

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Office of the United Nations Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia

Two UN Staff killed in Hargeysa UNDP Compound Attack

(Nairobi, 30 October 2008) It is with great sadness that the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mark Bowden, confirms the death of two staff members in the car bomb attack of the UNDP compound yesterday, 29 October 2008.

Mr. Mohammed Geele was a Local Security Advisor who had worked for the UN for five years. He is survived by his wife and five children. Mr. Sayid Hashi, from Borama, Somaliland, had been a driver for the UN Office for Project Services since 1997 and leaves behind a wife and three sons.

“Our deepest condolences go out to the families and colleagues of our two staff members who died in the explosion,” stated Mr. Bowden. “Right now, our immediate concern is for the wellbeing and support of the families of the victims and staff members who have survived this trauma. Given the extremely violent and targeted nature of the attack, many are severely shaken and mourning the loss of their colleagues.”

An additional six staff members were injured, two of them with serious injuries were evacuated to Djibouti for immediate medical attention. Their condition is now stable. The UN is currently evacuating other staff in need of further medical attention and counseling support to Nairobi. Essential staff involved in life-saving assistance are remaining in Hargeysa with restricted movements.

The UNDP Compound also houses other agencies such as Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), UN AIDS and the Resident Coordinator’s Office. At the time of the explosion yesterday, there were 74 international and almost 200 national United Nations staff working in Hargeysa in various locations.

There are four buildings in the compound. The roofs of several of the one-storey buildings have collapsed and there has been significant structural damage on the two-storey building that received the brunt of the blast. An emergency team arrived in Hargeysa yesterday and will assess the damage and next steps.

“While Somalia is one of the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers, Hargeysa has been relatively stable and consequently many United Nations staff were stationed there,” said Mr. Bowden. “It’s because of the stability that the UN has been able to help move forward the reconstruction process, constructing schools, drilling boreholes, and building on the peace which has been achieved there since 1998.”

United Nations agencies are working in Hargeysa and the northwest regions with the local government and communities to deliver much needed services such as water and health care. Assistance is being given to persons displaced by war who have yet to return to a normal life. UN agencies are also helping to build regional institutions such as police, the rule of law, public finance management and other key institutions of governance. UN agencies are also assisting in responding to the drought, particularly to help preserve people’s livestock and other assets.

In 2008, eight United Nations and 24 NGO aid-related staff have been killed in Somalia. However, all of these incidents had taken place in the southern and central regions of Somalia.

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