



**Discours du Vice-Premier Ministre et Ministre des Affaires étrangères belge, M. Didier REYNDEERS**

**À l'inauguration de l'exposition photographique sur les soldats étrangers en Europe pendant la Première Guerre mondiale (1914-1918)**

**24 avril 2018, au jardin de la cloche de paix et à l'entrée des délégués du bâtiment des Nations Unies à New York (18h.)**

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Your Majesties,  
Mister President,  
Madame the Chef de Cabinet,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moments ago we gathered in the Peace Bell Garden to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War. **I want to thank you for taking part in this ceremony to honor the countless military and civilian victims of a war which had a profound impact on the entire world.** If ever the need was felt that violent conflict ought better be prevented and that a multilateral structure should be created for that very purpose, it was certainly then, after four years of carnage, including the first ever attack with nerve gas near the city of Ypres. As a major battlefield for the two World Wars, **it is no surprise that Belgium became a founding father of the United Nations and home to European and international institutions all standing together in defense of freedom, dignity and development.**

And thus it is fitting, for us Belgians, **to remember and never forget** those who died in Flanders Fields between 1914 and 1918. All over the country, ceremonies are being held to commemorate all those who were affected by the war.

**The ceremony which we observed today, has been held in Ypres more than thirty-one thousand times.** Yet, each time it still resonates with crowds of people attending, not only because it is a memorial, but also because it remains just and relevant today.

**This exhibition is titled “World War One – Far From Home”. It wants to pay tribute to those who came to Europe from very far, to find themselves engaged in a horrendous conflict.** In many cases, those soldiers fought in Europe as a result of the political world map of that time. The exhibition depicts the less told stories of the thousands of young men of different nationalities and ethnicities who came from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, North America and the Pacific. They are not enough part of the collective memory of World War One. All too often, history ignores their enormous sacrifice.

**And so we will remember.**

**And so we should act, together, to prevent these tragic events from happening again.**

**We must make the United Nations truly united to stop violent conflict and bloodshed, whenever, wherever.**

May I now invite the President of the General Assembly to say a few words.