

**Office of the United Nations Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia****Statement attributable to Mark Bowden, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia**

(Nairobi, 15 July 2008): The United Nations Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mark Bowden, today expressed his grave concern over the rapidly deteriorating security situation for United Nations and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) humanitarian workers in Somalia in reaction to the killing of two Somali nationals employed by humanitarian NGOs in Mogadishu on Friday. He also expressed deep concern over the unacceptable level of violence against civilians in the country.

The attacks on humanitarian workers come less than a week after the brutal murder last Sunday of the Officer in Charge of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mogadishu. The recent killings bring to 19 the number of aid-related workers killed in Somalia this year.

“It is intolerable and incomprehensible that humanitarian workers striving to save lives and alleviate human suffering in one of the most difficult environments in the world are being targeted and killed”, says Mark Bowden.

“It is also very worrying that the general level of violence in large parts of Somalia has been constantly rising this year and has reached unacceptable levels of civilian casualties”, he adds.

The United Nations, for its part, is urgently taking measures to ensure the protection of its staff working in Somalia while at the same time allowing them to carry on with their vital humanitarian work. These measures involve prioritization of essential operations.

“What I must emphasize once again is that we, as humanitarians, depend on the Somali people to assist us in getting the assistance through. Somali communities have been very supportive of humanitarian work in the past. We ask them to redouble their efforts to provide an environment in which aid and services can be delivered”, said Mark Bowden.

For further information, please contact:

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