

Bangladesh 'fully committed' to UN peacekeeping as vital element of global peace and security – UN Force Commander

7 February 2018 – UN peacekeeping is a “very important component” of keeping the world safe and secure, and Bangladesh remains “fully committed” to contributing men – and increasingly women – to serve.

That’s according to Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh, who is currently the Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, which goes by the acronym UNFICYP.

Maj. Gen. Humayan began his long and distinguished UN career in the hostile environment of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), in Bosnia, serving in the capital Sarajevo, which was besieged by Bosnian-Serb forces during the mid-1990s.

He also served as a Military Observer with the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), from 2002 to 2003.

He has served as Brigadier General and Director of Military Operations for the Bangladesh Army, and is currently Commandant of his country’s Military Academy.

Highlighting Bangladesh’s commitment to foster women peacekeepers and police, and increase the numbers who serve by 2020 and beyond, he told UN News from his base in Cyprus that it was “virtually impossible” to protect civilians who rely on UN peacekeeping missions around the world, without the participation of women.

He said there were 157 Bangladeshi women peacekeepers currently serving, and more than 1,400 had been deployed throughout the world in total over the years, including an all-female Bangladeshi Formed Police Unit that served in Haiti between 2015 and 2017.

“Personally, I believe that it’s very important that you have gender parity, particularly the participation of female peacekeepers,” he said.

He added that in today’s modern “multi-dimensional” peacekeeping missions focussing on civilian protection, “your situational awareness is much better and naturally your performance will also be better.”

He said that majority-Muslim Bangladesh was committed to having what he called a “female engagement platoon” in every mission where they contribute troops and police.

Maj. Gen. Humayan said there was widespread public support for women playing

an active role in public service across a wide range of sectors.

Women officers began serving in the Bangladeshi Army back in 2003.

He also praised the “tremendous” support that Bangladeshi blue helmets receive at home, for their work across ten peacekeeping missions, as it currently stands.

“The Bangladesh Government is always more than willing to make sure that the contingents who are deployed; they are properly trained, properly equipped so they are fit for purpose – fit for the mission.”

He said that despite suffering the loss of 135 peacekeepers on active duty over the years, Bangladesh was proud of the fact that it is consistently among the top three troop-contributing countries, or TCCs.

“Bangladeshi people are aware of what kind of contributions” are being made each day, “ensuring peace and stability in the global perspective, and I think they are very proud of us.”

AUDIO: Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh, Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, highlights the decades-long commitment of troops and police contingents from his country to UN Peacekeeping.