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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Celebrating May 29, International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers:

### **Canada's support for UN peace operations: Still a work in progress**

Ottawa - In March of this year, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland and National Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan [announced](#) the future deployment of an Aviation Task Force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for a period of one year. Recent reports indicate that the Canadians will be fully operational in August. While the World Federalist Movement - Canada (WFMC) welcomes these steps towards fulfilling Canada's peacekeeping commitments, questions remain about the details of the announcement, as well as what further steps Canada will take.

According to WFMC President Walter Dorn, "After more than two years of dithering and delay, Canada needs to take concrete steps towards re-engaging in peace operations. The Mali deployment is only the beginning. There are many other ways in which we can participate and contribute to the UN's efforts on behalf of international peace and security."

WFMC's [Canadians for Peacekeeping](#) campaign seeks to mobilize Canadians and calls on the Government of Canada to increase and improve its commitment to United Nations peace operations. Practically, the campaign's [website tracks](#) the status of the promises and pledges that Canada has made, and actual Canadian deployments, using statistics and benchmark data that are updated on a monthly basis.

In August 2016 [Canada announced](#) a commitment of up to 600 military personnel, 150 police and \$450 million over three years. That commitment was reiterated last November by the Prime Minister in remarks at the Vancouver Ministerial Meeting on UN Peacekeeping. The Prime Minister went on to [announce](#) that Canada would make available tactical airlift support, an Aviation Task Force, a Quick Reaction Force and new deployments of police. In addition Canada is supporting the "Elsie Initiative" to increase the number of women in peacekeeping and a program of training for UN personnel.

In January 2018, the number of peacekeepers fall to the lowest level (41 personnel; 22 military and 19 police) since Canada proposed the first Peacekeeping force in 1956. And the numbers have barely increased since.

The Canadian deployment to MINUSMA in Mali includes up to 250 personnel and an aviation task force composed of Canadian Chinook transport helicopters and Griffin armed helicopters to

provide escort and protection. Though six helicopters are being offered, Canada is only allowing one mission at a time (one "tasking line"). So the Canadian offer does not allow the United Nations to send the helicopters to two or more destinations at the same time. This is an inefficient approach. Also it reduces UN capacity, given that the German helicopter detachment could conduct two missions at a time.

Three significant questions regarding the Mali deployment also raise questions regarding the extent of the government's longer-term support for UN peace operations.

1) Duration. A Department of National Defence March 19 [press release](#) indicated that Canada's aviation task force would deploy for "up to 12 months." A minimum three-year deployment is customary. How long will Canadians be deployed to Mali?

2) Mandate. Media reports have said that Canadian helicopters and support personnel will be tasked to operate as part of MINUSMA, but also as part of the French-led Operation Barkhane counter-terrorism operation and the newly created regional G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) regional force. Will Canadian personnel deploy outside Mali, or remain on Malian territory, as required by the MINUSMA mandate?

3) Training. The Canadian Forces have contributed very low levels of personnel to UN peace operations for a long time. There is a need to train Canadian military personnel for participation in future United Nations peacekeeping missions, but few measures to increase Canada's training for UN operations have been taken.

May 29th is the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and this year marks the 70th anniversary of UN peacekeeping. On May 29, 1948 the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) began operations in the Middle East. UNTSO remains in force and four Canadians are currently deployed to it. There have been 71 peacekeeping operations over the last 70 years and there are currently 14 peace operation with over 87,000 uniformed personnel.

The [World Federalist Movement – Canada](#) is a longstanding peace organization advocating more effective and accountable global governance. WFMC's peacekeeping monitoring program includes publication of a website updated monthly that tracks Canadian deployments, plus an annual fact sheet on Canada and UN Peacekeeping.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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