

Central African Republic: UN honours fallen 'blue helmets'

12 May 2017 – The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)) held a memorial ceremony today in honour of five peacekeepers who lost their lives after their convoy was attacked in the south-eastern part of the country earlier this week.

On a special visit to the Central African Republic, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, [UN Mission in Colombia, presided over the ceremony](#), in the presence of Government officials and alongside the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Najat Rochdi, and MINUSCA Force Commander Lt. Gen. Balla Keita.

The deadly attack on the MINUSCA convoy – perpetrated by suspected anti-Balaka elements – occurred Monday, 8 May, near the village of Yogofongo. During the exchange of fire, one Cambodian peacekeeper and eight anti-Balaka elements were killed. There were a number of injured on both sides. Three of the four peacekeepers reported missing after the fire fight were found dead the next day. The fourth was found dead yesterday.

Mr. Lacroix paid tribute to “the [five soldiers](#) serving under the UN flag and who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of peace,” emphasizing that “their sacrifice must not be forgotten and will not be in vain.” He saluted the courage of the 10 Cambodian and Moroccan peacekeepers injured in the attack and wished them a speedy recovery.

MINUSCA peacekeepers undertake a difficult and honourable endeavour. Their critical work protecting civilians, opening roadways and building bridges helps to bring unity to a divided country.



Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix visits a peacekeeper injured in an attack on the convoy on 8 May 2017 in southeast Central African Republic (CAR). Photo: MINUSCA

Addressing mourners, Mr. Lacroix said: “This attack is an attack against the United Nations’ ideals of peace and security that these soldiers defend here in the Central African Republic. This attack must not go unpunished and the perpetrators of this act of extreme cruelty must be prosecuted.”

“Those who accept to work in difficult conditions show remarkable courage and I am humbled by the courage of the personnel of the Mission,” said Mr. Lacroix, who laid wreaths on the coffins of the slain peacekeepers during the ceremony.

The ceremony at the Mission's headquarters in in the capital, Bangui, was attended by senior Central African Government officials, the diplomatic corps, humanitarian community representatives and hundreds of deeply saddened UN personnel in CAR, the Mission reported.

Earlier in the afternoon, Mr. Lacroix visited the survivors of the attack at the MINUSCA hospital.

The remains of the fallen peacekeepers will be transferred to a UN regional support base in Entebbe, Uganda, from where they will be flown home to Cambodia and Morocco.