



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA

Situation Report # 27- 14 July, 2008

Main developments

The security situation has become increasingly dangerous for humanitarian aid workers operating in Somalia. Aid workers are continuously targeted as they make efforts to reach the increasing number of Somalis in need of humanitarian assistance in various parts of the country.

On 6 July, the head of UNDP in Somalia, Osman Ali Ahmed was killed by unidentified gunmen in the Somali capital Mogadishu. Mr. Osman was attacked as he left a mosque after evening prayers. The motive of the killing is not yet known. Osman's brutal murder has since been condemned by the various arms of the UN including the Security Council and the UN Secretary General as well as the international community. The United Nations is urgently taking measures to ensure the protection of staff working in Somalia and minimize their exposure to risk while at the same time continuing high priority life saving humanitarian activities.

"The humanitarian situation in Somalia is such that we must continue our work to save lives and alleviate human suffering. While we explore various ways of ensuring staff security, it is clear that the ultimate protection comes from the Somali people and communities themselves," said the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mark Bowden.

On 7 July, a WFP convoy of trucks carrying 602 mt of WFP food assistance from Mogadishu to Xudur was attacked at a checkpoint near Leego, Wanla Weyn district, Lower Shabelle. In the fighting that broke out between the militia and convoy escorts, one of the WFP-contracted truck drivers was killed. The attack happened at the same location where another contracted truck driver was killed in early June. This is the fourth WFP-contracted truck driver killed this year. "WFP food is reaching many people but our drivers are daily risking their lives to deliver it," said Peter Goossens, WFP Somalia Country Director, adding that Somalia is becoming increasingly dangerous at the same time the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is on the rise.

On 11 July a senior NGO national staff member was shot and killed by unknown armed men in his residence in Mogadishu. Again on the same day another NGO staff member was shot in the face while conducting a food distribution in the Kilometre 13 area of Mogadishu. The victim is hospitalized and is in a critical condition. The motives for the incidents have not yet been established but may be related to recent threats against national aid workers issued by anti-government groups in Mogadishu.

In addition, civilians continued to be targeted throughout the reporting week. On 7 July thousands of residents of Belet Weyne fled their homes in fear of a possible clash between insurgents and Ethiopian troops. Reportedly 40% to 50% of the population fled their homes to seek refuge in nearby towns such as Bulo Burte, Jalalaqsi and other villages in the region. These families are currently said to be living under harsh conditions. On 7 July anti-government groups attacked Baidoa airport and the presidential palace in Baidoa town and has reportedly caused some displacement. The security situation in Baidoa remains tense.

Last week WFP distributed a total of 835 mt of food aid including to supplementary feeding programmes in Bay and Bakool regions (Ceel Berde, Qansax Dheere, Baidoa and Tayeeglow). Ceel Berde district has one of the highest malnutrition rates (24.1%) in Somalia. On 9 and 10 July WFP distributed general food aid in eight Bossaso IDP settlements. In total 3,281 households received a one month family ration, which amounts to 242 mt in total.

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