

UNITED NATIONS



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**Secretary-General's remarks at the
Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT)
Rajendrapur, Bangladesh, 14 November 2011**

As-salam aleikum.

I travel often as Secretary-General. And wherever I go, I try to meet with our UN peacekeepers.

But this visit is special.

No nation contributes more to our efforts than you.

In fact, one out of ten United Nations peacekeepers comes from Bangladesh.

That is why I am here. I want to say, simply and directly: thank you.

Dhonyobad.

Thank you to all those who serve.

Thank you to those who organize, train and support.

Thank you to the husbands and wives, the sons and daughters, all the families whose loved ones are sent so far from home.

And most of all, thank you to the families of fallen peacekeepers. We are forever in your debt.

Jaara, shanti rokkhar kaaje, praan dilen, tader kache amra chirorini, chirokritoggo.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our cooperation began with the first Bangladeshi Military Observers deployed in Iran and Iraq in 1988.

Over the past 20 years, your country's soldiers have kept the peace in many faraway places: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Western Sahara. In Timor-Leste, our UN operations are led by Bangladesh's own, Ameerah Haq.

Today, more than 10,600 Bangladeshi military and police personnel take part in ten United Nations' peacekeeping operations.

Most of them have trained here at this centre.

And you are also sharing your knowledge with the world. Last November, BIPSOT hosted the 16th Annual Conference of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres.

I have seen your troops in some of the harshest climates and the most difficult terrain.

They are deployed thousands of miles from home. They may not know the language. But they sacrifice everyday for the greater global good.

Nothing is more noble.

Let me share a story.

Last year, a terrible earthquake struck Haiti. Hundreds of thousands of people died. One million lost their homes. More than 1,000 camps were set up for the displaced.

We knew that women and children were especially vulnerable.

And we also knew that, in circumstances such as these, women peacekeepers have a special role. Women in the camps tended to trust them more. They would confide in them, especially in cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

To boost security in the camps, we issued an urgent call to our troop contributors. Bangladesh responded immediately.

You deployed an all-female formed-police unit to Haiti.

They have helped fight crime and prevent rapes and assaults. They distributed water, food and medicines. They protected humanitarian convoys.

They delivered hope.

Ladies and gentlemen,

That is one story. There are many more.

And it all starts here.

That is why I have come.

You are a centre of excellence.

You are a pioneer.

Thank you for helping to defend human lives and human dignity around the world.

Dhonyobad.