you would have just a few minutes to prepare.

Coordinates and routes go into the Global Positioning System (GPS) and we are ready to rumble and the MI-17 sure does rumble. All set, briefings fixed, it's take-off time or noise time which ever is appropriate. After take off, it will be time to call "Amigo Base" Flight Following.

The mandatory procedure is to give out some digits which may seem senseless to the untrained ear but which in fact give the position of the aircraft - information which can be useful in an emergency.

The cruising phase is probably the most relaxed, except that you may have to watch out for a couple of kamikaze birds, which may be on a collision course with your aircraft. It is also during this phase of a flight that you get

to catch a glimpse of the landscape, and the pleasant or not so pleasant vegetation. Pleasant, if the weather is clear enough for you to see the beautiful Ivorian landscape, unpleasant, if it is that fateful time of the year when mischievous and sinister cumulonimbus clouds (thunderstorms) ominously lurk



Fg officer Peter Attah-Obeng © UN / UNOCI

around to hurl intermittent chaotic bumps at any flying object in their vicinity. Soon it is time to land but there is no "ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking, please prepare for landing,....." - save that for the cozy commercial airlines.

Landing checks and all other safety details exhausted - we are ready to land. Now, even after you have been cleared to land by a air traffic controller, always keep your eyes open and follow that old aviation slogan - "safety first" - because you never know. I must mention at this stage that UNOCI's Ghana Aviation has often been commended for its professionalism, particularly its excellent touch downs and comfortable flights. The only problem with high praise is you have to live up it, despite crew stress and fatigue.

Finally, we return to the terminal controlled airspace of Bouaké and when we land, we praise the Lord for another successful day and smile broadly.