

Question: This month marks 60 years since the beginning of the peacekeeping force in Cyprus. In light of the ongoing tension at the buffer zone as Mr. Stewart has mentioned what is your opinion for its work over the years? Thank you.

Lacroix: When we look at the 60th year anniversary of UNFICYP, obviously there are mixed feelings because on the one hand there should had been political settlement on Cyprus, and this is ultimately what the UN is trying for, and the same time the role that UNFICYP is being playing over the years has been critical in terms of avoiding escalations in terms of liaising with the parties. And again, this is a case with the two parties need an intermediary. They are not talking to each other, at least on these various matters that UNFICYP addresses.

So, I think it's an opportunity to both pay tribute to our peacekeepers UNFICYP have been doing over the years, of course with fatalities, because human lives had paid for that and at the same time really urge for more progress in the political process so that we don't have to commemorate another such anniversary 60 years down the line.

Question: Turkish Cypriots claimed that UN peace force is just protecting the island. They are not really looking for making peace in the island, so 60 years have proved that. What does the peace mission should do more to establish real peace in the island?

Lacroix: I think you have a division of labor in Cyprus. The UN is one, but on the one you have the political process with the Secretary-General Envoy who is currently about to return to Cyprus, and the Peacekeeping Operation with our friend Colin Steward at the head of this operation and with the mandate which is essentially about making sure that ceasefire would hold at any incident will not lead to escalation and constantly liaising the parties to that effect. That is really what UNFICYP is doing. And of course, is critical for the political effort because if you have escalations, if the ceasefire is threatened in Cyprus, then all conditions for political efforts would be seriously undermined. So, there is complementarity, and at the same time the roles are different.