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Khartoum, 28 May 2007: Khartoum – The fifth International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers will be marked on 29 May at UN Headquarters in New York, as well as at UNMIS offices in Sudan and other peacekeeping missions around the world.

This year's commemorative ceremonies come at a time when the services of UN peacekeepers, both members of the military and civilians, are in greater demand than ever. There are currently more than 100,000 personnel from 115 countries serving in 18 peacekeeping operations on four continents.

In Sudan, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) will celebrate the event at its headquarters in Khartoum, as well as in Juba, Malakal, Kadugli, Wau, Bentiu, Abyei and Ed Damazin.

Though the ceremonies are a celebration of civilian and military United Nations peacekeepers who have served, and continue to serve, around the world, they are also a solemn occasion. The events in Sudan will include formal flag-raising ceremonies, and the reading of a Message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon. A one minute silence will be observed, to pay tribute to all those who have died in the service of UN peacekeeping, since the first UN Peacekeeping operation (the UN Truce Supervision Organization, UNTSO) began operations in Palestine on 29 May 1948.

In addition, military peacekeepers serving in different locations throughout Sudan will conduct parades, and in some locations, hold free medical or veterinary clinics to benefit the local populations. Peacekeepers in each location are also planning to hold friendly sports events, with the participation of local communities. In Khartoum, a photographic exhibition showing the work of civilian and military UNMIS peacekeepers will be displayed in the entrance of the main headquarters building.

Miraya FM (UNMIS Radio) will broadcast special programmes dedicated to the work of UNMIS peacekeepers throughout Sudan. These will include short sound portraits of some of the Sudanese and international staff who work in UNMIS, and live interviews in the evening with the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Taye-Brook Zerihoun, and the UNMIS Force-Commander, Lieutenant-General Jasbir Lidder, both of whom will participate in the commemorative ceremonies in Juba.

There are currently 9304 UN military peacekeepers and 648 police officers serving in Sudan. In addition, 2562 Sudanese and 1160 international civilians (including 191 UN Volunteers) from 116 countries are serving here.

For further information on International UN Peacekeepers Day in Sudan or around the world, contact:

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