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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
THIMPHU

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PRESS RELEASE

Police Officers to Start Participating in UN Peacekeeping

As part of Bhutan's ongoing UN peacekeeping engagement, six Officers from the Royal Bhutan Police will soon be leaving for a one year assignment at the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This is the first time that police officers from Bhutan will be participating in a UN peacekeeping mission under the UN Police (UNPOL).

The officers have all been selected based on their experience and training. They have also undergone pre-selection interview conducted by the UNPOL. The six police peacekeepers are Lt. Col Passang Dorji, Lt. Col. Dorji Khandu, Lt. Col. Jatshola, Lt. Col. Wangchula, Lt. Col. Karma Sonam and Capt. Nono, who is also the first female UN peacekeeper from Bhutan. As peacekeeping has evolved to encompass a broader humanitarian approach, women have increasingly become part of the peacekeeping operations. The Royal Government remains committed to gradually encouraging the participation of more women in peacekeeping missions in pursuance to UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

In an Audience to the six RBP Officers, His Majesty The King said that Bhutan's participation in UN peacekeeping is a matter of national pride. His Majesty said to the officers that they must represent the country well by being a model of excellence, and conduct themselves with the highest standards of professional ethics.

Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay also met with the Officers and congratulated them for being the first police peacekeepers from Bhutan. Lyonchhen said that Bhutan has always endeavored to be a responsible and an active member of the United Nations, one that is committed to the cause of international peace and security, and respect for the rule of law. Therefore, as a small country and after 43 years of membership to the United Nations, Lyonchhen said that it is indeed a proud moment for the country to be able to now contribute through direct engagement in UN peacekeeping operations to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Police personnel taking part in UN peacekeeping missions provide technical and operational support to the host state police, assisting them to perform core public order and law enforcement functions. They also contribute to the rebuilding and strengthening of the host state police and law enforcement agencies on policing functions, development of specialist skills, and the training of police leaders.



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Police were first used in a UN peace operation in 1960. Today there are over 12,500 international police personnel from 89 countries deployed to 16 UN peacekeeping missions. As of 30 September there were 4434 military personnel, 104 military observers and 1410 police personnel at UNMIL.

While there are no reports of any suspected or confirmed Ebola cases among UN police contingents in Liberia, the safety of the Bhutanese peacekeepers remains the foremost priority of the Royal Government. The peacekeepers have all been briefed and advised to strictly observe the UN issued Ebola prevention guidelines and protocol such as avoiding direct physical contact with infected or deceased persons, washing hands frequently with soap and water and other basic precautionary actions. With the right precautions the risk of being affected is low as transmission is only through direct physical contact with a person who is ill or who has died. The Bhutanese peacekeepers are not expected to come in contact with or interact with Ebola patients. Upon their arrival at the mission area the officers will also be provided with some training in terms of how to engage and conduct themselves in the light of the Ebola epidemic. They will also be issued with protective gear. On 19 November the World Health Organization announced that the number of Ebola cases is no longer increasing in Guinea and Liberia. The Ebola transmission has also been successfully halted in Nigeria and Senegal.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs