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**United Nations Staff Union President Urges States to Enhance Peacekeeper Security, as Targeted Attacks Kill 424 'Blue Helmets', Civilian Personnel in Last Decade**

At least 28 United Nations personnel — 23 peacekeepers and 5 civilians — were killed in deliberate attacks in the line of duty in 2019, according to the United Nations Staff Union Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.  This brings the death toll to at least 424 United Nations and associated personnel who were killed in deliberate attacks in the last 10 years from improvised explosive devices, rocket and artillery fire, mortar rounds, landmines, grenades, suicide attacks, targeted assassinations and armed ambushes.

For the sixth year in a row, in 2019, again most of the attacks took place in Mali.  The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) suffered the greatest loss of life with 22 of its "blue helmets" killed — 11 of them in a single incident in Aguelhok, the year’s worst occurrence.  In 2018, 11 peacekeepers from MINUSMA were killed in deliberate attacks.

The President of the United Nations Staff Union, Patricia Nemeth, said:  “Once again too many of our colleagues have made the ultimate sacrifice for the United Nations flag.  They did so in an effort to provide for the most vulnerable the most basic needs and freedoms that we all enjoy:  life, liberty, peace, security and justice.  Our thoughts go out in particular to our colleagues in Mali, who have suffered the greatest loss.”

Ms. Nemeth added:  “We have to do more to protect those colleagues around the world who continue to serve and risk their lives, on a daily basis, in some of the most dangerous places imaginable.  Therefore, we call on the United Nations and the Member States to enhance these security measures to protect the lives of our colleagues while also increasing the resources to our civilian, military and police personnel on the front line.  They and their families remain foremost in our hearts and their commitment to the ideals of this Organization will not be forgotten as they rest in the sacred and blessed grounds marking their devotion to humankind around the world.”

Fatality Trend

The personnel killed in 2019 were from Benin (1), Chad (12), Cameroon (1), Guinea (3), Sri Lanka (2), Egypt (2), Ethiopia (1) Libya (1), Fiji (1), Jamaica (1), Nigeria (1), Togo (1) and the United States (1).  These attacks took place in Abyei (straddling Sudan and South Sudan), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Libya and Afghanistan.

In 2018, at least 34 United Nations and associated personnel were killed in malicious attacks in the line of duty.  The figures for preceding years are as follows:  2017 (71 killed); 2016 (32 killed), 2015 (51 killed); 2014 (61 killed); 2013 (58 killed); 2012 (37 killed); 2011 (35 killed); and 2010 (15 killed).

Deliberate Attacks Resulting in Death

Following is the list of deliberate attacks in 2019 that resulted in death, compiled by the United Nations Staff Union Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.  The list is by no means exhaustive:

On 20 January, an attack against the camp of MINUSMA in Aguelhok, Kidal region, resulted in 11 peacekeepers from Chad killed and at least 25 injured.  The peacekeepers killed were Hery Ali Koura Mahamat, Siboro Tidjani Abdoulaye, Mougadam Youssouf Ahmat, Delsia Dackmaissou Yohouna, Djibrine Ali Ahmat, Hamid Oumar Djouma, Hellou Abdallah Abdramane, Souleymane Ousmane Hassaballah, Ahmat Hamdane Bahr and Mahmat Hassane Hamid.  Moumine Adoum Adoum died on 4 February from injuries.

On 25 January, an improvised explosive device attack against a MINUSMA convoy near Douentza, Mopti region, resulted in the killing of two peacekeepers from Sri Lanka, Hamangoda Wasantha Dinesh Jayawickrama and Sakralage Samantha Wijekumara.  Several others were injured.

On 22 February, three peacekeepers with MINUSMA from Guinea, Michel Théa, Yves Haba and Ismaël Bangoura, were killed by unidentified armed men in the area of Siby, 44 kilometres south-east of the capital, Bamako.  Other peacekeepers were wounded.

On 3 April, Koffo Semegnon Agbodjalou from Benin, a police peacekeeper with MINUSMA, suffered a cardiac arrest during an attack on his base in Kidal.

On 19 April, Dr. Valery Mouzoko Kiboung, of Cameroon, an epidemiologist deployed by the World Health Organization in response to the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus disease, was killed by gunshot in an attack on an Ebola treatment centre in Mutembo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 20 April, Sabry Mohamed Ahmed Hussein from Egypt, a peacekeeper with MINUSMA, was killed and four were wounded in an improvised explosive device attack against a MINUSMA convoy en route between Douentza and Boni, in Mopti region.  One of the wounded, Elbadry Yasser Badr from Egypt, succumbed to his injuries on 2 May.

On 19 May, Moshood Lasisi from Nigeria, a peacekeeper with MINUSMA, succumbed to his wounds following an armed attack in Timbuktu the previous day in which two armed men in a pickup truck attempted to intercept a MINUSMA vehicle carrying two Nigerian peacekeepers.

On 16 July, Gudina Yadeta Gindaba from Ethiopia, a peacekeeper with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), was killed when unknown assailants attacked peacekeepers at the Amiet market.  One other peacekeeper was severely injured and five civilians also died in the assault.

On 10 August, three civilian staff members of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Hussein Elhader from Libya, Clive Peck from Jamaica and Seniloli Tabuatausole from Fiji, were killed in a car bomb attack against a UNSMIL convoy outside a shopping mall in the eastern city of Benghazi, controlled by the self-styled Libyan National Army.  The three were staff members of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security in Libya.  Three other staff members were wounded in the attack.

On 6 October, Hissene Tergouno Bedallah from Chad, a peacekeeper with MINUSMA, was killed and four others seriously wounded when their convoy hit an improvised explosive device in Aguelhok, Kidal region, northern Mali.

Also on 6 October, S. Kossi Agounwadhe from Togo, a peacekeeper with MINUSMA, was killed by unidentified assailants who attacked a MINUSMA temporary operating base in Bandiagara, Mopti region.

On 24 November, Anil Raj from the United States, who was working for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was killed and two people injured when their vehicle was hit by a grenade in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Several other staff members were wounded during the year.  Among other incidents, two United Nations staff members and one contractor were injured on 1 January when seven mortars landed inside the United Nations compound in Mogadishu — an attack for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility.  On 24 January, one peacekeeper from Burkina Faso was injured in an improvised explosive device attack against a MINUSMA convoy near Douentza, Mopti region.  On 19 May, three Chadian peacekeepers with MINUSMA were wounded when their mine-protected vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in Tessalit, Kidal region, Mali.

Acting against Independence of International Civil Service

The year also saw aggressive action against the independence of the international civil service.  On 1 January, the Government of Somalia declared persona non grata Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).

The Secretary-General, in a statement on 4 January (See Press Release [SG/SM/19424](https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sgsm19424.doc.htm)) said that:  “The doctrine of persona non grata does not apply to, or in respect of, United Nations personnel.  As described in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the doctrine applies to diplomatic agents who are accredited by one State to another in the context of their bilateral relations.  The United Nations is not a State and its personnel are not accredited to the States where they are deployed, but work under the sole responsibility of the Secretary‑General.”

On 8 January, the Secretary-General “strongly rejected” the decision by the Government of Guatemala to unilaterally terminate the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, an independent body set up by the United Nations and Guatemala to investigate illegal security groups and high-level corruption in the country.

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