



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Currently, there are Finnish peacekeepers serving in nine military crisis management and observer operations. The ongoing missions are an important part of our contribution to global responsibility sharing for peace. Peace cannot be forced, it must be built. We must be ready to take small, everyday actions for building it. Maybe this was the reason why many people in Europe even got accustomed to taking peace for granted.

We must work for peace every single day. Even if the opportunities of reaching peace would appear small and the work would require a lot of effort. You must also remain cool-headed under hot circumstances. Participation serves Finland's international relations and shows Finland's willingness to be involved in solving international problems.

In the middle of crises, Finnish soldiers are known to be reliable and capable of cooperation. We have heard thanks from our partners in joint operations. You have solid basis for your operations. High-quality training has guaranteed the foundations for coping in crisis situations, and your experiences have taught you to understand other cultures and languages.

This is the heritage you are currently cherishing in various continents and operations. You have been ready to serve even under challenging circumstances to protect others far away from your home country and in unfamiliar surroundings. The locals observe the example you show every day. Your presence makes it possible, for children to dare to go to school. That, if something, gives hope for the future.

I thank you for your service in crisis management operations and your valuable work for stability in different parts of the world. I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful Christmas and all the best for 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sauli Niinistö".

Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic of Finland