

## [Spike in attacks on 'blue helmets' means UN peace operations must adapt, says peacekeeping chief](#)

24 January 2018 – With United Nations 'blue helmets' facing increasingly grave threats, including armed groups with no interest in peace, the UN peacekeeping chief called on Wednesday for greater political engagement and leadership from the Security Council and the world body's Member countries to ensure UN troops – and the populations they serve – are better protected.

"We are being attacked by the armed groups who are looting, killing, raping and they have no interest in peaceful solution," Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, told reporters in New York at a briefing on a new report on reducing casualties among UN peacekeepers.

"So, it is because we have these very different dangerous environments that we have to change," he said, calling specifically for deployment of troops that are well-trained, well-equipped and with the right mindset.

Doing so, Mr. Lacroix underlined, will not only help reduce fatalities, but will also facilitate the implementation of mandates assigned to UN missions and protect civilian populations.

In November 2017, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres had appointed Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz of Brazil, who held senior positions at a number of UN peacekeeping missions, to lead a high-level review to identify why the UN has had so many casualties caused by acts of violence in recent years, and what should be done to reduce these casualties.

Made public on Tuesday, the report states that with the influx of armed groups, extremists, organized crime, and other criminal elements and threats, the 'blue helmet' and UN flag no longer offer "natural" protection to peacekeepers.

**VIDEO:** Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix talks about the 'Cruz report'.

Describing the overall report a "very, very candid assessment" of the problems and what should be done to address them, Mr. Lacroix said that an [action plan](#) has been developed to implement it.

"The 'Cruz report' and the action plan that we will implement, are about the reducing fatalities in peacekeeping but they touch most issues that are relevant to performance. They address issues such as are we implementing our own rules even down to the basic levels – are we playing by our own book," he added.

The plan focuses on three key areas- – operational behaviour and mindset; capacity building and readiness; and support issues – and includes immediate UN Headquarters and field-level actions.

Since 1948, more than 3,500 personnel have lost their lives serving in UN peace operations with 943 due to acts of violence. Since 2013, casualties have spiked, with 195 deaths in violent attacks, more than during any other five-year period in history.