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**At Least 51 United Nations Personnel Killed in Deliberate Attacks against Peacekeeping Operations in 2015**

**Staff Union Standing Committee Calls for Creation of High-level Review Panel as Killers Increasingly Target Soft Targets**

At least 51 United Nations and associated personnel were killed in the line of duty during the course of 2015, according to the United Nations Staff Union’s Standing Committee for the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.

Among those killed were 27 peacekeepers, among them two police officers, and 24 civilians, including contractors, in deliberate attacks using improvised explosive devices, rocket and artillery fire, mortar rounds, landmines, grenades, suicide attacks, targeted assassinations and armed ambushes.  Not included in the total are friendly-fire incidents.  Four Rwandan peacekeepers were shot dead by a member of their own contingent on 8 August in Bangui, Central African Republic.

In the past four years, at least 207 United Nations personnel have died in deliberate attacks.

Call for High-level Panel

With personnel increasingly working in high-risk environments and facing a growing number of deliberate attacks, the Committee respectfully calls upon the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel to review evolving and emerging threats against the Organization.  The panel should also review whether the current security framework and oversight mechanisms are meeting the needs of its personnel who often work at great personal risk.  In addition, it should review whether adequate compensation was provided to the families of those who died for the Organization, including that of Officer Louis James Maxwell, Jr., a United States national killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan in 2009.

The Committee notes that the toll from deadly attacks could have been greater were it not for the dedicated professionalism and devotion, above and beyond the call of duty, of United Nations security and peacekeeping personnel in many high-risk areas.  In Bamako, Mali, on 20 November 2015, 11 United Nations first responders, alongside other security forces, held off gunmen in a terrorist and hostage situation at the Radisson Blu Hotel, preventing a higher death toll.  Hotels and other soft and vulnerable targets where United Nations personnel routinely reside or gather are being increasingly attacked.

Fatality Trend

In 2014, at least 61 United Nations personnel were killed: 33 peacekeepers, 16 civilians, nine contractors and three consultants.  In 2013, at least 58 were killed in deliberate attacks: 33 peacekeepers and 25 civilians and associated personnel.  In 2012, at least 37 United Nations personnel, 20 civilians and 17 peacekeepers, two of them police officers, were killed.

For the second year in a row, the greatest loss of life in 2015 was recorded in Mali, where at least 25 personnel, including 11 peacekeepers and 14 civilians and associated personnel, were killed in ambushes, improvised explosive device detonations or when their vehicles hit landmines.  The incident with the most casualties also occurred on 2 July, when attackers in vehicles ambushed an escort of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), killing six soldiers and severely injuring six more.  That was followed by the deaths of four MINUSMA contractors in a besieged hotel on 7 August.

Kidnappings and Abductions

For the second successive year, South Sudan topped the list of countries in which the highest number of staff were detained, abducted or disappeared.  Four of them, one a staff member missing since 2014, are now presumed no longer alive.

On 26 January, six Bulgarian nationals were detained by the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North when their World Food Programme (WFP)-contracted helicopter made an emergency landing under fire.  The crew were released a week later.

On 1 April, three WFP staff in an aid convoy from Malakal to Merut in South Sudan disappeared en route to a food distribution point.  After months of searching, WFP concluded in August that the three were no longer alive.  In a similar abduction and disappearance in 2014, a WFP staff member from the Malakal airstrip was seized by eight armed men in plain clothes, and is now presumed no longer alive.

Further north in Darfur, Sudan, two Russian contractors working for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) were kidnapped on 29 January before being freed on 7 June.  And on 21 July, one UNAMID national staff member was kidnapped by armed men and released five days later.

More kidnappings were reported in the Central African Republic, Yemen, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 20 January, a female staff member with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was kidnapped from her vehicle and released the same day.

In Yemen, a female World Bank consultant from France was kidnapped from her car with her female Yemeni translator on 24 February.  While the translator was freed in March, the consultant was not released until five months later.

On 26 April, a Governorate Liaison Officer with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was abducted from his car by gunmen in Baqouba.  His whereabouts remain unknown to date.

In another kidnapping incident on 23 April, at Kibumba, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, three contractors — two Congolese and one Zimbabwe national — hired by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) added to the 2015 toll.

Fatal Incidents

The list of fatal incidents is by no means exhaustive, according to the Staff Union’s Standing Committee for the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.

On **17 January**, in Kidal, Mali, Sub Lieutenant Ahmat Adam Adoum of Chad was killed when a car bomb exploded near a MINUSMA checkpoint.  Four other Chadian peacekeepers were wounded.  In a coordinated attack, a second vehicle exploded at one of the entrances to the camp that was simultaneously bombarded by at least eight rockets or mortars, two of which landed inside the camp, causing significant damage.

Also in Mali, MINUSMA Corporal Noma Adamou of Niger was killed in a landmine explosion on **27 January**.

On **28 January**, near the Israel-Lebanon border, Lance Corporal Francisco Javier Soria of Toledo, Spain, deployed with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), was killed by artillery fire retaliating against six rockets launched towards Israel from the vicinity of Wazzani north of Maysat in the UNIFIL operations area.

On **14 April**, Second Sergeant Rodrigo Andres Sanhueza Soto of Chile, with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), succumbed to gunshot wounds after protestors fired at his military vehicle near Ouanaminthe the previous day.

Three MINUSMA civilian contractors driving peacekeeping supply convoys were killed in attacks by unknown assailants west of Gao, Mali, on **17 and 20 April**.

Also on **20 April**, in Garowe, Puntland state, Somalia, four staff of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) were killed in their van by a suspected improvised explosive device: Payenda Gul Abed of Afghanistan, polio immunization coordinator; Brenda Kyeyune of Uganda, social mobilization and communication manager for polio eradication; Woki Munyui of Kenya, education specialist; and Stephen Oduor, also of Kenya, an administration specialist.

On **26 April**, citing security concerns, Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services refused an emergency air medevac of injured Private Mehari Baraki of Ethiopia from Mukjar to Nyala.  Assigned to UNAMID, he died the same day.

Corporal John Leonard Nkunde and Private Juma Ally Khamis, both from the United Republic of Tanzania, were killed in a rebel ambush on **5 May**, in Kikiki village, Beni region, while assigned to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On **24 May**, in Sudan, Sheiklehdeen Abuelkhajrat, a national staff member, was riding his motorcycle home from work when he was stopped by two people who shot and killed him on the spot.  The perpetrators fled the scene, taking his motorcycle.

In Mali, on **25 May**, MINUSMA Private Shri Nilkanto Hajong of Bangladesh was fired upon by armed gunmen when traveling in a United Nations vehicle near Bamako airport.  While a second peacekeeper from Bangladesh suffered injuries, Private Hajong succumbed to profuse bleeding.

On **2 July**, also in Mali, attackers in vehicles ambushed a MINUSMA convoy, killing six peacekeepers from Burkina Faso.  Corporal Ousmane Compaoré, Warrant Officer Sylvestre Diendere, Corporal Saidou Ilboudo, Corporal Abdoul Rachid Napon, Private Dieudonné Ouedraogo and Private Appolinaire Sawadogo were killed on the road between Goundam and Timbuktu, 45 kilometres south-west of Timbuktu.  Five more peacekeepers, also from Burkina Faso, were injured in the attack.

In Sévaré, Mali, on **7 August**, MINUSMA contractors Raju Bhandari of Nepal and Roelof Janse van Rensburg of South Africa, as well as Illia Sukhodolsky and Fedir Zolotikov from Ukraine, were killed by terrorists in a hotel siege.

On **26 September**, near Mellit, North Darfur, Sudan, UNAMID’s Private Toto Tom Malashe was killed when his patrol was ambushed by an unknown armed group.

In Ombella M’Poko Prefecture, Central African Republic, MINUSCA’S Master Corporal Japhet Itangishaka of Burundi was killed on **7 October**, in an attack on his convoy between Damara and Ngerengou.

On **12 October**, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Toorpakai Ulfat, a female national staff member with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), was shot dead on her way to work by gunmen riding a motorcycle.

In Beletweyne, Somalia, gunmen fatally shot Mahdi Hussein Macow, a local contractor with UNMAS and Community Liaison Officer with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on **16 November**.

On **24 November** in Mali, Dramane Hamadou, a MINUSMA national staff member, died from an explosion while traveling in a convoy.

In Kidal, Mali, on **28**November, MINUSMA’s Lieutenant Colonel Marwane Diallo and Corporal Jacob Loua, both from Guinea, and a contractor from Burkina Faso died in a mortar attack against the Mission’s Kidal camp, and 20 others were wounded, four of them seriously.

On **29 November** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO Staff Sergeant Dyson Mayao of Malawi died from internal bleeding when he was wounded in a gun battle with rebels.

In Mogadishu, Somalia, Amina Noor Mohamed, a national staff member with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was killed alongside a colleague from a partner organization when unknown gunmen fired upon their car on **14 December**.

On **30 December**, in Cap-Haïtien*,* Haiti, Assistant Inspectors of Police Lillian Mukansonera and Aimée Nyiramudakemwa of MINUSTAH were found dead in their residence, apparently shot by unidentified assailants.

Many other United Nations personnel paid with their lives while serving the Organization due to accidents, critical security incidents and other causes, while scores of others were injured.