Coordinating Blue Helmet rotations on the ground

Kigali, Rwanda: 19 815 is the number of peacekeepers deployed to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Sent by 52 troop-contributing countries, contingents are deployed for a period that varies from six to eight months before being replaced with a new contingent. The deployment and repatriation of contingents take place in Entebbe, Bujumbura or Kigali, where MONUSCO has MovCon liaison offices.

Nalin Perera, a MovCon Assistant at the Kigali airport, coordinates flights for the rotation of military contingents being deployed and repatriated from the Rwandan capital, and also handles the administrative formalities relative to their arrival and departure from the country: "Whenever we get told that there is going to be a rotation of contingents I inform the Government, who then facilitates the arrival or departure procedures for them. Next, we emit a work order to the Rwandan transportation services for the transportation of troops from Kigali to Goma and vice versa. Finally, when the contingents
arrive in Kigali, we help them with administrative procedures at the border,” says Nalin.

“It is work that requires diplomacy, since we are working in close collaboration with the local authorities and we need their support to provide quality service to the contingents.”

“When there is a rotation, it means that some men are being deployed while others, at the end of their mission, are being repatriated via the same airplane, with a maximum capacity of 272 seats per flight,” explains Nalin. Troops transiting through Kigali are sent by India, Guatemala, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Uruguay, South Africa, Senegal, and Malawi.

In addition to the rotation of military troops, Nalin coordinates ground and convoy movement as well as MONUSCO VIP flights: “All the prominent figures of the United Nations who come to Goma arrive via Kigali. I already had the good fortune of meeting Ban Ki Moon on two occasions.” Nalin Perera is from Sri Lanka and is the only United Nations Volunteer (UN Volunteer) with MONUSCO in Kigali.

Before joining the ranks of UN Volunteers in January 2013, Nalin worked for 12 years in the aviation and passenger transport sector: “I wanted to use the experience I acquired in passenger transport with international and multinational companies for the service of peace.”

Nalin completed his UNV mission in April 2015 to join the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) as a consultant: “Joining the United Nations as a UN Volunteer was the most extraordinary experience of my life,” he sums up.

Sub-Saharan Africa

• Democratic Republic of the Congo • Monusco • UN peacekeepers

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions