

THE OBSERVER

FOR PEACE IN KASHMIR



**United Nations Military Observer Group
in India and Pakistan**

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United Nations
Peace Operations



Message from Head of Mission Chief Military Observer



The fifth edition of *The Observer* celebrates peace and diversity by focusing on stories of peacekeepers, especially women UN Military Observers, and the civilian staff working tirelessly to implement the mandate of the United Nations Military Observer Mission in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

We are the second oldest peacekeeping mission in operation and we are aware of the changing nature of UN missions that today require greater knowledge, competencies, and diverse skills. Women have increasingly become part of the peacekeeping family with proven ability to perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. I would like to thank Thailand, South Korea, and Croatia as the three highest ranking contributors of women Military Observers to UNMOGIP. We highly appreciate these efforts and are eager to welcome more women as part of our Mission team.

In February, UNMOGIP said goodbye to Finland following 56 years of uninterrupted troop-contributions. I thank Finland for its unwavering efforts and welcome Italy and Romania as our new troop contributors. I also extend my appreciation to Chile, Croatia, Philippines, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Uruguay for their solid commitment made to UNMOGIP over the past years and look forward to their continued contributions and our ongoing cooperation.

This past year, the Mission has been very engaged in investigating alleged ceasefire violations. This is tedious work which requires impeccable professionalism, impartiality and high precision in reporting. The results achieved by UNMOGIP have only been made possible thanks to the efforts of our 44 UN Military Observers (UNMOs) that monitor the 770-kilometre long Line of Control and Working Boundary with the support of 75 civilians ensuring the smooth running of our



peacekeeping operation.

Our Mission has continued to build confidence in the region and we will continue to fulfil our mandate with impartiality. This has only been made possible through the relentless support of India and Pakistan, their army liaison officers, their drivers that assist us in our movements and the local authorities. We also wish to highlight the kindness and welcoming attitude of the Kashmiri civilian population.

Diversity and professionalism is the beauty and strength of UNMOGIP in which we rejoice and will continue to celebrate while working towards bringing more peace and stability to the region.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'P. Lodin'.

Major General Per Lodin
Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer of UNMOGIP

About UNMOGIP



WHAT IS UNMOGIP

The Jammu and Kashmir region has been a source of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan for nearly seven decades. The UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) observes the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control and Working Boundary in Jammu and Kashmir.

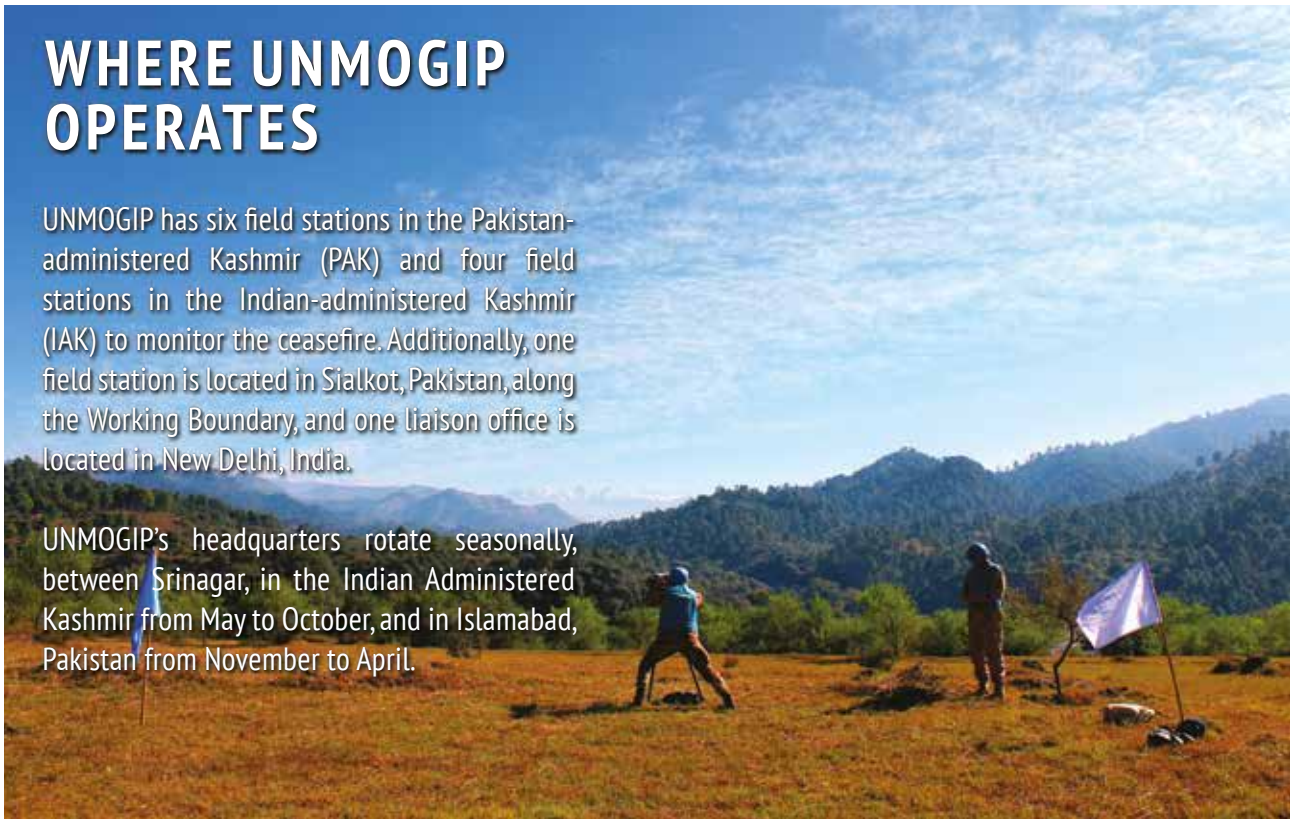




WHERE UNMOGIP OPERATES

UNMOGIP has six field stations in the Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PAK) and four field stations in the Indian-administered Kashmir (IAK) to monitor the ceasefire. Additionally, one field station is located in Sialkot, Pakistan, along the Working Boundary, and one liaison office is located in New Delhi, India.

UNMOGIP's headquarters rotate seasonally, between Srinagar, in the Indian Administered Kashmir from May to October, and in Islamabad, Pakistan from November to April.



UNMOGIP'S MANDATE

The task of UNMOGIP is to observe, to the extent possible, developments pertaining to the strict observance of the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 and to report thereon to the Secretary-General. The last report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNMOGIP was published in January 1972.



UNMOGIP in Facts



**SECOND OLDEST
UN MISSION**



**HOST COUNTRIES:
INDIA AND PAKISTAN**



**AUTHORIZED MILITARY
OBSERVERS**



**TOTAL
PERSONNEL**



POLICE



CIVILIANS



**TROOP CONTRIBUTING
COUNTRIES**

**Area of responsibility: 770 kilometres long (approximately)
Line of Control and Working Boundary.**



Troop Contributors to UNMOGIP



Chile



Croatia



Italy



South Korea



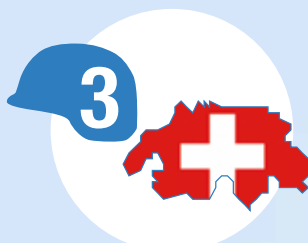
Philippines



Romania



Sweden



Switzerland



Thailand



Uruguay



The Investigation



MATS OVE ORDEN



The mandate of United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) is in short “to observe and report”. This also means that the Mission conducts investigations, when needed.

UNMOGIP was established to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It has remained in the area to monitor developments pertaining to the strict observance of the 1971 ceasefire.

Peacekeepers observe the ceasefire through conducting investigations, area reconnaissance, observation posts

Major Mats Orden accompanied by a South Korean UN Military Observer and a Pakistani officer during a field station visit in Kotli, Pakistan near the Line of Control.

and field trips. The investigation is, therefore, one of UNMOGIP’s most important tasks. If an investigation needs to be conducted, most other tasks are put aside. The usual reasons for conducting an investigation is if there is firing across the Line of Control (LoC), (troop) movements across the LoC, or aircrafts crossing the LoC. Investigations can also be conducted if there are cases of complaints related to the Working Boundary in the South, as well as investigations into “other alleged incidents (OAI)”.

Most often the trigger for an investigation is a complaint received by UNMOGIP. These complaints, once handed



UN Military Observers carrying out an investigation in Domel Field Station with local witnesses.



Major
Mats Orden

Lastly, a more thorough report is put together: the “Final Investigation Report, which is shared with UN Headquarters.

One of the most challenging things about an investigation is that it seldom arrives “alone”. Often it takes place within a period of numerous alleged ceasefire violations. That means that Field Stations have to do many investigations in a short period of time. The OiC of each station has to plan them in the most efficient way after exploring different possibilities, like; is it possible to split the station into two teams, and in that way, conduct two investigations each day? If there are only three UNMOs at the station, you might have to divide everyone into 1, 2 and 3 – and have a “circling plan” meaning that UNMO 1 is responsible for the first investigation on day 1, UNMO 2 for the investigation the next day and so on. With this solution, UNMO 1 can stay at the station the day after making an investigation and finish all paperwork while others are doing another investigation. With this three-person solution, a field station can conduct 6 investigations per week. With a 4 or 5 UNMO team, it’s possible to conduct up to 12 every week.

over to the field stations in PAK, are received and get a case number from the Operations Centre (OPS). Then the Field Station plans the investigation process, which most often involves a visit to the area of the incident. If that area is near the Line of Control (LoC), the Indian side is notified about the upcoming visit.

During the investigation, the teams often first meet up with the Commander of the unit who gives them a briefing about the alleged violation, often followed by a meeting with the whole military unit involved. In many cases, the team visits the place of the incident and talks to any civilians involved in the incident.

After conducting the investigation, the team immediately sends in a “First Investigation Report” to OPS. In this report, the responsible team leader or officer in charge (OiC) reports about the investigation and provides a short summary of the incident. The report ends with a recommendation on whether the incident was considered a violation or not.

UNMOGIP's Pledge to Diminish Carbon Footprint



In 2007, when the Headquarters of UNMOGIP moved from Rawalpindi to Islamabad, it was the opportunity to design the structure of the building to reduce energy consumption. For example, the building is not attached to the floor thus reducing the absorption of heat from the ground, which considerably reduced the use of air-conditioning. There are two layers of roof with huge ventilation and circulation of air above and between them. The insulating material used in the construction also provides additional layer of protection from the elements. The spatial orientation of the building allows maximum sun exposure thus reducing the use of artificial lighting. These

simple methodologies and architectural techniques massively reduced energy consumption.

UNMOGIP has a long history of adopting environment friendly practices in their offices so explained Ayad Al-Kaissi, Chief of Supply Chain Management and Service Delivery. He said that he is an environmentalist and working for the environment is not only part of his job but also a passion. His personal drive to improve the environment has led him to find innovative solutions for a better environment. For example, a lot of water was wasted because of high pressure of water or leakage. Water meters were installed to measure the



usage of water. All leakages were identified to control wastage of water. Touch sensors were applied to taps to stop water waste.

Nazma Khan, Environment Focal point at Supply Chain Management, said that they have been trying to cut down the consumption of energy by educating the staff.

“You will see during our meetings if you go to UNMOGIP’s offices, all the lights and air conditioners would be off. Even our CMS switches off everything when stepping out. We have developed that habit in the staff through constant reminders and talking about it in meetings,” she said.

Transportation and movement of vehicles is another area that has its environmental impact yet it’s inevitable to run a peacekeeping mission without it. However, UNMOGIP has been following UN policies to minimize carbon emission from its vehicles.

Patrick Frederick Mwanje, Head of Transport Section said that the major way to reduce impact is to decrease movement of vehicles that automatically reduce consumption of fuel and carbon emission. Earlier, vehicles were sent on a weekly basis for Special Delivery Service (SDC) to the Field Stations. Weekly visits were changed to monthly visits. This simple management change cut down the cost of fuel and the amount of carbon emission.

Another practice is using the ‘idling policy’ for vehicles, that means turning off the vehicles when not moving. UNMOGIP switched from using wet cell to dry cell batteries because liquid batteries contain acid that creates hazardous waste as compared to the dry cell batteries that contain powder.

Working for the environment needs a team effort

from all the departments such as recycling and disposal of the waste like old tires and car batteries from Transport requires assistance from Supply Chain Management Section.

“Protecting environment is a cross-cutting responsibility for all of us. I have learned that protecting environment go beyond my own contribution and we need to team up with all the sections to attain what we want,” said Mwanje.

“Ensuring environmental sustainability” is the seventh Sustainable Development Goal. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) are working towards these goals.



“ Working for the environment needs a team effort from all the departments such as recycling and disposal of the waste like old tires and car batteries from transport requires assistance from supply chain management department. ”

UNMOGIP's Pledge to Diminish Carbon Footprint



**NESTER
ODAGA-
JALOMAYO**

**Chief of Mission
Support**

“UNMOGIP being one of the smallest peacekeeping operations, our footprint is proportionate when it comes to environmental impact. However, when it comes to the environment, no action is small. It is the individual and collective responsibilities that bring change to saving our environment. Our collective actions on the environment as small missions together with those of big missions can become a global driver of change.”



**COLONEL
ORIEL
PANGCO**

**Deputy Chief Military
Observer (DCMO)**

“In Philippines, we are very conscious about environmental protection after losing a lot of natural resources during natural disasters and going through the process of rebuilding. I turn off lights in the hallways during the day to reduce the amount of electricity we use. It is great that the United Nations has made the environment a priority and developed this environment strategy. On the military side of the Mission, we fully support the agenda and follow the guidance to improve and protect the environment.”



**QAZI SAIF
UR REHMAN**

**Information
Technology Assistant,
Information
Technology Unit**

“The Information Technology Unit has implemented strategies that are cost-effective and beneficial to the environment. From printing, we have shifted to virtualization of documents by encouraging staff to share soft copies and making digital presentations.”



**NAZMA
KHAN**

**Environment Focal
point at Supply Chain
Management**

“Acting as the Environmental Focal Point, I work directly on environmental issues such as proper disposal of waste to ensure that hazardous waste is collected by a registered contractor; metal scraps are sold separately to a contractor, and; normal waste is disposed of in a proper manner. Throughout the day, I only turn on necessary lights. I also train and encourage staff to follow the same practice to cut down the consumption of energy and water. I frequently remind staff and I show them through example.”



OBAIDULLAH KHAN

**Workshop
Supervisor, Transport
Section**

“As an automotive engineer, I knew a lot about carbon emission from vehicles and its impact on the environment before it became a public matter in Pakistan. But I was not conscious about small acts that increase pollution. Awareness is very important when it comes to the environment. In 2004, while hanging out with a colleague, I threw an empty can of coke out of the car window. My colleague was shocked and reprimanded me rather harshly. I realized my mistake. Ever since, I throw out trash into bins, and also instruct my children not to litter.”



THOMAS NYARACH

**Chief Communications
and Information
Technology Section**

“The Communication and Information Technology Services at UNMOGIP have adopted procedures that lead to a greener environment and introduced an efficient system that consumes less electricity. We started providing remote IT assistance to the field stations and this has considerably reduced the number of trips by IT staff to fix minor issues. It reduced the gas emissions created by the use of vehicles and it is also cost-efficient.”



PATRICK FREDERICK MWANJE

**Chief of Transport
Section**

“I learned about many things that I did not know have an impact on the environment. For example, we all know that printing wastes paper because it is made of wood and it can cause deforestation. Printers also use electricity that can lead to carbon emission and create an impact on the environment.”



ISMA FAISAL

**Head of Supply and
Fuel Unit**

“There is a lot of focus on saving energy at UNMOGIP and staff members are encouraged to turn off all lights and air conditioners when they are stepping out of the office for a short time. This is something new that I learned at UNMOGIP and now I am practicing it at the office and in my personal life.”



Diversity is the Beauty of UN



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT ORAPIM PAKDEESONGKRAM



During my last field investigation, the situation was very tense in the area. I met the Pakistani officer who was present there as our interpreter. During the interview, my colleague and I had trouble understanding some Urdu words. I looked at the officer's face but he seemed to be uninterested in our questions.

I realized that I needed to change the atmosphere. So instead of resuming the investigation, I asked him where he was from. He eagerly spoke about his hometown. When I told him that I have travelled in Pakistan and told him

Flight Lt. Orapim Pakdeesongkram performing her duties as a UN Military Observer on the field.

about my trip to Lahore, his face just lit up. That's how a tense situation changed into a delightful conversation.

My first month as a new United Nations Military Observer (UNMO) in the field, in Pakistan, was challenging to say the least. I found carrying out investigations to be the most difficult task. But the other challenges presented themselves in unexpected ways from familiarizing myself with the culture and traditions of my host country to breaking into the military boy's fraternity as a female officer.

During the one year that I served in UNMOGIP, I had a chance to work on both the Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) side and the Pakistani Administered Kashmir (PAK) side of the LoC., though I spent more time in PAK. My officer



Flight Lt. Orapim Pakdeesongkram during a medal parade ceremony at UNMOGIP.



Interaction with the local population for building rapport and collecting information is an important part of a peacekeeper's duty at UNMOGIP. A female peacekeeper is seen talking to a local woman.

in charge in Domel was Captain Denis Zubac. On the day I was going to carry out my first field task in a Pakistani Army unit, Denis cautioned me that I might have trouble communicating with Pakistani officers because they are not used to having many female officers around. When I started working in the field, I realized that his thoughts were true.

I learned a lot from Denis by observing and studying him interact with officers and how they interacted with him. Pakistani officers really like to ask questions like: How do you find Pakistan? Is this your first UN mission? Have you visited any place in Pakistan? Do you like Pakistani food? Is this your first field station?

I consciously made an effort to learn more about Pakistan's interesting places, food, and also learned some Urdu vocabulary. I decided to travel and visit Pakistan when I got my first Compensatory Time Off (CTO) after a few months of stay. I heard a lot of Pakistani officers' talk about Lahore. They told me that "one who has never been to Lahore, has yet to be born." So, I travelled to Lahore where a friend hosted me for a week. Pakistan is a really incredible country, rich with nature and historical places. This travel experience helped me engage in meaningful conversations with Pakistani

officers in the field. That, in return, greatly facilitated my work often dissolving tense situations and building rapport.

During my field visits, I made it a point to ask other officers if they had ever been associated with UN peacekeeping Missions. They gladly shared stories from their time in UN Missions and their experiences. One Pakistani officer told me that his boss in his previous UN mission was a woman and that made him feel comfortable interacting with other female officers.

"Respect for diversity" is a core value that all UN personnel are familiar with, as we need to work together, side by side, with people from other countries to achieve the same goals of bringing peace to the conflict area. I observed that the diversity in the UN mission can really shape the attitude of people. They become more open and embrace diversity readily. They are more accepting and comfortable around diverse groups, people from other countries, gender, and race.

I will always remember a sentence a Pakistani officer said, "Diversity is the beauty of the UN."

A Peacekeeper's Journey into a New Culture

MAJOR MICHAEL TSCHUMI



Major Michael Tschumi joined UNMOGIP in June 2017 as his first UN peacekeeping mission. Coming straight from Zurich, Switzerland to a remote part of Pakistan, contrasts between the two societies were evident. His approach has been to try to learn new things about the culture and find common ground to get his job done when faced with challenges due to cultural differences.

He learned many new things, including some new perspectives with regards to time management. This different pace and approach to life sometimes brought minor challenges. Major Michael recalled that at times they went to villages to do an investigation on a very tight schedule. But on arrival, according to local customs, drinking chai [tea] came before anything else. Instead of being frustrated, he accepted the local culture and tried to find a middle way between that and his own way of working.

He recalled that when he started his mission, the situation was quite tense on the Line of Control and there was a lot of firing and shelling from both Indian and the Pakistani sides. So, he spent most of his time performing investigations of the alleged ceasefire violations. At times, incidents occur in remote areas that are difficult to reach involving long bumpy drives and walking for hours wearing heavy protection equipment like bulletproof vests and helmets. In addition to that, everything must be documented and that involves a lot of paperwork.



Major Michael Tschumi has been a conscripted officer in Swiss Armed Forces for 14 years. He holds a Masters in Accounting and Finance and has worked as a public accountant and financial business consultant. UNMOGIP is his first UN mission. His first peacekeeping mission was with NATO in Kosovo in 2016.

Despite these challenges, he never found the technical part of the investigations difficult, because being a military officer for the last 14 years, he has been trained to undertake such responsibilities. However, at times he couldn't detach himself from the human suffering.

"The difficult part is visiting civilian victims, as most of those have lost a son or a daughter or have an injured family member. It is difficult to interview them and stay focused on what you have to do technically, when you are at the same time overwhelmed with



“If we don’t have an investigation (because that’s the priority), we go out for area reconnaissance, explain to people what we are doing and also understand their opinions about the issue between India and Pakistan and the Kashmir conflict,” he said.

compassion, understanding and emotions”, he said.

It is part of UN Military Observers’ (UNMOs) job to go on field visits to army units and maintain good relationships with the commanding army officers of the area. Another important job is to go out for area reconnaissance and build rapport with the local community and explain the purpose for being in the area.

CAPTAIN AMIRA DZIRI ABAZA



Captain Amira from Croatia joined UNMOGIP in September 2017. Coming from the Croatian Navy, she has worked on UN and EU operations in the Croatian Ministry of Defence. This is her second UN mission. Between 2014 to 2015, she spent 15 months as a UN peacekeeper with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

How did you feel about being the only woman in your field station?

“I would like to have more people in the Field Station. It would be particularly nice to have women to talk to. But it is part of being in the Military Service and it is not my first field experience of being the only woman. It is a different culture here but my job is to do my work professionally. No matter what your gender is, when you conduct an investigation, you are treated equally”.

Why did you apply for this mission?

“If I had only worked within my country, I would have felt that I hadn’t reached my true potential. I feel like doing more and to go and meet people, see foreign countries and experience new things to gain cultural awareness. It makes you feel more alive, not just professionally but also socially. I encourage all young officers to join peacekeeping missions. It can be hard and challenging, but at the same time it is also a beautiful experience”.



MAJOR YOUNGJU SON



Major Youngju Son has been serving in the South Korean Army for the last 15 years. This is his first UN mission but he wishes to join more missions in the future because of the multicultural work environment and the opportunity to contribute to the peacekeeping process.

What was your motivation to apply for UNMOGIP?

"I applied because I always wanted to join a UN peacekeeping mission. When I attached the UN badge on the shoulder of my uniform, I did not change as a person, but I noticed that most people treated me with greater respect. This is because the UN logo is famous for bringing peace throughout the world. I intend to strive to do my utmost to keep up the standard.

LT COLONEL NICOLA VERO



Lt Colonel Nicola Vero has been part of the Italian Military since 1991. He has been deployed to NATO missions four times, twice in Bosnia and twice in Kosovo. During his first deployment in Bosnia from 1999 to 2000, he helped displaced communities return to their homes. He is proud of the fact that, at times, along with his team, he was able to remove mines and booby traps from homes and residential areas.

How is UNMOGIP different from your other missions?

"It's my first mission with the UN. It's totally different from the NATO missions I participated in before. The UN provides logistical support for everything you do. In UNMOGIP, we are relatively free to move around in Pakistan, to meet the local people and ask them questions about their social or cultural life. In NATO missions, it was different, because I was deployed to war zones and it was more difficult to talk with the local population".

MAJOR LOUIS LEANDER



Major Louis Leander has been serving in the Philippines Airforce for 17 years. Before joining UNMOGIP in June 2017, he had been a part of the search and rescue mission of the Philippines Airforce. In the past, he worked as a flight instructor training officers as co-pilots.

How would you describe your experience in the field?

“The people here are so hospitable and warm. You talk with somebody in the street, nine times out of ten they will offer you something to eat, to drink or to sit with them. My country is known for hospitality but I think Kashmiri people are even more hospitable. I haven’t seen such warm reception in many places. I have been to other countries but I haven’t seen that kind of warmth especially for foreigners. It’s really unique”.

Did you face any challenges because of the language barrier?

“We don’t have dedicated translators, but when we have investigations in military camps, we have local officers who translate for us. The problem is when we go to far-away areas along the Line of Control, the local officers can’t go with us as it is dangerous for them and for us as well. We can’t take anyone with us. Sometimes we ask villagers if they have someone who can speak English and sometimes, of course, we get someone who can speak the language. However, when we can’t find anyone we make sketches to communicate”.

A Conversation with a Veteran Peacekeeper and Emergency Doctor



Lieutenant Colonel Vesna Megic, is an Emergency Doctor from Croatia, who served as a United Nations Military Observer (UNMO) with UNMOGIP for 13 months starting from June 2016 until September 2017. She has completed four mission assignments in her career; two in Kabul with NATO, one in the Golan Heights with United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and her latest with UNMOGIP.

When she joined the Croatian Armed Forces in 1994, Croatia was in the middle of a civil war that lasted from 1991 to 1995. During that time, she had to see many casualties and injured people with multiple traumas caused by explosive devices, rockets, mortar shells, and gunshot.

Lieutenant Colonel Vesna Megic with local children during a field trip.

“In wartime, it is something that you expect, that you are prepared for but it’s worse to see civilians suffering because of [military] combat, especially children and people who have no direct stake in the conflict” she added.

The end of her first year in the armed forces in 1995 brought peace to her country.

What were you doing in Croatia before joining UNMOGIP as a Medical Officer?

“I was running a Military Medical Education Centre with the Croatian Army, where we developed different kinds of courses for military personnel”.

Have you been part of other UN Missions?

“This is my second UN peacekeeping mission. I was with UNDOF in the Golan Heights, situated between the Syrian and Israeli border, from 2012 to 2013.

My first mission was with NATO in Kabul from 2005 to 2006. It was very different for me than this mission because there I went with my complete medical team including the Nurses. I was responsible for 300 people in the hospital. At that time, the Croatian Armed Forces had a big contingent in Afghanistan. I served once again in the NATO mission in Afghanistan from 2008 to 2009.”

Tell me about work with UNMOGIP? And how it compares with your past missions?

“This mission is completely different. Firstly, my position here is as the medical officer within the Mission Headquarters. I don't have any clinic, so I am more like a manager and advisor. That's why I often go around in different Field Stations to check living condition of UNMOs and see how they are maintaining their personal and kitchen hygiene, etc.

Secondly, it is challenging geographically. Some of the field stations are pretty far away from HQ in remote parts of the IAK and PAK side of the LoC. I am always in the field and available to advise and guide my colleagues, but at times it can get challenging because I cannot be with them all the time to see, to cure, to check and assist in medical

procedures. Our numbers are smaller here if you compare with other missions in Africa like Congo and Mali where troops contributions are in the thousands. There are only 44 military personnel here supported by 75 civilians.”

What are some of the challenges you face during your work?

“When I am here in HQ, whoever comes to my door with a problem, I will do all I can for them. I don't feel good when I get calls from a remote location due to a medical reason and I can't help directly. There are shortcomings when you are available remotely but can't examine a patient in person.

These challenges can be dealt with most of the times with good communication through skype or video calls and through cooperation with local hospitals. We have an agreement with the Pakistani and Indian Armies to give us medical support. Sometimes I refer people to other hospitals when I am not equipped to handle the situation”.

What do you say about your overall stay at UNMOGIP?

“I am an emergency doctor and I am used to dealing with people and doing practical work like medical procedures. I enjoy visiting field stations and spending time with UNMOs and going with them to the field. I don't like administration and paperwork so much”.

How do you find hospitals here in India and Pakistan?

“Most of the hospitals I have visited here were military hospitals. They are usually better than civilian hospitals and are well organized. I saw hospitals in Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot; they are very big and well equipped and provide all kinds of medical services, except surgery”.

“These hospitals were recently renovated after the



Lieutenant Colonel Vesna Megic during a field trip.

earthquake in 2005. So, they are following international standards such as those you see in Europe. I spoke with several local medical colleagues here and all of them have had good training”.

How is it like being part of the military as a woman and how was your experience with UNMOGIP?

“From the moment I joined the army as a woman, I was aware that I would be one of a few. I am already used to living [and working] in a predominantly male environment. When I first arrived, I was at the field station for a few months and I performed my daily field tasks without any trouble because I had already studied the local culture.

I was aware that local officers would not shake

hands with me or speak directly to me. I respected that, because I already had the necessary cultural awareness training”.

Who is back in your family and how do you cope staying away from them when you are on assignments?

“I have three grown-up daughters who have completed their education, two of them are married and I have one grandson. All three of my daughters are living their lives independently”.

“When I went on my first mission in Afghanistan in 2005, we didn’t have communication applications like Viber or WhatsApp, it is far easier now. Communication even in distant places is not that difficult. You just have to have a good Wi-Fi /internet connection and you can see your family and speak with them and share photos. So, you feel that you are included in their life. Otherwise, a one year separation can be very long”.

UN Cinema Celebrates the Role of Female Peacekeepers



To mark International Day of UN Peacekeepers on 29 May, UN Cinema launched at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, with its first screening of 'A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers,' a documentary on the role of women in international peacekeeping.

In his opening remarks, Major General Per Lodin, Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer (HOM/CMO), UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan's (UNMOGIP's) highlighted the importance

Major General Per Lodin, Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer (HOM/CMO), UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan's (UNMOGIP's) giving opening remarks at the screening of documentary 'A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers'

of female peacekeepers and the evolving nature of UN peacekeeping operations around the world. He



United Nations Military Observers and Director United Nations Information Centre at the screening of documentary 'A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers'

mentioned that in all fields of peacekeeping, women have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts.

UNMOGIP is the second oldest UN peacekeeping mission that monitors the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control and working boundary in Jammu and Kashmir. The CMO emphasized the importance of having female peacekeepers in UNMOGIP's mission.

"In traditional missions like UNMOGIP, more women are needed. In a Muslim dominated area, this is even more important because there is a need to reach out to the whole population. Female observers help with that," he said.

Gender parity amongst UN staff is a priority for the UN Secretary-General. There is a good balance at the UN Headquarters but in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the figures are more

challenging. In March 2017, out of approximately 98,000 peacekeepers, women constituted 3.4% of military personnel and roughly 10% of police personnel in peacekeeping missions around the world.

Thailand, South Korea and Croatia are three top countries sending female Military Observers to UNMOGIP. However, UNMOGIP is making a deliberate effort to get more females on board by requesting and encouraging other troop-contributing countries to send more female peacekeepers to the mission.

UN Cinema is a collaboration between the UN Information Centre and PNCA to feature films and documentaries focused on development, humanitarian issues, and human rights from across the world.

Directed and produced by Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy and Geeta Gandbir, the documentary follows a unit of 160 Bangladeshi women who between June 2013 and July 2014, traveled far from their friends and families to join the the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. They form one of the world's first all-female, predominantly Muslim peacekeeping units; shattering every stereotype the world holds about the capabilities of Muslim women.

Vittorio Cammarota, Director UN Information Centre stated that this new partnership is instrumental in increasing the number of Pakistani people that information can be shared with on what the United Nations System is working on in Pakistan and abroad.

CMO joins UN Military Observers in their Peacekeeping Activities

Major General Per Lodin recently finished a ten-day visit to UN field stations. He is the Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

UNMOGIP was established to observe the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. There are 10 Field Stations along the cease fire line that is monitored by UN peacekeepers.

During his visit that started on August 23, 2017, he visited Bhimber, Kotli, Skardu, and Sialkot - four of the seven UN Field Stations in Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Pakistan. The CMO informed us that he had visited all Field Stations at least twice since he joined the mission in July, 2016.

“It is important for me to be out and to meet our really professional military observers and see how they are doing their work,” he said. “Even when the Headquarter is in Srinagar, it doesn’t mean that I am not in Pakistan Administered Kashmir because my area of responsibility is on both sides of the ceasefire line,” he added.

UN Peacekeepers monitor the ceasefire by performing tasks such as investigations of alleged ceasefire violations, area reconnaissance (including interaction with locals), observation posts, and field trips. During his visit to the four field stations, CMO joined the UNMOs on their daily field tasks.

“It is really important for me to follow our teams when they go out to perform their respective tasks,” he said.

CMO also held meetings with the Pakistani Army representatives and government officials during his visit. “I visited and shared really good information with the Deputy Commissioner in the town of Shigar,” he said. “It [the visit] also gives me an opportunity to meet commanders from the Pakistan army and interact with

them and by doing that I get quite a good perception of the overall situation in different areas,” he added.

BHIMBER



CMO and his MA joined the field tasks of the team from Bhimber Field Station, Gura Village, Aug. 24, 2017.



UN vehicle stuck on the way from Gura Village to Bhimber field station, Aug. 24, 2017.



KOTLI



CMO together with a team of observers from Kotli during an Observation Post, Chattar, Aug. 26, 2017



CMO joined a team of UN peacekeepers from Kotli Field Station for an area reconnaissance. It is a way to show presence and talk to the locals about any new developments in the area, Kotli, Aug. 26, 2017

SKARDU



CMO meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of Shigar, Skardu, Aug. 31, 2017.

Deputy Chief Military Observer Visits UNMOS on the Field



Between 20 to 23 August 2017, Colonel Oriel Pangcog, Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO) of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), went on a four-day visit to two UN field stations in Domel and Rawalakot. During his visit, he held briefing sessions with the UN Military Observers (UNMOs), observed border crossings from Chakothi to Uri on the Line of Control (LoC), and participated in a field reconnaissance in Tolipeer, Rawalakot.

The DCMO said that these visits are a part of his regular monthly or bi-monthly activities to personally monitor and observe the situation in the area and to engage and show his support to the UNMOs.

On 20 August, the DCMO reached Domel Field Station with his team. The next day, he held a briefing with the UNMOs and went on a field visit to observe border crossing on the Line of Control (LoC) from Chakothi to Uri in Jammu and Kashmir region. Every Monday, locals cross the border to meet their relatives and families on

Colonel Oriel Pangcog, Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO) joins UN Military Observers in their activities at Domel Field Station.

the other side of the border. The crossing is monitored by UN peacekeepers.

On 22 August, the DCMO traveled to Rawalakot and had a briefing with the UNMOs in the evening. The next day, he carried out an area reconnaissance with the UNMOs in Tolipeer, Rawalakot district.

He said that area reconnaissance is a way for the UN to show their presence to the local population and interact with them. It also allows UNMOs to personally observe the situation in the area, gather information to inform the United Nations HQ and report objectively.

UNMOGIP Celebrates Medal Parade to Recognize Work of UN Peacekeepers



On 9 November, 2017 the Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer, Major General Per Lodin awarded medals to the United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) in a ceremony held at UNMOGIP Headquarters in Islamabad, Pakistan. The medal parade was attended by the diplomatic community, head of agencies, the civilian and military staff.

Medal parades are organized twice a year in April and November to recognize the contributions of UN peacekeepers to the implementation of the Mission's mandate. Colonel Oriel Pangcog, Deputy Chief Military Observer said that medals are awarded to UN peacekeepers who have completed a minimum of three months of service with the Mission.

“Medal parade is a way to recognize and show appreciation for the work of UN peacekeepers,” Pangcog said.

During the medal parade week, UNMOs arrive from their respective field stations to the Headquarters in Islamabad to participate in the three-day activities that include the UNMO Conference followed by the medal parade. The first two days of the UNMO conference is devoted to trainings and lectures. The UNMOs also get updates on the latest UN policies and discuss operational issues with the Chief of Mission Support.

Present since 1949, UNMOGIP monitors the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control and Working Boundary in Jammu and Kashmir. The ceasefire line is approximately 770 kilometers long observed by 44 peacekeepers.



General Per Lodin, Chief Military Observer and Head of Mission (HOM/CMO) and Colonel Oriel Pangcog, Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO) during Medal Parade, November 2017, Islamabad.



Major General Per Lodin, Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer (on the left) is awarding a female UN peacekeeper during the medal parade ceremony, November 2017, Islamabad.

UNMOGIP Celebrates Medal Parade







UNMOGIP Family



Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer Maj Gen Per Lodin, Deputy Chief Military Observer, Colonel Oriel Pangcog, Chief of Mission Support Nester Odaga-Jalomayo and Chief Security Officer Syed Capua with national staff in Islamabad.



Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer and Deputy Chief Military Observer, Colonel Oriel Pangcog, the Chief of Mission Support Nester Odaga-Jalomayo and the Chief Security Officer Syed Capua with Military Observers on Medal Parade Day.

Images of Peacekeeping

Military Observers' operational tasks include conducting investigations of alleged ceasefire violations, field trips, area reconnaissance and observation posts. Support tasks include receipt of petitions and Working Boundary crossing duties, among other things. Here are some pictures from 2017.





Images of Peacekeeping







International Women's Day



International Women's Day is a global day celebrated on 8 March every year to commemorate and celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. At UNMOGIP, Women's Day celebrations were held at Islamabad Headquarters.



UN Staff Day 25 October

UN Staff Day celebrates the courage, commitment and sacrifice of the men and women who became international civil servants. This year UNMOGIP family gathered at the Complex, Islamabad and spent a fun-filled day participating in sports competitions and other activities.





International Day of UN Peacekeepers

International Day of UN Peacekeepers honours the men and women who have served under the UN flag. A ceremony was held in Islamabad Headquarters to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets on 29 May.





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