**[PRESS RELEASE](https://www.un.org/press/en/press-release)**

**ORG/1593**

**13 JANUARY 2015**

**With Increased Number of United Nations Personnel Deliberately Killed in 2014, Staff Unions Calls on Organization to Do More towards Protecting Lives**

Working for the United Nations proved especially deadly in 2014 as its personnel continued to be subject to deliberate attacks and exposed to hazardous environments.  According to the Staff Union’s Standing Committee for the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service, at least 61 United Nations and associated personnel were killed in 2014:  33 peacekeepers, 16 civilians, 9 contractors and 3 consultants.

In 2013, at least 58 personnel were killed by deliberate attacks — 33 peacekeepers and 25 civilians and associated personnel.  In 2012, 37 United Nations personnel — 20 civilians and 17 peacekeepers, two of them police officers — were killed in the line of duty

The incident with the most casualties took place in Northern Mali where nine peacekeepers were killed on 3 October when their convoy was ambushed.  Northern Mali was the most deadly place for United Nations personnel:  28 peacekeepers were killed there between June and October.  Gaza was the most deadly place for civilian personnel, with 11 killed in July and August.

South Sudan was the country with the highest number of national staff members detained or abducted.  In May, alleged members of South Sudan's security forces assaulted and illegally detained two staff members in separate incidents in Juba.  On 26 August, South Sudan’s National Security Service detained two national staff.  On 16 October, eight armed men wearing plain clothes seized a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member who was waiting in line for a flight from Malakal airport and drove him to an unknown location.

Scores of United Nations staff and associated personnel were also subject to hostage-taking, kidnapping and abductions.  The worst incidents took place in the Golan Heights, where 44 Fijian peacekeepers were detained by armed opposition elements between 28 August and 11 September.  United Nations personnel were abducted in Yemen, the Sudan’s Darfur region, Pakistan and South Sudan.  An international contractor from India working for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was released on 12 June after 94 days of captivity.

Contracted personnel working alongside United Nations staff were equally targeted.  A contracted deminer, along with two civilians, was killed in Afghanistan on 7 March by an improvised explosive device (IED) fixed to a motorcycle.  Three contracted vaccinators were killed in Afghanistan on 11 March when their vehicle struck an IED.  A United Nations driver was abducted in the Central African Republic on 1 May and found dead a few hours later.  A United Nations polio worker was killed in an IED explosion in Pakistan on 7 October.

Ian Richards, President of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions, speaking at the memorial service at United Nations Headquarters on 8 January to honour those personnel who had died in the service of peace, highlighted the increased dangers faced by staff and called on the General Assembly to do more to protect their lives.

“We are asked to work in some of the world’s most difficult and dangerous places,” Mr. Richards said.  “The work is fulfilling and we do it willingly.  All we ask in return is that the Organization do its best to protect us, look after our families and hold those who attack us, including Governments, responsible for their actions.”

“Partly for this reason we presented the Secretary-General with a proposal to set up an independent United Nations coroner, so that the death of every colleague is investigated, the results published, lessons learned and lives saved,” he said.  “Families also need to be kept informed of how and why their loved one died.”

Here is a list of the most serious incidents according to the Staff Union’s Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.

— On 17 January, a suicide attack at a restaurant in the Afghan capital, Kabul, killed 21 people, including four United Nations staff members:  Basra Hassan, of the United States, nutrition specialist at the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); Nasreen Khan, of Pakistan, health specialist at UNICEF; Wabel Abdallah, of Lebanon, the resident representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and Vadim Nazarov, of the Russian Federation, the senior political officer at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).  The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

— On 5 February, Hamza Ntuba Katsambya, a national staff member of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), was shot dead by an unknown gunman while going to work in Beni, North Kivu Province.

— On 7 April, two international consultants working for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Simon Davies, of the United Kingdom, and Clement Gorrissen, of France, were shot and killed by unknown gunmen at Galkayo Airport, Puntland, Somalia, as they disembarked from a plane.

— On 27 April, Daphna Beerdsen, 31, of the Netherlands, a consultant on climate change projects for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), was found dead in her home in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, after receiving six stab wounds.  Her 19-month-old baby daughter, Dana, was left in critical condition after being stabbed multiple times; her death was announced on 8 May.

— On 24 May, a UNAMID team was attending a mediation meeting between Fur people and Arab militia in Kabkabiya, North Darfur.  The militia elements became hostile towards the peacekeepers and started shooting at them, at which point the peacekeepers returned fire.  As a result of the fighting, four Rwandan peacekeepers were injured and one of them, Vincent Murangwa, died from his wounds.

— On 11 June, a car bomb attack on the Aguelhok camp of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) resulted in the death of four peacekeepers from Chad:  Alyo Gabriel, Paque Tordalbaye Berangar, Maguemadji Innocent Kemsolbaye and Bassiri Madjima Tchompika.  Six peacekeepers were injured.

— On 30 June, one MINUSMA peacekeeper from Burkina Faso, Christian Sawadogo, was killed and six others injured when their vehicle hit an IED about 30 kilometres west of Timbuktu, northern Mali.

— Between 20 July and 3 August, 11 civilian personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were killed during the Israeli operation in Gaza.  They were Fatma A. Rahim Abu Amouna, 54, a teacher; Inas Shaban Derbas, 30, a teacher; Mohammed A. Raouf al-Dadda, 39, a teacher; Ismail A. Qader el-Kujk, 53, an environmental health worker; Farid Mohammed Ahmed, 50, a teacher; Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed, 51, a school principal; Munir Ibrahim Hajjar, a social worker; Medhat Ahmed al Amoudi, 53, a labourer; Abdullah Naser Fahajan, 21, a school attendant; Adel Abu Qamar, a guard; and Hazem Abu Hellal, a guard.

— On 16 August, two MINUSMA peacekeepers from Burkina Faso, Moussa Konaté and Innocent Rouamba, were killed and seven others wounded in a suicide attack in Ber, Timbuktu region.

— On 26 August, three Russian crew members — Captain Andrei Berdnikov, aged 50, Flight Engineer Tuktasyn Ishmetov, 57, and Flight Attendant Alexey Sazontov, 33 — of a helicopter contracted by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were killed in a crash about 10 kilometres south of Bentiu, South Sudan.  An initial probe indicated that the helicopter, which was on a routine cargo flight, was shot down.

— On 2 September, five MINUSMA peacekeepers from Chad — Toidengar Merci Djasna, Abdoulaye Said Zakaria, Abba Maina Koumaba, Mahamath Moukou Djorogo and Adama Djerbo Macky — were killed when their vehicle was hit by an explosive on a road between Aguelhok and Kidal.

— On 14 September, an attack on a MINUSMA military vehicle in the vicinity of Aguelhok, Kidal region, resulted in the death of a Chadian peacekeeper, Florent Djimtoloum Miambaye, and left four others wounded.

— On 18 September, five MINUSMA peacekeepers from Chad — Ousmane Bouye, Mahamat Sougoy Iga, Hisseine Ali Hisseine, Issakh Zakaria Hassane and Saria Sylvestre — were killed and three others injured when their vehicle was hit by an explosive on a road between Aguelhok and Tessalit.

— On 3 October, nine MINUSMA peacekeepers from Niger — Jacob Soumaila Cherif, Issoufou Seydou, Massaoudou Koula Moutari, Yacouba Issa Yagi, Oumarou Djibo, Edwi Wayfan, Sanoussi Mamane Issa, Salamou Harouna and Ahmed Mohamed — were killed when their convoy was ambushed while travelling from Ménaka to Ansongo, in Mali’s north-eastern Gao region.

— On 7 October, a MINUSMA peacekeeper from Senegal, Birane Wane, was killed and another injured when unidentified assailants launched approximately six explosive rounds towards the Mission’s camp in the northern Malian town of Kidal.

— On 9 October, Fahad Iftikhar, a Pakistani peacekeeper with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), was killed and eight others were injured in an attack by unknown perpetrators against their convoy on the outskirts of Bangui, Central African Republic.

— On 16 October, a group of unidentified armed men attacked a patrol of Ethiopian UNAMID peacekeepers guarding a water borehole in Korma, North Darfur, killing two peacekeepers, Abiyot Amajo and Worku Weldeyes, and seriously injuring one.  The injured soldier, Wudu Tawye, subsequently died in Khartoum.

Many other United Nations personnel paid with their lives while serving the Organization due to accidents and other causes, including three who died while trying to contain the Ebola virus disease outbreak.

In addition, Glenn Thomas, of the United Kingdom, a spokesperson at the World Health Organization (WHO), was among the 298 people killed in the crash of a Malaysia Airlines jet on 17 July in eastern Ukraine.  He was headed to Melbourne for a global AIDS conference.