



Secretary-General's statement on attack in Herat

23 October 2010 - The Secretary-General strongly condemns the suicide attack earlier today against the UN compound in the western city of Herat, Afghanistan, where staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other UN agencies are housed.

No fatalities among the UN staff have been reported although regrettably there are wounded security guards. A number of assailants were killed in the attack and the United Nations is conducting a full investigation.

The Secretary-General wholeheartedly commends the immediate in extremis support rendered by units of the Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) whose prompt action stabilized the situation and undoubtedly saved the lives of United Nations staff members in the compound.

The United Nations will continue to maintain its presence and programmes in Herat for the benefit of the population in need and in support of the Afghan authorities.

Statement by the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura

23 October 2010 - The United Nations in Afghanistan condemns in the strongest terms the attack which took place today at 11:58 a.m. against the United Nations operations centre in Herat, in the west of Afghanistan. The attack did not disrupt the United Nations activities and no United Nations personnel was injured.

The United Nations is in Afghanistan to support efforts to achieve peace, to assist the people of Afghanistan with urgent humanitarian aid and to support long-term development to help make the lives of all Afghan people better.

We commend and are grateful to the internal international security guards for their bravery and courage in initially responding to this attack.

On behalf of all who serve the United Nations in Afghanistan, we further thank the Afghan National Police Force, the Afghan security forces and government authorities, as well as the International Security Assistance Force, for their assistance in protecting United Nations personnel and thwarting this attack.

Our thoughts are with the families of the at least two Afghan security officers who were injured during this attack.

The United Nations will continue to maintain its presence and programmes in Herat for the benefit of the population in need and in support of the Afghan authorities.

Ban and Security Council condemn attack on UN compound in western Afghanistan

23 October 2010 (UN News Centre, New York) - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council today strongly condemned the suicide attack on the United Nations compound in Afghanistan's western city of Herat, where members of staff of the UN mission in the country and other agencies are based.

There were no casualties among the UN staff, but some security guards were wounded, the spokesperson of the Secretary-General said in a statement. A number of assailants were killed in the attack, and the UN is conducting a full investigation.

Earlier the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also condemned the attack and stressed that the Organization was in the country to support efforts to restore peace and provide humanitarian and development assistance to the people.

The attack did not disrupt UN activities in Herat, UNAMA's spokesperson said.

Mr. Ban "wholeheartedly commends the immediate in extremis support rendered by units of the Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) whose prompt action stabilized the situation and undoubtedly saved the lives of United Nations staff members in the compound."

The Secretary-General emphasized that the UN will continue to maintain its presence and programmes in Herat for the benefit of the population and in support of the Afghan authorities.

UNAMA also expressed its gratitude to the internal international security guards for their bravery and courage in responding to the attack.

"On behalf of all who serve the UN in Afghanistan, we further thank the Afghan National Police Force, the Afghan security forces and Government authorities, as well as the International Security Assistance Force, for their assistance in protecting UN personnel and thwarting this attack," UNAMA said in its statement. The mission expressed sympathy for the security officers injured in the attack and their families. Condemning that assault, the Security Council said it deeply regretted that a number of security guards were wounded and voiced its appreciation of the prompt support rendered by units of the Afghan security forces and ISAF during the attack.

"Members of the Council reiterate their steadfast support for the role of the United Nations in Afghanistan," the Council said in a press statement. The members noted that a number of assailants were killed in the attack, adding that they will be waiting to hear the results of the investigation that has already been launched.

"The members of the Security Council reiterated their serious concern at the threats posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, to the local population, national security forces, international military and international assistance efforts in Afghanistan," they said.



The Council stressed the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers and financiers of the "reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice." They urged all States to cooperate with the Afghan authorities to ensure that those behind the attack were caught.

Council members reaffirmed the need to combat, in accordance with the UN Charter and all obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. They Council reiterated its determination to combat all forms of terrorism.

They also stressed that that "no terrorist act can reverse the path towards peace, democracy and reconstruction in Afghanistan which is supported by the people and the Government of Afghanistan and the international community."

According to media reports, a group of assailants dressed as local women in disguise attacked the compound minutes before midday, local time, sparking a fire fight with guards and the police during which the raiders were killed. One of the attackers in reported to have blown himself up with an explosive.



WFP celebrates national leadership to end hunger and malnutrition

27 October 2010, Kabul - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Afghanistan today marks World Food Day by celebrating the bold leadership and outstanding contributions of national governments toward lasting solutions to hunger and malnutrition.

"When we act together we have the power to bring about real change in the lives of millions of people who would otherwise struggle to feed their families," said WFP Deputy Executive Director for Hunger Solutions, Sheila Sisulu.

"Through our partnerships with governments, local authorities and small-scale farmers, WFP is helping to roll out innovative programmes that boost nutrition, and build sustainable solutions to hunger."

"Leaders are seizing the opportunity to align effective policies, programmes and resources behind national and regional priorities," Sisulu added, highlighting the impact of comprehensive national strategies designed to boost farm production, improve nutrition, strengthen social protection systems and ensure that children have access to the right food at the right time.

"Afghanistan is currently one of the most food-insecure countries on Earth, and to change that WFP is working more closely than ever with our government partners to fight hunger through sustainable programmes that can eventually be fully 'Afghanized,'" said Bradley Guerrant, WFP's Deputy Country Director and Officer-in-Charge.

The theme of this year's World Food Day - "United Against Hunger" - was chosen to recognise efforts made in the fight against hunger at national, regional and international levels.

WFP's contribution to country-led food security plans builds on this theme through the deployment of an array of innovative tools that vary from country to country. All are focused on harnessing agricultural potential to improve access to the nutritious food that is the building block of life.

AFGHANISTAN - WFP's innovative Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative uses WFP's purchasing power to help connect farmers and food producers to markets and enhance agricultural production. In Afghanistan, this means that WFP is buying more than 6,000 metric tonnes of wheat directly from small-scale farmers and farmers' organizations this year. WFP is also working with local factory partners to, for the first time, produce in Afghanistan some of the fortified biscuits distributed to schoolchildren.



MAIL and UN FAO celebrate World Food Day 2010

27 October 2010, Kabul - Today 27 October 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations celebrated the 30th anniversary of World Food Day (WFD) at the main conference hall of MAIL in Kabul.

The theme of this year's observance, "United against hunger," highlights the need to launch a new green revolution, while emphasizing that the task of increasing food security is a job for everyone as is the goal of ensuring access to food.

The ceremony started by the opening remarks from His Excellency Deputy Minister Abdul Ghani Ghuriani, Acting MAIL Minister.

Mr. Tekeste G. Tekie, FAO Representative read the FAO Director General's Message on WFD. There were remarks from Ministry of Energy and Water and World Food Programme presented by their authorized representatives.

More than 150 people attended the event from different Ministries, Donor Agencies, UN Organizations, National and International NGOs and FAO projects.

A joint media conference was conducted by MAIL and FAO on this occasion. The participants then paid a visit to the exhibitions prepared by FAO/MAIL projects displaying their activities. The Day adjourned by serving lunch to the invitees.



STATEMENT ON PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 62:

BY STAFFAN DE MISTURA, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN

27 October 2010, Kabul - In close consultation with and on behalf of all relevant and concerned donor countries and the ISAF/NATO, we reaffirm our support for the principled stand taken by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the subject of private security companies.

Presidential Decree 62 is an expression of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's commitment to the consolidation of rule of law and we are committed to implementation of this Decree with a fixed timetable and accept that the international community must respond promptly to President Karzai's long-standing concerns about the conduct of private security companies.

We respect the national sovereignty of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and are engaged with representatives of the Government in constructive discussions to implement Presidential Decree 62.

Our position is guided by a shared objective with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to advance the security and economic development of Afghanistan within a rule of law framework and a spirit of genuine partnership and mutual support.

On 65th anniversary, UN resolves 'to do more' for peace, development

24 October 2010 - Marking its 65th anniversary, the United Nations has reaffirmed its commitment to promote peace, development and human rights, pledging enhanced action to achieve its global mission.

UN Day is commemorated every year on 24 October, the day in 1945 when the UN Charter entered into force.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says the Day is an occasion to reassert the "universal values of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity," as well as progress made jointly in the areas of literacy, life expectancy, the spread of technology and advances in democracy and the rule of law.

"But above all, UN Day is a day on which we resolve to do more, more to protect those caught up in armed conflict, to fight climate change and avert nuclear catastrophe; more to expand opportunities for women and girls, and to combat injustice and impunity."

Mr Ban also calls for sustained efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the set of poverty reduction and social development targets with a 2015 deadline.

Last month's MDG summit bringing together scores of world leaders in New York generated political momentum and fresh financial commitments for global anti-poverty efforts, despite the hard economic times the world is going through, he says.

"I am determined to press ahead as the 2015 deadline approaches," Mr Ban declares. "Despite our problems, despite polarization and distrust, our interconnected world has opened up vast new possibilities for common progress. Let us commit to do even more to realize the great vision set out in the UN Charter."

In his message, General Assembly President Joseph Deiss recalls the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, when the world came together to express solidarity with the most vulnerable members of the global community. "We demonstrated that all the peoples of the United Nations form a single community and that no one has the right to remain indifferent to abject poverty and the suffering of others," he says.

"We gave great hope to millions of men and women. We now have to unite our efforts to meet these expectations and to keep our promise. This is our moral duty. In so doing, we will make a significant contribution to global peace, security and prosperity, the primary mission of the United Nations," Mr Deiss says in his message, which he will deliver this evening at a UN Day concert in the General Assembly Hall featuring the Korean Broadcast System Symphony Orchestra, the Westminster Symphonic Choir and violinist Sarah Chang.

He also stresses that international solidarity, like musicians performing in an orchestra, remains the element that will continue to spur the movement towards achieving the MDGs. "Music brings us together across cultures and borders to promote peace and harmony. The one who sings does not argue, the one who plays an instrument does not carry a weapon," the President says. "To use Plato's words, we should now let music give soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."