

29 May 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers recognizes the selfless contribution made by men and women who have served across the world as Blue Helmets under the UN flag.

I join in solemn remembrance of the 101 peacekeepers who died in 2012. They made the ultimate sacrifice in the discharge of their duty. Collectively, we should celebrate the nobility, integrity and courage with which they dedicated their lives to the UN.

I would also like to pay tribute to the over 110,000 military, police and civilians who continue to serve in 15 peacekeeping operations in some of the world's harshest environments. They are truly in the front-line of the UN's global operations, never far from harm's way.

The presence of the United Nations on the ground in troubled areas is an indispensable instrument of peace. For many decades, it has greatly contributed to reducing hostilities between belligerents, while helping create an atmosphere more conducive to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

The preamble of the UN Charter states that one of the aims of the organization is to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

Through their dedication and professionalism, the colleagues we are honoring today embody and personify the aims of our august gathering of nations. They have defended the aspirations of the United Nations towards peace and security, development, and human rights, values that we all hold so dearly.

The General Assembly is proud to have established the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers following a resolution adopted in 2002. As President, I remain committed to strengthening the role of UN peacekeeping.

I continue to engage with Member States on how we can more decisively support those who serve under the UN flag in conflict-ridden areas throughout the world.