

THE OBSERVER

FOR PEACE IN KASHMIR



**United Nations Military Observer Group
in India and Pakistan**

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United Nations
Peace Operations

From the Desk of the Head of Mission/ Chief Military Observer



I am pleased to associate myself with 'The Observer Magazine' which I consider a useful tool for UNMOGIP.

This third edition is a follow-up to the two earlier publications of 2012 and 2014. I pay tribute to the praiseworthy novelty of Major General Young-Bum Choi, my predecessor and his team for setting the tone. Each peacekeeping mission is unique with its challenges and peculiarities. UNMOGIP is no exception. With its vast ground area of responsibility, characterized by rugged terrain and extreme climate, I am impressed by the abundant human energies that the relatively few UNMOs of UNMOGIP have exerted so far. UNMOs have operated effectively from our UN Field Stations that are widely dispersed across the fields in order to observe developments along the Line of Control (LOC), in line with the mandate of UNMOGIP. We undertook field trips, conducted area reconnaissance and carried out observation post duties. We also investigated complaints of alleged ceasefire violations and processed them for delivery to the

UN Headquarters, including petitions as and when received. I commend all, for the visible presence and the sustained efforts. Our collective will has magnified our strengths to help make our goal attainments meaningful. With enormous support from our Mission Support and Security Section, including assistance from all local staff and the Army Liaison Officers respectively in Srinagar and Islamabad, we have played our part towards our mandate implementation. I recognize all women of UNMOGIP, including our four UNMO womenfolk at the moment. Our October 2014 Headquarters' movement from Srinagar to Islamabad was efficiently conducted and I look forward same for the upcoming April 2015 relocation back to Srinagar. I am also satisfied with the last UNMO Conference which served as useful tool for lessons learnt. Senior management will continue to encourage a learning organization, promote sound staff mindset and cherish best practices. We will inspire physical well-being through various forms of sporting activities. 'A sound body they say, houses a sound mind'.

UNMOGIP today, like years before, continues to contribute effectively to peace. I urge all to engender a dynamic work culture through teamwork, impartiality and optimism, in order to forge ahead for world peace. Let us also uphold the sanctity of UN values always. Be role models wherever you are and back your efforts up with determination and resilience.

I am thankful to the two host nations of India and Pakistan and their respective authorities with whom we work. Equally, I appreciate the collaborative support from all other UN Agencies in the two host countries; especially the efforts of the UN designated officials (DOs) of both Pakistan and India. I appreciate all the high level dignitaries who visited UNMOGIP for their fruitful interactions. I convey special thanks to the troop contributing countries to UNMOGIP namely Chile, Croatia, Finland, Ghana, Italy, Philippines, Switzerland, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand and Uruguay. I thank most especially the UN Headquarters for the regular support to UNMOGIP.

I strongly believe that if "We Go Together" as espoused in our slogan, we can positively stay on course.

Maj Gen Delali Sakyi
Chief Military Observer/Head of
Mission

My year in UNMOGIP

When I was young and impatient, my dad used to say: “The beginning is always difficult – at the end of all the hard work”.

So, when I arrived in Islamabad, at almost 50 and still impatient, that phrase echoed in my mind. The most challenging period luckily didn't last long. The warm welcome and good rapport among UNMOGIP personnel enabled rapid transition to work

and supported my drive to take up my responsibilities.

It felt as if I were meeting the world in the first two months after my arrival. Getting acquainted with staff, familiarizing with routines and representing CMO at receptions consumed most of my time. What was left was spent celebrating Christmas and New Year celebrations with Hunk and Meat hosted by Fijians of UNMOGIP and UNDSS.

By the end of December I was

already making Field Station visits. Not only did I enjoy them but were useful for the organization as well. My colleagues got to know me and I built a connection with them that is usually required to learn techniques, tactics and the environment. I am thankful to my superiors at UNMOGIP for their support to make these Field Station visits.

During the Field Station visits I realized that it was important to bridge cultural differences and so



The writer (former Deputy Chief Military Observer, DCMO) with an UNMO and Pakistan Army Driver



The writer coming face to face with a landslide en route to Muzaffarabad in February 2014

to make an effort in this direction, on the occasion of Finland's Winter War Memorial Day I made a presentation on Finnish identity for all staff members in Islamabad.

In a 66 year old mission such as the UNMOGIP, communication remains the key to success. It's vital to recognize different cultures, different language skills and different length of experience in the mission. I say this from my own experience because my understanding of "Kashmir dispute", improved only after my first couple of months in Indian Administered side of LoC (IAK).

It is tremendously important to understand all standpoints when we at UNMOGIP are playing our part.

In the months that followed, we handled UNMOGIP in HQ relocation, CMO's change and Indian Visa issue, New Delhi Office vacation, worst floods in a century in Srinagar and biannual UNMO Conference. It went smooth.

My year at UNMOGIP gave me a chance to learn from my superiors and colleagues. Here, I want to thank all UNMOGIP personnel for their professionalism, commitment and friendship towards me.

Col Jouko Rauhala
Former Deputy Chief Military
Observer

Message from New Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO)

Dear military observers, civil personnel and all readers, in the beginning I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at UNMOGIP for very warm and friendly welcome to the Headquarters.

Let me introduce myself first. I am Colonel Arto Ikonen from Finland. I am 50 years old and I am blessed to have a lovely family that includes my wife Päivi and three daughters aged 23, 20 and 16 years. Jogging is my hobby but I also like other forms of physical activity. I think being physically active is my passion.

I have worked for 26 years in the Finnish Army, Army Command and Defense Command. I participated in KFOR operation in Kosovo in 2007. My last post was Commanding Officer in Lapland Air Defense Regiment during 2013-2014. This Regiment is located in the Arctic Circle in Northern Finland and it is just 3 kilometers away from the Workshop of Santa Claus. The weather conditions in Finland are really different and I'm lucky to be here where there is more sun and less snow.

Before arriving here, I read as much as I could about the history of Kashmir area and the mission of UNMOGIP. But as you probably know it is only after intensive work



opportunities with colleagues in HQ, visiting and participating in different tasks at the Field Stations and meeting with local authorities one gets a better understanding of the situation than one can get from just reading. Being on the ground also helps perform tasks more efficiently and effectively. Therefore I look forward to start visiting Field Stations and other areas of our responsibility very soon.

Looking back at the varied personal and professional experiences I have had in life I understand that being humble and focused achieve results. Sometimes the destination may appear far away, but it is always very important to keep going and striving for our aims. With renewed enthusiasm and determination I have assumed my responsibilities. I am happy to

know that the Mission here has been doing a great job for many years. In the same way personnel have been performing their duties very well for a long time, so I am encouraged to take the good practices forward from here. So let's continue with the good work. I look forward to close cooperation with all the competent and accomplished colleagues. In the end, I wish to thank my predecessor Col Jouko Rauhala for the hand over and help.

Col Arto Ikonen
Deputy Chief Military
Observer

From the Chief of Mission Support Desk



“Welcome my CMS for UNMOGIP” This one sentence proved to be a life changing experience for me.

After liquidating United Nations Integrated Peace building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) I was quite certain I would be returning to the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) where I was to serve as the Chief Administrative Services (CAS). Going back and forth I was also offered the assignment to liquidate the Mission in Burundi. On March 18, 2014 when I went to meet with the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support (USG/DFS), Ms Ameerah Haq, I was pleasantly surprised to learn from her that my destination was no longer Burundi but Pakistan and India where I would be the Chief of Mission Support (CMS) for UNMOGIP.

This was a challenge for me in more ways than one. Not only because UNMOGIP had never been on my radar but also because UNMOGIP had been without a substantive CMS for almost a year. On 04 July, 2014, I set off from Sierra Leone for Islamabad. Upon

arrival warmth awaited me. After enjoying a welcome that extended over two days that included a sumptuous Pakistani dinner hosted by the OIC - Mission Support Mr. Pedro Burgos and staff, on 07 July, 2014, I assumed my function as the Chief of Mission Support. I find it important to talk here about UNMOGIP briefly for the benefit of our readers. In January 1948, the Security Council adopted resolution 39 (1948) and established the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan to investigate the facts pursuant to Article-34 of the Charter of the United Nations and to exercise any mediatory influence likely to raise difficulties in the dispute regarding the status of Kashmir. At present, the task of UNMOGIP is to observe developments pertaining to the strict observance of the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 and to report thereon to the Secretary General. Mission Support continued to adjust its structure in order to effectively implement UNMOGIP mandate as outlined in Security Council resolutions 47 (1948) and 91 (1951).

We continue to enhance inter mission cooperation with Missions in the region especially UNAMA. The Mission is hosting UNAMA Liaison office while at the same time UNAMA continues to provide support in areas where UNMOGIP does not have the resources and expertise. Also, the Regional Ombudsman Office in Bangkok, Thailand and the Inter Conduct and Discipline Unit (ICDU) based in

Kuwait continue to visit the Mission and discuss with staff issues of conflict, conduct and discipline that need to be addressed. The Mission participates actively in the Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting as well as engage the representatives of the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and Defense Attaches (DAO) through regular contacts and providing information regarding UNMOGIP.

Our journey towards success is made possible through the cooperation of all stakeholders who are committed to achieving peace in the Kashmir Region including the host nations of India and Pakistan. We salute all our partners for their support and cooperation with us. UNMOGIP is a Mission with limited resources but the staff are dedicated and self-motivated to always work harder for the implementation of the Mission mandate. Although the Mission mandate has not changed since 1948 the requirements for Mission Support have changed. We now have to adjust to the new challenges that come up in the course of our operation. I feel proud of UNMOGIP staff who have all risen up to the occasion and have placed themselves in a position to meet the new demands. Together we can make UNMOGIP achieve its mandate.

Nester Odaga-Jalomayo
Chief of Mission Support

Driving in UNMOGIP

An Observer Mission With a Difference

Military Observers are more or less passengers and this is indeed unique and different from other missions of the UN.

Every prospective military officer nominated for observer mission will think of perfecting his/her driving skills before embarking on the mission. This is because driving test is taken seriously by the UN and indeed DPKO. Consequently, passing one's driving test among other requirements is a panacea to serving in almost all missions as United Nations Military Observer. A failure may mean having to be given second or third opportunities to pass. If however, all the chances are exhausted, repatriation may be the only option left. To avoid this passing one's driving test is not traded for any other thing. Well, the story in UNMOGIP is quite different. In spite of feverish preparations and anticipations to surmount the dreaded driving test associated with observer missions, all one needs to know is the transport system and its unique arrangements in the Mission. During 'In-Briefing and Orientation Training', one is told that UNMOs are not permitted to drive. The reason is never satisfactorily given. In any case most people do not bother to find out the reasons behind this prohibition. By the way, why would anyone worry if there are excellent arrangements in place to ensure effectiveness at work and comfort in moving from one place to another? Ah, speaking of driving test, have we thought of horse riding test for places that horses are still the means of transport. Anyway, maybe not this age and time. Going through the archives of UNMOGIP, I found a picture of Uruguayan Officer (Major Emilio Altieri) riding a horse while on patrols along the cease-fire line in the Kashmir Region in 1955. Your



The Writer with a Pakistani Army Driver

imagination of such a picture could well be that of mine. Anyway, that was in the past. The question now is why do Military Observers in UNMOGIP not allowed to drive? Perhaps, the most plausible answers given have to do with the nature of the terrain in the AOR of UNMOGIP.

What is it about the terrain that should prevent Military Observers from driving? Well, this is the area that is home to the Himalayas. The terrain is indeed rugged and winding with frightening steep slopes. The roads running through the mountains are restricted as result of natural imposition. It could be that the forebears dreaded the dangerous mountainous region and decided otherwise in order to avoid registering fatalities. The decision to let the Army drivers of the host countries to drive can only be applauded. The Army drivers are familiar with the area and therefore conversant with the road network. The fear of height does not arise. Just see them behind the steering wheel and you will nod in concurrence.

The provision of Army drivers is one of the contributions being made by the host countries to facilitate and support the Mission. The drivers are disciplined and professionally minded. They have high sense of duty and always respond promptly to all assignments. They also exhibit immaculate professionalism in



UNMOGIP Vehicle on Area Reconnaissance Patrols in the Kashmir Region

discharging their duties. They are selfless, committed and friendly. The drivers who are not known by the outside world are temporarily attached to the Mission for periodic rotational basis. They are given orders through laid down arrangements regarding pick up and drop off timings of personnel at the Headquarters. All other requests are communicated to them well ahead and they accordingly honor them. Of course, provisions are made for emergency situations. In the Field Stations, they drive UNMOs in all their assignments from Area Reconnaissance and Observation Post Duties through Field Trips to Investigation Sites. Their work and contribution to UNMOGIP operations are impeccable. These unassuming Army drivers will one day pat their shoulders if an eventual peace is attained in the Kashmir Region. Make a request and an Army driver with a UN vehicle will be there on time to take you to your desired destination. For the selfless services of these drivers UNMOGIP thrives. Military Observers are more or less passengers and this is indeed unique and different from other missions of the UN.

Lt Col DD Gbedawo
Military Assistant to Chief Military
Observer/Head Of Mission

UNMOGIP Family



Head of Mission/
Chief Military
Observer (HMO/
CMO), Deputy Chief
Military Observer
(DCMO) And Chief
Mission Support
(CMS) With United
Nations Military
Observers (UNMOs)



Head of Mission/
Chief Military
Observer (HoM/CMO)
with International Staff



Head of Mission/
Chief Military
Observer (HoM/CMO)
with National Staff

Troop Contributing Countries as at January 2015



UNMOGIP in pictures



UNMOGIP HQs in Srinagar



Croatian UNMOs



Pakistan Army band performing at UNMOGIP HQ Islamabad



Saluting the UN flag



Investigation Workshop



HoM/CMO awarding medal to a female UNMO



Farewell for outgoing UNMO at UNMOGIP HQs Islamabad



CMS presenting a token to visiting Chief Peacekeeping Operations Support Section



UNMOGIP Cricket team



Flag Lowering Ceremony for outgoing Italian UNMOs



The Deputy Chief Military Observer welcoming the Head of the Swiss Armed Forces International Relations, Brigadier General Peter Wanner to UNMOGIP

At the UN Field Station in Kotli

Greetings from UNFS Kotli!

UNFS Kotli is one of the UN Field Stations on the Pakistani side of UNMOGIP's area of responsibility. The city of Kotli (or Cotly, as known in Britain) is located in the middle of UNMOGIP AoR, approximately, 75 km far away from Islamabad. If you travel to Kotli by UN route, the distance will be longer and you will spend 5-6 hrs on the road.

Kotli is the main town of Kotli



Kotli Field Station



Tata Pani Area



Aerial view of Kotli Township

district, which covers 1862 km² and with the population of about 640.000 citizens. The area is mainly mountainous area with altitudes up to 3000 m. The road conditions along the area of Kotli are average for Kashmir but remote rural areas sometimes are unreachable by car. Kotli is located in the valley bound with river Poonch.

The climate in Kotli area is moderate. In summer time temperature goes up to 40 Celsius and during winter temperature ranges from 12 to -2 degrees Celsius. June is the hottest month of the year.

UNFS Kotli, like some other stations, is located inside military compound. The compound has two yards that provide the parking area for our vehicles. It also has two buildings which serve the purpose of accommodating UNMOs. It has all facilities for cooking and recreation. Finnish Sauna, Pakistan Army medical facility and a church add to the quality of modest life within the compound. The station's main office is well equipped and



Office

so performing our tasks is easier. Radio communication assets and telephones are easily approachable because they are our connection with the outside world and with our main HQ. Internet is crucial media for contact with families and in UNFS Kotli our Internet works well. Daily routine at UNFS Kotli is not different from daily routines at other FSs. Team Kotli conducts Area Recces, Field Trips to Pakistan Army units and Observation Posts with the accent on night observation posts, close to the Line of Control. The most challenging and demanding jobs definitely are investigating

alleged cease fire violation.

This involves interactions with the local population and Pakistani units but generates a lot of paper work. Together with the opportunity to contribute in maintaining peace in Kashmir, we are awarded a chance to see a lot of beautiful places along the task routes.

This is UNFS Kotli in short. I hope it encourages UNMOs to fulfill their "Posting preferences" for Kotli.

Welcome to Kotli!

Lt Col Zlatan Sever

Serving as a UN Military Observer in Sialkot

The life of a United Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) is much more than just being a soldier on patrols around his Area of Operations (AoR) and reporting back on what is necessary for planning and helpful for the Commander in making decisions. The only difference is that we perform our mandated task without guns.

As a Military Observer, life starts from the very day you arrive at Islamabad International Airport, Pakistan, until the end of your tour of duty.

Serving as Military Observer involves sacrifice. Being away from those who are dear to us is always the hardest part. But there is also a lighter side to it which is full of excitement, challenges, and rewards, as we explore the way of life of Pakistan and Indian people in performance of our mandated task as Peacekeepers.

Coping up with a diverse unit of different nationalities in the Field Station adds to the charm of serving as Military Observer.

Life in the Field Station is generally simple, you just have to maintain your presence in your AoR as representative of the United Nation and ambassador of good will, collect information by observation or

by talking to the locals and the local authorities and report to Headquarters. Gaining respect and trust of people is important because at the end of the day, crucial information for planning and decision making of Security Council comes from the locals.

Our tasks include Area Recce to collect information about the situation of a certain area related to the Ceasefire Agreement; day and night Observation Post (OP) and investigation by gathering evidence regarding ceasefire violations and eventually reporting to HQ.

UNFS Sialkot is a five hour drive southeast of Islamabad. It is located inside cantonment area, where the 15th Division HQ and the 8th Division HQ of the Pakistan Army are located. The field task is no different from the other stations. Aside from normal Area Recce and investigation, it is more focused on border crossing of UNMOGIP personnel and vehicles from Pakistan to India and through the Border Crossing Point (BCP) located along the working boundary of both countries.

Life as a Military Observer has its own rewards. Being one of the selected few to work with UNMOGIP is very prestigious. At UNFS Sialkot, one can enjoy being in a clean and developed

area an example of which are the fast food outlets nearby. One draws satisfaction not only from completing the day's work all alone but also by being able to talk with using internet and going to breathtaking places where others fear or fail to go. Meeting with a total stranger who invites you to his house over "chai", local tea with milk, is heartwarming. But being able to contribute to achievement of UNMOGIP's mandate in keeping the peace between Pakistan and India is a unique reward.

Challenges unique to every Field Station will always test your limit. But remember to approach these challenges with confidence and positive attitude.

Maj Aladdin Caluza
UN Military Observer -
Sialkot



Border Crossing Point between Jammu and Sialkot

Life in UNMOGIP Liaison Office in New Delhi



Liaison Officer with UNMOGIP Staff

The premises of New Delhi Liaison Office of UNMOGIP were recently moved to a new location, closer to the Gandhi International Airport. The new office is easy to reach by taxi or tuc-tuc. It is located in the southern part of New Delhi in Vasant Vihar, a posh residential area, close to several Embassies and Diplomatic Agencies. Moving the office premises successfully, was possible because of careful planning, involvement and collective dedicated efforts of CMO and all Civilian Staff in coordination with SOIC and AA. It was a well-coordinated effort that led to the smooth and well organized shifting. Special thanks go to local civilian UN employees in New Delhi for their great efforts. The new independent bungalow feels fresh and has ample space to accommodate the office of the CMO/SOIC and AA/UNMOGIP separately on the ground floor, besides housing the Guest room and the Rest Room of SOIC on the



Liaison Officer with Staff

first floor. We now also have a lush garden and terrace which can be used for holding get together and celebrations outdoors. In line with the new modern outfit, the entire office set up and overall presentation of our premises has a got a major uplift. In the revamp set up, besides attending to the routine SMT meetings and other meetings related to security issues, the SOIC also officially represents UNMOGIP at key official invitations from Embassies and other diplomatic missions in New Delhi on behalf of CMO/HoM.

Maj Alfio Scaccianocce
UNMOGIP Liaison Officer



UNMOGIP Liaison Office in New Delhi, India

VISITORS' DIARY



The Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO) welcoming a member of COSA to UNMOGIP Headquarters



The CMO/HOM in a hearty handshake with a COSA member



The Military Information Officer (MIO) welcoming a COSA member



The CMO/HOM making a point to some members of COSA



EU Ambassador His Excellency Lars-Gunnar Wigemark



Netherlands Ambassador His Excellency Marcel de Vink in tete-a-tete chat with the Chief Military Observer/Head of Mission



Korean Ambassador in a pose with UNMOs



VIPs observing minute of silence at UNMOGIP Headquarters Islamabad during Medal Day Parade



Dignitaries on visit to UNMOGIP Headquarters



The Chief Military Observer/Head of Mission (CMO/HOM) with UNMOGIP Headquarters Staff and members of Pakistani Corps of Service Attaches (COSEA) Defence Attache

My Time in UNMOGIP as Medical Officer

In January 2013 Swiss Army asked me if I would like to go for another Military Observer Mission. It would be a new mission for Switzerland.

Before I left home for UNMOGIP, I did not know about the vacancy of the Medical Officer in this mission. I wished to be on a regular Military Observer posting so that I could go in the mountains to meet people and learn about a new culture. But it seems fate had something else planned for me. My stay in UNMOGIP turned out to be completely different.

I arrived in Islamabad in February 2014 on a very early Sunday morning. The Deputy Chief Military Observer (DCMO) gave me a very warm welcome at the Finnish House.

The next morning DCMO briefed me about the alarmingly poor hygienic conditions at the Field Stations (FS). I wanted to concentrate on my Military Observer duties ignoring DCMO's concerns but soon realized that he was fully justified and hygiene was a genuine issue.

Within a week I was to start hygiene inspections in all FS. I had a lot of questions in mind about my duties as Medical Officer revolving around relevant documents of my predecessors, computer passwords, road conditions, maps and situation at the FS where I was to carry out



inspections.

During the six-week hygiene inspection tour in Kashmir area I had the opportunity to visit all FS. During the long car rides I got a chance to enjoy beautiful Kashmir landscapes. I don't think I would ever forget the hospitable locals.

Besides hygiene inspections, I also had the task to visit the Combined Military Hospitals (CMH) in vicinity of the FS and gain an overview about medical capacities and if UNMOGIP could count on medical support in case of emergencies far away from the HQ in Islamabad.

At all FS I could provide basic First Aid Training for the Military Observers and the drivers from the Pakistani Army. I was surprised how much the local drivers appreciated this training. We checked the First

Aid equipment of all vehicles and I explained how to use the items. Everyone participated very actively in the practical training sequences for evacuating patients out of vehicles and stabilizing a patient. At that time I discovered that the First Aid equipment in all vehicles was below UN standards.

The hygiene situations I met at the FS were far from satisfactory. It was not easy to explain to local cooks and helpers the importance of maintaining good hygiene. Part of the problem was a lack of education as well. Even the best of hygiene plans are useless without proper equipment. For this reason I highlighted the need for adequate equipment along with the hygiene situation in all reports I prepared.

I am glad that I had the opportunity



to hand in a medical budget and a justification for a Level 1 Clinic. My main tasks towards the end of my mission were to have a permanent appointed Medical Officer, equipping UN vehicles with mandatory DPKO Trauma Kits and have all FS reach an acceptable hygienic level.

The recent flood in the Kashmir area revealed how vulnerable the situation in our Area of Operation is. The medical situation needs to be improved for the long-term. This only can be done with a permanently appointed Medical Officer. It makes me more than happy that I could convince the key staff officers to support this project.

Capt Dr Mathias Bosiger
Medical Officer UNMOGIP



My Summer Experience in Srinagar

I arrived in UNMOGIP in December 13, 2013 and performed the task in UNFS Rawalakot, Kotli, Bhimber, Rajouri and Jammu.

I mainly stayed in Indian side because few UNMOs had Indian visas. I was positioned as Military Information Officer in Islamabad at the end of April. Beginning May, UNMOGIP HQ was relocated to Srinagar.

I served in Srinagar for approximately three months. When I went to Srinagar, I got to understand why Jammu & Kashmir chose Srinagar as the capital of summer. The weather is so pleasant in Srinagar during summer. No wonder Srinagar is a popular tourist destination with local and foreign tourists. What fascinated me is that UNMOGIP HQ in Srinagar is close to Dal Lake where fabulous boats, called house boats float all the time. Unluckily I could not go for this boat ride but most of my colleagues in Srinagar enjoyed this recreation.

Srinagar somewhat has some security challenges as compared to other areas on the Indian side. Many incidents occur near Srinagar which calls for enforcement of security measures. For example, security screening at Srinagar Airport is more strict than is in other areas. The Indian Army Liaison Officer (IALO) at times prohibits staff members from going outdoors and exercising caution.

Accommodation provided is in a



fenced compound and office is easy to approach. This enables staff members to be together for every meal including weekends. Basic exercise facilities are available in the gym.

Heavy rains struck Srinagar on Sep 7, 2014. Due to unprecedented consecutive heavy rainfall, Srinagar city was inundated but UNMOGIP HQ in Srinagar could survive because it is situated on a higher ground behind the mountain. Municipal facilities were dysfunctional and this led to the city being cut off from everything and everywhere. Under the support of Indian Army, we were able to pull through this tough time. Here I would like to express gratitude to

CMO General Sakyi who helped us stay together during good and bad times. During the tough time we went through in Srinagar, we learnt that it is important to stay focused and enduring no matter how adverse the situation. I cannot forget to thank the local staff in Srinagar for their kindness and professionalism. I always found them eager to support UN officers even if it required them to work on weekends. At UNMOGIP we are always one team. Our nationalities might be different but our goals may not.

Maj Hoyul Chun
UN Military Observer-Srinagar

You make us proud – Our Female UNMO



Please tell us about yourself first. About your home country, your family, education etc.

I am Squadron Leader Chuleeporn SUNGMANA from Royal Thai Air Force. I was born in CHAINAT province, a small city in Thailand, Southeast Asian country. I am from a Buddhist farmer family. I graduated with Bachelors of Arts (Political Science) from Kasetsart University, Thailand in 2000. After I graduated, I started my military career in Royal Thai Air Force in 2003.

How did you end up working for the UNMOGIP?

I applied for UN mission in 2013. We have Peace Operations Centre and we use “On-Call List” system in Thailand for providing military officers to support UN missions. The selection process includes test in English, Physical Fitness, knowledge of the UN, an interview and UNMO Training Course. After I passed the selection process, Peace Operations Centre informed me that UNMOGIP requested 3 military officers from Thailand to replace Thai UNMOs in the Mission. I confirmed them without hesitation because I intended to participate in UN mission. My family also agreed with me.



Where did you serve before you came to Islamabad? How are your duties different from your previous assignment/posting?

Before arriving at the mission, I worked as personnel officer at Directorate of Intelligence, Royal Thai Air Force HQ in Bangkok, Thailand since October 2013. Before that I worked at the Directorate of Personnel as Plans and Policy Officer for 5 years and then at Wing 4 Air Base as a Personnel Officer for 5 years. My major experience relates to Human Resource Management. My previous work experience differs from my role as UNMO in UNMOGIP in so many ways. I had only documents and paper work related to personnel previously but here I have to work with UNMOs who come from different countries and culture. Also, I get to work outside the office and interact with local people who are from entirely different culture, language and religion.

How did you feel when you were told you would be going to serve at UNMOGIP in Islamabad?

I was very excited and I thought it was very challenging for any woman to join UN mission as a Military Observer in a country which was so different from mine.

Did you find this country different from what you had heard about or perceived before you came here? What do you like about being here?

Yes, I did. Before I came here I followed the situation in Pakistan in international media and there were a lot of negative news about terrorism and natural disasters in this area. But when I arrived and worked here the picture was different. People are very friendly. They are warm and always try to help when we have problems while conducting field tasks. Different language, religion and culture did not make me uncomfortable or awkward in any way. In peacekeeping operations, we need to solve problems by peaceful negotiation and this comes naturally to a woman.

What are your duties as a female UNMO? Are they different from your male counterparts in any way? Do you have an edge being a female?

My duties are not different from those of my male counterparts. We perform the same tasks. But sometimes male UNMOs need help in situations where being a woman comes as an advantage. For example, when we need to approach local females to fulfill our tasks, the women and their families freely communicate with us.

Please share with us how is it working with male UNMOs at international level. What are the challenges and what are the benefits?

It is very challenging for me to work with them because we come from different cultural backgrounds. Sometimes we have different perspectives about matters but we need to discuss and share our opinions. In societies, accepting or giving values to women's opinion or ideas is not prevalent. We need to prove ourselves as professionals. It is not easy but is possible.

Would you like to give a message to women who might be reading this or who might want to have a career such as yours? Is it a suitable job for females? What qualities should they have if they want to make it?

Yes, I want women who want to work as UNMOs not to be afraid of new environments or any risks in the mission. This is a great opportunity for us to learn and do what we might never get to do again in life. This job may not seem comfortable for women to do but we can do it. All we need is to make an effort to learn to adapt to new people and situations. Just keep an open mind and that will open opportunities to do great things in your life. This will benefit not only us but also people who suffer from conflict in their areas. There is no reason why a woman cannot be a peacekeeper.

Many Thanks for taking out time.



United Nations
Military Observer Group
in India and Pakistan



Visual communications developed by

UNITED NATIONS
Information Centre
I S L A M A B A D