Speech by Foreign Minister Westerwelle on the Day of the Peacekeeper

2013-06-12

-- Translation of advance text --

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today for the first time, Federal Minister Friedrich, Federal Minister de Maizière and I are together honouring German participants in international peace missions.

We’re honouring custodians of peace.

We’re honouring police officers, soldiers and civilian experts.

They represent the more than 6000 Germans who took part in peace missions around the world in 2012 alone.

Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace requires effective state structures. Peace requires the rule of law. Peace requires favourable economic prospects.

Every crisis is different. Every crisis needs its own tailor-made solutions. Neither the tools of traditional diplomacy, nor development policy, nor security policy alone are enough to overcome them.

We will only succeed if we adopt a networked approach.

Our engagement in Mali is one example of our broad-based support. German soldiers are serving with the

EU

Training Mission EUTM. We will contribute up to 150 soldiers to the new

UN

mission MINUSMA.

The Federal Government is also considering seconding officers to the Mission’s police contingent. At the same time, we are supporting the dialogue and reconciliation process within Mali.

Furthermore, we will make 100 million euros in development aid available in the next two years.

The situation in Syria is dramatic. There is a very real danger that the conflict will spread to other countries in the region. There can be no lasting peace in Syria without a political solution.

The Federal Government has provided more than 140 million euros to assist refugees, the internally displaced and the countries which have taken them in. We are helping to build civilian structures in northern Syria.

We congratulate Martin Kobler on his appointment as head of the largest United Nations peace mission, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A fellow German – Stefan Feller – is the

UN

’s top police officer. I’m delighted to welcome both of them here today.

Our soldiers are risking their lives for Germany’s security. And many police officers and civilian experts are also taking part in dangerous missions.

When civilian experts such as lawyers, logisticians or engineers return home, there isn’t always a safe job waiting for them. The returnees’ skills and experience often don’t receive adequate recognition in Germany.

Every single one of them makes a vital contribution to peace and security: whether they are part of a large German contingent in Afghanistan or in Kosovo, or one of the few Germans serving in the Central African Republic or in Haiti.

I’d like to express my great admiration for your work. Today we want to publicly honour your achievements, your courage and your commitment.

I thank you, but also your families. For serving abroad involves many sacrifices.

Often under difficult circumstances, you have demonstrated with your expertise, experience and personal commitment that Germany is prepared to shoulder responsibility on the international stage. You are a great advert for our country. We are proud of what you are doing.

Overview "Newsroom"

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