

UN to honour two Ghanaian peacekeepers posthumously



The peacekeepers will be awarded for their investment in peace (file photo)

Two fallen peacekeepers from Ghana will be honoured at the United Nations Headquarters on Wednesday, 24 May, to mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will lay a wreath to honour all fallen peacekeepers and will preside over a ceremony at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal will be awarded posthumously to 117 military, police and civilian personnel who lost their lives while serving in peacekeeping operations during 2016.

Two fallen peacekeepers from Ghana are among the 117 who will posthumously receive the Dag Hammarskjöld medal. They are Lance Corporal Emmanuel Sakyi, who served with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); and Staff Sergeant Boniface Atanyik, who lost his life while deployed with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

In a video message to mark the Day, the Secretary-General said: “Every day, peacekeepers help bring peace and stability to war-torn societies around the world. On the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, we pay tribute to the more than 3,500 peacekeepers who have given their lives in the service of peace since 1948.”

For his part, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, said: “We pay our greatest respects to the committed and courageous peacekeepers who are no longer with us today. I offer my deepest and most sincere condolences to the families of those we honour and to the bereaved.

It’s critical that we continue to invest in peace and make every effort to carry forward their noble work, and that we continue to pursue reform efforts to make United Nations peacekeeping more efficient and effective. That is the best way we can honour the memories and sacrifices of our fallen peacekeepers.”

Today, more than 96,000 uniformed personnel from 124 troop-and-police-contributing countries serve under the blue flag, alongside more than 15,000 international and national civilian staff and nearly 1,600 United Nations Volunteers.



Ghanaian Peacekeeping Officers being decorated by a UN staff

Ghana is the 10th largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping. It currently deploys more than 2,700 military and police personnel to UN peace operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan and the Western Sahara.

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002, to pay tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

The Assembly designated 29 May as the Day because it was the date in 1948 when the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the world body's first peacekeeping mission, began operations in Palestine.

Ghana will observe the Day with a number of activities starting tomorrow, Wednesday, May 24. The flag-raising and wreath-laying ceremony will take place on Monday, 29 May at the Forecourt of the State House.