

# **INTERVIEW: 'I want to contribute to the service of humanity,' says first-time UN peacekeeper from Indonesia**

It is Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro's first deployment with an international peacekeeping operation. The Indonesian police officer serves with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), a region of Sudan where conflict has left some 2.7 million people displaced and over 2 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

Peace has remained elusive in Darfur, where some 16,000 [UNAMID](#) personnel are deployed to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian aid and help the political process. While Mr. Yudhantoro says his days are filled with "amazing experiences," he notes that working in an environment with civilian, police and military components from different parts of the world has its challenges. *This interview has been edited for content and clarity.*

**UN News:** Tell us a little bit about your background.

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** My name is Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro. I'm with the Indonesian Formed Police Unit (FPU)-10 here in UNAMID. Back home, I am stationed in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. I graduated from the Indonesian Police Academy in 2007 and have served with the Indonesian National Police for the past 10 years. Additionally, I studied policing science, criminal investigation, cyber analysis, intelligence analysis and Japanese at the Indonesian Police Language School. Prior to joining UNAMID, I held the position of Chief, Intelligence Division in West Lombok District Police, Indonesia.

**UN News:** How long have you been with UNAMID and what are your responsibilities?

Serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** I have been here for three months. My main responsibilities entail management of the operational duties of the Indonesian FPU, which involves controlling the personnel's operational activities in the field, in my role as operational officer in my contingent.

**UN News:** What led you to join the mission?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** My motivation was basically driven by my need to gain experience in the field, working for an international peacekeeping mission. I also want to enhance my knowledge about the UN and AU peacekeeping

mission operational skills. Most importantly, I want to contribute to the service of humanity, as this is enshrined in our nation's principles. I have, since my arrival in Darfur, observed that the conflict which took place here in this region requires the presence and services of dedicated peacekeepers who can provide the necessary protection and humanitarian assistance to the affected communities.

**UN News:** Describe what a typical day at the mission is like for you.

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** For me, all days here are full of amazing experiences. As an operational officer, my activities start around 8 a.m., when I take the morning roll call. From 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., I conduct daily training for the Tactical Section in our Camp. From 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., I go to Main Road and Khutum Road for inspection of our peacekeepers on duty. At around about 3 p.m., I come back to my office to lead the meeting with the different sections in my contingent and also use the time to prepare the activity schedule for the following day. From 5 p.m. until around 7 p.m., I have my physical exercises to keep my body healthy. It's important to keep the mind and body in good shape to be able to offer full services as a peacekeeper in the mission.



UN Photo/Amin Ismail

Yudhantoro says serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

**UN News:** What are some of the highlights of serving with the peacekeeping mission?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** All our operations should conform to UN DPKO [[Department of Peacekeeping Operations](#)] rules and guidelines; we must adhere to relevant SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures] that govern our operations; we must always have utmost respect for diversity and humanity in our

workplace and operational area and create good relations with other peacekeepers we interact with daily in the mission area.

**UN News:** What are some of the challenges for you personally?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** UNAMID is composed of so many civilian, police and military components from different parts of the world. That can be challenging in the operational space. All have different cultures and traditions. My challenge lies in the need to acquaint myself with the different norms and cultures of fellow peacekeepers; to respect and adapt quickly to these different work and social approaches; take on board the diverse local cultures, even in our operational plans; respect local laws; and deal with the harsh local weather!

**UN News:** What do your family and friends back home think about your service with [UN peacekeeping](#)?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** They are very proud of me because being part of an international peacekeeping mission, especially one as large as UNAMID, is a major achievement. Not everyone in my country can get an opportunity to join a UN mission. I sincerely hope that after completion of my service with UNAMID, an opportunity will be availed to me to share my experiences, including the achievements and challenges of being a UN peacekeeper, and what the mission means to the host community.

**UN News:** How would you describe your overall experience as a UN peacekeeper? Is there one particular experience/memory you will take back with you when you return home?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** Serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

The memory I will take home is one related to the decision-making skills that I have certainly acquired since my arrival here, especially during my operational interactions with my counterparts within the contingent and from other components of the mission. This is especially true in my daily work, as I have to coordinate with other peacekeepers from other countries who may have different approaches or positions to issues at hand. In such cases, I have learnt to exercise the spirit of compromise and listening to ensure that we arrive at the best solution to the problem at hand, without prejudice to the people and the country we serve.

**UN News:** What would you say to others in your home country who are considering serving with the UN?

**Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro:** I would strongly urge them to work hard to enhance their professional skills and capabilities, especially in operational conversations and decision-making; urge them to internalize their knowledge of UN SOPs and relevant guidelines; and polish up their English language skills – as you know language is the window to the world. And most importantly, I would urge them to have maximum respect for diversity and

humanity for the people they serve and serve with.

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## **UN chief condemns abduction and killing of media workers near Ecuador-Colombia border**

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has condemned the kidnapping and killing three media workers near the border between Ecuador and Colombia, confirmed on 13 April, as well as the subsequent kidnapping of two other Ecuadorian nationals.

[“These acts highlight the threats posed by criminal groups operating on the border between Ecuador and Colombia,”](#) said the Secretary-General in a statement attributable to his spokesperson.

In that regard, the UN chief welcomes the close cooperation between both countries to address the common threat, the statement added.

Mr. Guterres also reiterated the UN’s availability to support the two Governments in the areas deemed necessary.

The Secretary-General also expressed his condolences to the families of the victims, and his sympathy and solidarity to the Government and the people of Ecuador.

According to reports, the three media workers – two journalists and their driver – were taken near the village of Mataje, in northern Ecuador, on 26 March. They worked for the Ecuadorian newspaper, El Comercio.

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## **‘Give peace a chance; give children a chance,’ senior UN peacekeeping official says visiting South Sudan**

All stakeholders in South Sudan must “engage genuinely and constructively in finding a political solution” to the conflict there, a senior United Nations peacekeeping official said at the end of her four-day visit.

“There is [no military solution](#) to the conflict,” UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita told reporters in the war-ravaged country’s capital, Juba, underscoring the importance of the peace talks facilitated by the regional body, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

A key forum led by IGAD to revive the peace process, which will resume soon, offers an important opportunity that needs to be seized, she said, urging warring parties to “adhere scrupulously to the terms of the December 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement” – an accord adopted at the Forum’s previous round held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

“But peace will not be won in Addis Ababa only,” Ms. Keita said, stressing that it must be won in every state of South Sudan where politically motivated intercommunal violence has caused numerous fatalities in the past month.

“The fighting between the government and rebel forces, which broke out in several parts of Greater Upper Nile and the Bahr-El-Ghazal in the past few weeks, has to stop once and for all,” she said.

Ms. Keita said the UN is committed to supporting people-to-people peace initiatives, reconciliation efforts and the national dialogue process “provided they are genuinely inclusive, transparent and offer complementary platforms through the efforts of IGAD.”

“If they are, we will not hesitate to tell the opposition leaders: ‘Think about the country beyond your individual interest. Give peace a chance. Give your children a chance. Every opportunity for peace, every chance to save lives, has to be seized,’” she said.

David Shearer, the Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, known as [UNMISS](#), highlighted the many ways the Mission is supporting the peace process, internationally and locally, as a part of its mandate.

“We have provided logistical support to get the national dialogue to the places they need to go to, in other words helicopters and planes. We have provided financial support directly to the dialogue,” Mr. Shearer said, in response to a question about what the Mission was doing to support efforts to find a political solution.

“We have provided technical support to bring in the experience of national dialogues across the world. In those ways, we have supported the peace process. It is a critical part of our mission,” he added.

Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has spent much of its short life mired in conflict, as what began as a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted into full-blown war late in 2013.

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# Early rains expose risks for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, but worst 'yet to come,' warns UN agency

The arrival of pre-Monsoon rains in southern Bangladesh have exposed alarming level of risks for Rohingya refugees, United Nations humanitarian agencies said, urging immediate funding to ensure support and protection can be provided to hundreds of thousands in desperate need.

“The arrival of the rains first marks the start of what is going to be an incredibly challenging period for the refugees and those working to support them,” said John McCue, an official at the UN [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM), in Cox’s Bazar, where more than 700,000 refugees are residing.

“[The worst is yet to come](#) when cyclone and monsoon seasons hit in the coming weeks.”

UN agencies and partners have some heavy machinery and road clearing equipment and some more are expected to arrive. But humanitarian workers are facing severe shortage when it comes to other vital resources.

To date, just 7 per cent of the UN migration agency’s \$182 million appeal for 2018 has been secured.

“The grim reality is that most [refugees] are living under tarpaulins on highly unstable ground and are going to have to survive months of rain, floods, landslides and possible cyclones. They are in desperate need of support and protection and we simply do not have the funding we need to deliver a fraction of what is required,” said Mr. McCue.

## **Impossible to predict at-risk areas**

Furthermore, the sheer scale of the crisis and the short period of time in which it unfolded has had a major impact on the topography of the area.

Trees and vegetation had to be cleared by people to set up shelters and as a result it is now impossible to predict where the most severe weather-related damage will occur, officials say.

Conservative estimates suggest 120,000 people will be at grave risk from flooding and landslides when Monsoon proper hits.

However, one thing is certain: protecting almost a million people from the life-threatening dangers of cyclones and other disasters far exceeds current financial resources and pledges.

## **Working flat out amid limited resources**

In spite of the severe shortage of funds, IOM and partners on the ground, including the UN [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) and the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) are working flat out to prepare.

IOM is establishing sites across the camps with emergency supplies to ensure that even if areas are temporarily cut off, people will still have access to aid. Teams of porters have also been readied to bring in supplies on foot, if roads are damaged.

UN agencies are also supporting the relocation of thousands of families from areas deemed most at risk and helping communities strengthen their resilience. They are also training refugees in first aid, search and rescue, and early warning systems as part of a cyclone preparedness programme.

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## **[Liberia: Security Council seeks study of role played by UN mission in conflict resolution, political mediation](#)**

Commending the remarkable achievements made by the people and Government of Liberia to consolidate lasting peace and stability in the wake of a 1999-2003 civil war, the Security Council on Thursday asked the United Nations Secretary-General to conduct a study of the role played by its peacekeeping mission in resolving conflicts and other challenges the country has faced.

In a Presidential Statement adopted Thursday, the 15-member body said it “looks forward to the results of this study,” which can be useful when considering ways to enhance the overall effectiveness of UN peacekeeping.

The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) closed on 30 March, ending a nearly 15-year presence in the West African country, which had been devastated by 14 years of civil war.

In the statement, the Council welcomed the continued implementation of the peacebuilding plan for Liberia submitted by UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) and stressed that the UN will continue to be an important partner of Liberia after the closure of UNMIL.

Addressing the Council, a senior UN peacekeeping official commended the people of Liberia whose resilience was the decisive factor in turning the page on crisis and conflict, and whose determination will ensure that the

hard-won peace is sustained.

“For nearly 25 years, the situation in Liberia was so concerning that it has been a constant presence on this Council’s agenda. But the country has turned an important corner,” said Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.



UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Liberia.

Earlier this year, President George Weah succeeded Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who had led Liberia since 2006, marking the first peaceful transfer of power between democratically-elected leaders in 71 years.

Mr. Zuev said that, now, with the people and Government of Liberia, lies the important work of continuing to build a nation – a unified, reconciled nation with an accountable Government committed to addressing corruption within its ranks, a nation where all citizens share the benefits of Liberia’s abundant natural and human resources, and a nation fully responsible for its own destiny, with institutions and a Government providing basic guarantees – of security, of protection, of services – to its citizens.

“The conclusion of UNMIL’s mandate [...] is a remarkable demonstration of confidence that the country is moving steadfastly along the path of sustained peace,” he stressed.

The meeting was also addressed by Deputy Ambassador Irina Schoulgin Nyoni of Sweden, which is the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission’s Liberia Configuration, as well as Chid Liberty, the chief executive officer of “Liberty & Justice.”