

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrating the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers (May 29):

As Canada bids for UN Security Council seat, contributions to peacekeeping reach all-time low

Ottawa – As the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is celebrated worldwide on May 29, Canada's support for UN peacekeeping has fallen to the lowest level since the creation of the first UN peacekeeping force in 1956.

At 35 personnel (25 military and 10 police), this is lower than the personnel contribution of any Canadian government since the time of Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent. The 35 figure is less than half the lowest level reached under the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which itself had reached a low point in Canadian history.

To help its bid for a Security Council seat, Canada should contribute more peacekeepers. Both Ireland and Norway, our friendly competitors, have more personnel deployed than Canada (Ireland: 474; Norway: 65, at the end of April). The European Union is committed to increasing the contributions of its members in the coming months. A vote in the General Assembly is scheduled to take place June 17 to select the non-permanent members of the Council for 2021-22.

“Canada's low personnel contributions to peacekeeping could well be the Achilles heel of our Security Council campaign,” says Walter Dorn, National President of the World Federalist Movement – Canada.

According to Dorn, “Even during the COVID-19 crisis, UN peacekeeping is working to reduce conflict, restore peace and promote health in hotspots around the world. From Colombia to Mali, from Kashmir to the Golan Heights, the United Nations is giving peace a chance, helping conflicting parties and formerly war-torn countries restore good governance and the rule of law.

“After Canada’s peacekeeping deployment in Mali in 2018-19, the largest in two decades, the personnel contributions have been modest, at under 50 personnel. This is disappointing, especially since Prime Minister Trudeau mandated his defence and foreign ministers to re-engage in UN peacekeeping.

“Despite the decline in uniformed personnel contributions, Canada has made significant contributions in other ways,” continues Dorn. “Canada provides substantial funding to the UN peacekeeping budget – a mandatory contribution that Canada pays

in full, on time and without conditions (unlike the United States). Canada is also a leader in extra-budgetary contributions to UN peace operations, at \$12.5 million this year. Finally, Canada continues its historic role as chair of the Working Group of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping. This year, skillful diplomacy resulted in the adoption of a final statement, despite strong disagreements among the 154 nations in the Committee.”

“Nevertheless, the greatest national contribution is the men and women in uniform who serve in the field. Those numbers are at an all-time low. Canada can and should do better.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

See <https://peacekeepingcanada.com/>

Prof. Walter Dorn, President, World Federalist Movement - Canada

Email: Walter.Dorn@rmc.ca

Mobile: +1 647-205-2032

Dr. Dorn is a professor at Royal Military College and Canadian Forces College in Toronto, and also serves as a consultant to the United Nations on peacekeeping.