

shalikov



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Personnel "U"
Condolences/indivis

18 October 1999

Dear Mrs. Von Meijenfeldt-de Graaf,

I wish to express to you and your family my deep and profound condolences on the loss of your daughter, Saskia Von Meijenfeldt. The tragic nature of her death only deepens the sense of loss and sorrow felt by me, my United Nations colleagues, and humanitarians world-wide.

Your daughter was known for her dedication to helping those less fortunate. She was a highly respected member of the humanitarian community in Burundi, and in the Sudan and Kenya before. As her assignments testify, she served selflessly in extremely difficult environments, helping improve the lives of thousands of vulnerable men, women and children living in desperate conditions. Her contribution will be long remembered by those whom she served.

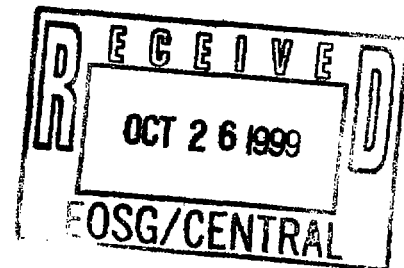
I wish to assure you that our thoughts and sentiments are with you and your family in this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan'.

- Kofi A. Annan

Mrs. Von Meijenfeldt-de Graaf
The Hague



Personal "v"
Messages/gated

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE FUNERAL OF SASKIA VON MEIJENFELDT

*Delivered on his behalf by Ms. Catherine Bertini,
Executive Director, World Food Programme
Groningen, the Netherlands, 21 October 1999*

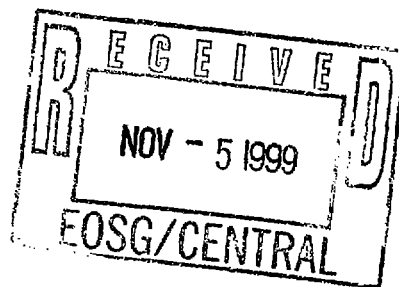
It is with profound sadness that I wish to express my heartfelt sympathies to all those who knew and loved Saskia von Meijenfeldt, especially her family, her friends and her colleagues. The entire United Nations family mourns with you for your irreplaceable loss.

Despite her youth, so cruelly cut short last week, Saskia had risen quickly to become the chief of WFP logistics in Burundi, making her one of the very few women to have served in this capacity in a United Nations humanitarian operation. We share your pride in this accomplishment. Saskia, who had served previously with WFP in Kenya, the Sudan and Somalia, was an outstanding example of the courage, dedication and professionalism that represent the true spirit of the United Nations.

The men and women who go into the field on behalf of the United Nations, whether they wear the blue helmets of UN peacekeepers, work for one of our humanitarian agencies or undertake missions for other UN bodies, are a breed apart. They take to heart the stirring summons to international cooperation enshrined in the UN Charter; they leave their homes and their families, often venturing into perilous situations.

It is a sad and unacceptable commentary on our times that those, like Saskia, who selflessly dedicate their lives to relieving human suffering, should be felled by the same unspeakable brutality that causes so much of that suffering. It is tragic that she, who stood in solidarity with the innocent victims of conflicts, should now herself have become a victim.

Let us honour her life with a prayer that her work will not have been in vain. Let us do all we can to ensure that her killers -- and all others who target UN personnel for violence and murder -- are brought to justice. We who carry on will never forget Saskia, and we will strive to make our work in the United Nations, in pursuit of peace and security for all humanity, continuously worthy of her supreme sacrifice.





Press Release Deputy Secretary-General

Safety of Staff
DSG

United Nations

Department of Public Information - News Coverage and Accreditation Service - New York

DSG/SM/71
GA/9636
14 October 1999

ACTION TO IMPROVE SECURITY OF STAFF ASKED OF MEMBER STATES,

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Following is the text of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette today to the General Assembly on staff security:

Let me start by paying homage to Julius Nyerere, the founder and first president of the United Republic of Tanzania, an architect of the Organization of African Unity and one of the giants of the 20th century African liberation movement. He was "Mwalimu", or "Teacher", to us all, and his death takes from us a good friend and a tireless supporter of the United Nations.

As I stand before you this morning, the following scenes are unfolding elsewhere: the family of Valentin Krumov of Bulgaria is mourning his brutal murder in Pristina on the very day he took up his duties there. The families of Luis Zuniga of Chile and Saskia von Meijenfeldt of the Netherlands are preparing to bury their loved ones, killed in cold blood while on a mission in Burundi to assess humanitarian needs. And the families of still more United Nations colleagues, held hostage in Georgia, are waiting in anguish for word of their fate.

Such incidents -- killings, assaults, harassment, kidnapping -- have become far too routine in conflict zones throughout the world. United Nations staff have become moving targets, not through any fault of their own but because there are those who seek advantage in flouting international humanitarian norms and simple human decency.

All too often the targeting is deliberate, directed not only against United Nations staff but also non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This is not only wrong. It is depriving the international community of a precious tool with which to relieve the suffering caused by war and humanitarian emergencies.

Some will say there is little that can be done against hatred and violence. I beg to differ, and I do so in the strongest possible terms. Some things are indeed beyond our control, but much is within it. You, the Member States, bear primary responsibility for ensuring

(more)

the security of United Nations staff. Here are some measures you can take:

First, you can conduct vigorous investigations into all such killings and incidents, prosecuting those responsible to the full extent of the law. To our knowledge, only one person has ever been found guilty and imprisoned for killing or causing the death of a United Nations staff member. This impunity cannot be allowed to stand.

Second, those who have not done so already can sign and ratify two conventions. The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel has come into force at long last, but only 29 nations have ratified it. The Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court, not yet in force, will make it a war crime to attack personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission pursued in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Third, you can provide the funding necessary to improve staff security. We need more security officers and stress counsellors, and more training. Improved security is not a luxury. It should be viewed -- as it would be in any private firm -- as an essential operating cost.

Fourth, you can use your influence over those who control the territories in which these atrocities occur. You can exert more influence over States, or over factions within them, to bring their forces under better control and discipline.

We all know that risk is part of the job. But a desperate irony is developing. Member States are willing to send unarmed civilians into places where they will not send well-armed soldiers.

As the Secretary-General has said, these are your own citizens who are venturing into peril. Let us consider what more we can do, on an urgent basis, to ensure that they can carry out their vital work in safety. Let us send our prayers to all who are mourning today.

And let us recognize that if we fail to act, there will be more families and friends who will mourn tomorrow, and the day after that. That is not something any of us would wish on another human being, or want to have on our conscience. So we must prevent it. Thank you very much.

* * * * *

Burundi
Safety of Staff



General Assembly

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Fifty-fourth session

Agenda item 46

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Letter dated 13 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the note verbale from the Government of Burundi concerning the murder of two United Nations officials on a humanitarian assistance mission in Rutana Province, Burundi (see annex).

I should like to request that the note verbale be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Marc Nteturuye
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex

Note verbale from the Government of Burundi concerning the murder of two United Nations officials on a humanitarian assistance mission in Rutana Province, Burundi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and wishes to inform him of the following.

1. The Government of Burundi is deeply shocked and horrified by the murder of several officials on a humanitarian assistance mission in Rutana Province, in the Muzye area, near the border with the United Republic of Tanzania, on the morning of 12 October 1999. Among those officials were Mr. Luis Manuel Zuñiga and Ms. Saskia Louise Von Meijenfeldt, the UNICEF representative and the Logistics Chief for the World Food Programme in Burundi, respectively.

2. The Government of Burundi strongly condemns these barbarous acts perpetrated by terrorists fearing neither God nor man, particularly against the two officials in the service of United Nations humanitarian agencies operating in Burundi. It deeply regrets this deplorable situation and offers its most sincere condolences to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the executive heads of UNICEF in New York and of the World Food Programme in Rome, to the representatives of those agencies in Bujumbura, and to the victims' families.

3. The Government of Burundi strongly urges humanitarian and international cooperation agencies operating in Burundi not to give way to intimidation by these terrorists.

4. The Government of Burundi will continue to make every effort to ensure the protection of all personnel, both expatriate and Burundian, working for humanitarian organizations operating on its soil.

5. The Government of Burundi reiterates the urgent request for regional cooperation, in particular with the United Republic of Tanzania, in tracking down and eliminating such terrorism, which operates without any moral or political justification as has just been flagrantly demonstrated by these vile acts against members of humanitarian organizations and innocent civilians.

6. The Government of Burundi will conduct all the necessary investigations and will bring the full force of the law and justice to bear against all conspirators and perpetrators of these horrible crimes.

N.A.

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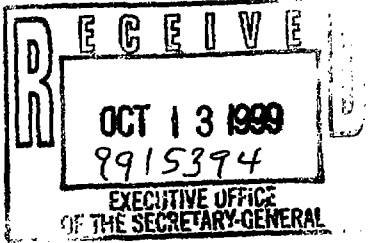
H.E. The Secretary General Kofi Annan,
The United Nations,
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NGO "O"

13th October



<http://www.oxfam.org.uk>

Dear Secretary General,

I am writing on behalf of David Bryer and all of us here in Oxfam to express our shock and distress at the terrible killings of Luis Zuniga and Saskia Von Meijenfeldt in Burundi and of Valentin Krumov in Kosovo.

Those who give light, it is said, must endure burning. They were good and brave people doing a noble and vital job, furthering peace and the meeting of humanitarian needs. We hope that their crucial work will continue and that their killers will be brought to justice.

Please pass on our deepest sympathies and condolences to their colleagues and their families.

John Magrath.

John Magrath,
Executive Assistant to the Director

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