

## **UNITED NATIONS POLICE PREVENT CONFLICT AND SUSTAIN PEACE**

**By Luís Carrilho**

On 21 June, police executives and international experts from around the world will gather at United Nations Headquarters to articulate a common vision for United Nations Police to effectively meet contemporary challenges. Member States will be asked to nominate their finest police officers and, together with the United Nations, further refine their skills needed to be most effective in today's globalized environment, where threats originating thousands of miles away have a direct impact on the safety and security of your citizens and communities. This is an important meeting, because the work they do in the field couldn't be more significant.

More than 11,000 police women and men are currently serving under the United Nations flag in 16 peace operations, making United Nations Police the largest, most diverse global police service in the world. These police professionals provide a full range of critical operational and capacity-building support to their host-State counterparts. They assist in delivering basic public safety.

United Nations Police also help countries recovering from conflict to rebuild their own law enforcement services and institutions. The Police Component in the United Nations Mission in Liberia contributed to peaceful elections and the transfer of power in the West African nation by supporting the comprehensive reform of the Liberia National Police and setting Liberia on a positive path for the future. United Nations Police help build operational capacities in places, such as Darfur, where we provided 80 training courses to 720 policing volunteers from internally displaced persons camps. During the past 12 months, United Nations Police also implemented over 25 awareness raising seminars and training sessions about sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) to women in the Central African Republic and trained 179 Malian police counterparts in the investigation of SGBV crimes. United Nations Police protect and serve, but they also build.

Establishing sustainable governance and restoring the rule of law constitute core elements of lasting peace and security. Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions stresses the need for all Member States to have proper access to justice and the rule of law, to end human rights abuses, such as violence, terrorism, discrimination and organized crime. This is a very slow and difficult process, but is absolutely pivotal to prevent conflict and sustain peace. There cannot be sustainable human security and economic and social development in the absence of the rule of law.

United Nations Police needs help from its partners. We need Member States to support our efforts by providing more police officers with specialized skillsets. More female police officers as well as more resources are essential so that United Nations Police is able to translate lessons

from the field into guidance and to advance the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping, our global doctrinal base, to successfully meet contemporary international police peacekeeping demands.

The United Nations Police have a key role to play in keeping communities around the world safe and secure, and so do Member States. United Nations Police have undergone a dramatic transformation over the last half-century. From their first deployment to the United Nations Mission in the Congo in 1960, to the advent of complex, multidimensional peacekeeping operations in the 1990s, to the dynamic, full-fledged police service of today. In these complex and unpredictable scenarios, one thing is certain: the United Nations Police will continue to play a major role in achieving international peace and security in the years to come.

*The author is the United Nations Police Adviser. He previously served as United Nations Police Commissioner in the Central African Republic, in Haiti and in Timor-Leste.*