This year marks 71 years of service and sacrifice by UN Peacekeepers. In this time, the UN has helped countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Ireland is proud of being the only nation to have a continuous presence on UN and UN-mandated peace support operations since 1958, with Irish peacekeepers highly respected internationally.

"United Nations peacekeeping is a proven investment in global peace, security and prosperity. Together, let us pledge to do all we can to enable that mission to succeed." — UN Secretary-General António Guterres

UN Peacekeepers work not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians and promote human rights. It is a truly global partnership, with over 100,000 peacekeepers from over 120 countries, in 14 operations globally. In total, 628 Irish Peacekeepers have been deployed since 1948. Of those, 90 have given their lives in the name of peace. Many Irish Peacekeepers have been stationed in Lebanon with UNIFIL, now in its 41st year.

An emotional tribute was given in Lebanon by veteran Irish peacekeeper John O'Mahony last

year, commemorating the dead, including 47 Irish men and women. "Seeing south Lebanon today, I know that the service and sacrifice of thousands of UNIFIL men and women – especially the 312 UNIFIL Peacekeepers who paid the ultimate price – have not gone in vain," he said.

Today in Lebanon Irish Peacekeepers are inspiring hope, both at home and in the local community.

Speaking of Ireland's involvement, Private Kiev Grey said: "They are obviously behind us... it's great for them to see us in a different light, over in a different country, peacekeeping." While Sargeant Pierce O'Reagen, talking about the local community, noted that, "when we look at these projects, we look for something that we hope they'll benefit from." Watch the video below for more.

The General Assembly designated 29 May as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. On this day in 1948, the first UN peacekeeping mission named the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) began operations in Palestine. Every year, we honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace, thanking them for their service and sacrifice. We pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and courage of all the men and women serving in UN peacekeeping operations.

Personal anecdotes from former Irish Peacekeepers with UNIFIL: bit.ly/2Ue0F0V

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