



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Staff Union
DFS

30 May 2008

Dear Mr. Kisambira,

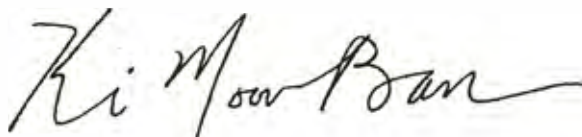
I wish to thank you for your letter raising concerns about air safety standards pursuant to the helicopter crash in Nepal on 3 March 2008.

Any aviation incident involving injury or loss of life represents a traumatic event for the entire United Nations family. The safety of United Nations personnel, in all its aspects including aviation safety, is of paramount importance to the Organization. I am also fully committed to ensuring the adherence to international standards, as well as the systematic implementation of best practices and lessons-learned in this and all areas involving the safety of staff.

To this end, the United Nations has implemented policies, mechanisms and processes to ensure that the highest standards of aviation safety are adhered to. Attached, please find a detailed note from the Department of Field Support outlining measures taken to ensure aviation safety and compliance. The note further details the international standards with respect to the sharing of investigation reports into aviation accidents.

Once again, I thank you for the concerns raised in your letter. United Nations personnel represent our greatest strength and assets. I am fully committed to ensuring their safety.

Yours sincerely,


BAN Ki-moon

Mr. Stephen Kisambira
President
United Nations Staff Union
New York

JUN - 2 2008

28-06142 / 28-02469

United Nations



Nations Unies

Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Cabinet du Secrétaire général

To: Mr. Nambiar,

Please find attached, for your approval and signature a reply letter addressed to the President of the UN Staff Union relating to the tragic helicopter crash in Nepal on 3 March 2008.

The response has been coordinated with DPKO and DSS.

Nicholas Haysom
30 May 2008

Cc: KWS

*Note - Original long letter from SG
returned to dept to provide a
short letter with annexed detailed
response from USG Malcomra.*

28-06142

Note to the Secretary-General
Aviation safety in UN peacekeeping operations

1. I refer to the letter addressed to you by the United Nations Staff Union of 3 March 2008, which expressed their concern regarding the safety of United Nations staff following the helicopter accident in Nepal. This note outlines the efforts taken and policies, mechanisms, and processes followed by the Departments of Field Support (DFS) and **Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** to ensure that air transportation in the field is as safe as possible.

2. DPKO/DFS air operations are frequently conducted in harsh environmental and post-conflict conditions, where lack of infrastructure and potential for hostile activities continue to exist. While there can never be zero risk associated with air travel, DFS and DPKO are fully committed and highly vigilant in our efforts, both at headquarters and in the field, to ensure air safety standards and industry best practices are comprehensively and consistently adhered to. A rigorous system of checks and balances is in place to ensure not only that safe aircraft are procured through a careful review of the procurement process, but also that Organizational policies and guidelines related to air operations and aviation safety are developed and implemented in accordance with Standards and Recommended Practices (SARP) set out by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

3. The implementation of DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety policy is overseen both in the field and at headquarters by Aviation Safety experts in DFS. The Aviation Safety personnel in the field are responsible for maintaining a strong and pro-active mission accident prevention programmes including hazard identification, aircraft inspection, landing site surveys and aircraft incident investigations. The Aviation Safety personnel at headquarters are responsible for providing advice to DPKO/DFS senior management, developing and promulgating aviation safety policies and overseeing missions' air operations. They also participate in the investigation of accidents of DPKO/DFS chartered aircraft, maintain relevant databases, and prepare risk analysis with corresponding recommendations for appropriate risk mitigation measures. They conduct regular aviation safety assistance visits to field missions; visit approved vendors; ensure strict adherence to the Aviation Safety Manual, Aviation Manual, and Aviation Standards for Humanitarian and Peacekeeping Operations; and develop and implement accident prevention programmes and emergency response plans in each mission.

4. ICAO conducted an audit on peacekeeping air operations in 2000. Since then, aviation safety and aviation in DPKO/DFS has been audited several times by OIOS and external auditors. In addition, the Aviation Standards were developed by the Aviation Technical Advisory Group (ATAG), comprising aviation and aviation safety specialists from DPKO/DFS, WFP and, since February 2006, a senior official from ICAO headquarters.

5. In case of an accident involving a civilian registered aircraft contracted by DFS, investigation is governed by ICAO rules. The Government of the host country in which the accident occurs conducts the investigation with the participation of the civil aviation authorities of the country of the operator, country of registration, country of design and

manufacture and the United Nations. Upon completion of all investigation activities, the chairperson of the Investigation Commission disseminates the final report. All States participating in the investigation, as well as those States whose citizens have been involved the accident, are entitled to request a copy of the report. The United Nations receives a copy of the Investigation Report as a participant in the investigation.

6. In case of an accident involving State (military) aircraft, the investigation is conducted by the Government of the country providing the aircraft to the United Nations. The United Nations participates in the investigation through its accredited representative and receives a copy of the Investigation Report. The Government investigating the accident has exclusive authority over the final Investigation Report which should be released through the appropriate government channels to all concerned including the Governments, whose citizens perished in the accident.

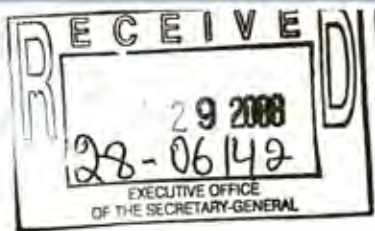
7. The United Nations has received copies of the investigation reports for all incidents listed in the letter of the Staff Union except the one that occurred on 2 November 2007, where the investigation is still ongoing. However a condition of the receipt of these reports is that the United Nations is not authorized to disseminate all or part of the report to any other State or organization. Affected individuals or their relatives may direct queries regarding the status of the investigation process through their national governments to the State Authority conducting the investigation.

8. In addition to these investigations, the Organization convenes a Board of Inquiry (BOI) in all appropriate and mandatory cases. A team is currently deployed to Nepal to conduct the BOI for the helicopter accident on 3 March 2008.

9. I wish to assure you that there are sufficient and effective measures in place to ensure that peacekeeping air operations are conducted in a safe and effective manner in accordance with internationally recognized aviation safety standards and, in compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly. That said, DFS and DPKO continue to actively strive to improve our safety measures. Policies and guidelines are routinely reviewed and improved to ensure they remain current with industry improvements, in accordance with the latest requirements and proposed safety standards in international civil aviation. Manuals and procedures are also routinely reviewed and updated to accurately reflect these standards. Risk management has been introduced as a major tool in day-to-day air operations. Collectively these highly integrated and closely coordinated activities represent the foundation upon which the DPKO/DFS-wide Safety Management System is implemented.



Susana Malcorra
28 May 2008



ACTION NH
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Note to Mr. Nambiar

Re: Communication from the United Nations Staff Union ✓
on the helicopter crash in Nepal ✓

1. Reference is made to the note of Mr. Haysom dated 21 May 2008 requesting an abbreviated version of the Secretary-General's response to the letter of the United Nations Staff Union of 3 March 2008.
2. A draft response for the consideration of the Secretary-General is enclosed. As requested, this response includes a detailed note signed by me, outlining in detail the efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) and policies, mechanisms and processes in place to ensure that air transportation in United Nations peacekeeping operations is as safe as possible.


Susana Malcorra
23 May 2008

Has the letter been?

by

JUN - 2 2008

Note to the Secretary-General
Aviation safety in UN peacekeeping operations

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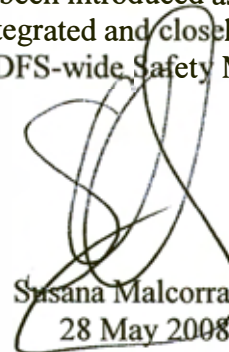
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8. In addition to these investigations, the Organization convenes a Board of Inquiry (BOI) in all appropriate and mandatory cases. A team is currently deployed to Nepal to conduct the BOI for the helicopter accident on 3 March 2008.

9. I wish to assure you that there are sufficient and effective measures in place to ensure that peacekeeping air operations are conducted in a safe and effective manner in accordance with internationally recognized aviation safety standards and, in compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly. That said, DFS and DPKO continue to actively strive to improve our safety measures. Policies and guidelines are routinely reviewed and improved to ensure they remain current with industry improvements, in accordance with the latest requirements and proposed safety standards in international civil aviation. Manuals and procedures are also routinely reviewed and updated to accurately reflect these standards. Risk management has been introduced as a major tool in day-to-day air operations. Collectively these highly integrated and closely coordinated activities represent the foundation upon which the DPKO/DFS-wide Safety Management System is implemented.



Susana Malcorra
28 May 2008

006326.02
MAY 22 2008

To: Ms. Malcorra,

• Action by _____
• Info copy to _____

This is in reference to the reply letter addressed to Mr. Kisambira, President of the UN Staff Union.

The Acting Chef de Cabinet believes that it would be more appropriate for the Secretary-General letter to be shorter, assuring them of his full commitment to Staff Safety and referring to an attached detailed response from yourselves.

The more detailed response should be for your signature and can be referred to in the SG's letter.

Thank you.

Nicholas Haysom

21 May 2008


Cc: Mr. Nambiar
Mr. Kim

28-05687

Note to Mr. Nambiar

**Re: Communication from the United Nations Staff Union ✓
on the helicopter crash in Nepal ✓**

1. Reference is made to your note dated 10 March 2008 and the communication of the President of the United Nations Staff Union dated 3 March 2008 to the Secretary-General relating to the tragic helicopter crash in Nepal on 3 March 2008.
2. A draft response for the consideration of Secretary General addressing the concerns raised by the President of United Nations Staff Union is enclosed. As requested, the response has been coordinated with DPKO and DSS.



Susana Malcorra
16 May 2008

Note to Messrs Guéhenno and Veness and Ms. Holl-Lute

Re: Communication from the United Nations Staff Union on the helicopter crash in Nepal

1. A communication addressed to the Secretary-General has been received from the President, United Nations Staff Union on the above subject. This letter, inter alia, calls for a full accounting of the causes behind accidents involving all UN helicopter crashes to determine if adequate air safety standards were met or overlooked and reiterates that the results of all previous investigations must be made public. A copy of the letter is attached for your reference.
2. In this connection, I would appreciate if your offices could work together to provide a draft response to this communication of the United Nations Staff Union for consideration of the Secretary-General.

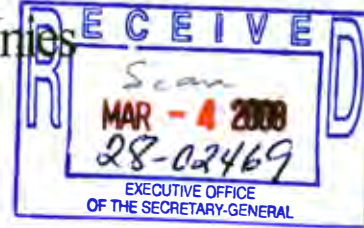

Vijay Nambiar
10 March 2008

United Nations
Staff Union



Syndicat du personnel
des Nations Unies

HEADQUARTERS ROOM S-525 NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL.: 1 (212) 963.7075 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.3367



3 March 2008

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

The fatal crash of a United Nations helicopter today in Nepal once again underscores the numerous dangers faced by staff working for the Organization. While the final toll and cause of the crash today is not yet known, the Staff Union calls for a full accounting of the causes behind accidents involving all UN helicopter crashes to determine if adequate air safety standards were met or overlooked.

The United Nations Staff Council's Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service has identified aircraft safety issues as presenting a severe risk to personnel serving in the field. The General Assembly (resolution 57/279) shared the view that air safety was an issue of primary concern to the United Nations and had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that air safety standards are met for all United Nations air operations.

Excluding the crash today, there have been nine fatal helicopter crashes involving United Nations or UN contracted helicopters since 1997, in which a total of 80 personnel have died. The list of incidents is:

2 November 2007	United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL): MI-8 helicopter, 3 dead;
25 January 2006	United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS): Puma helicopter, 1 dead, 10 critically injured;
29 June 2004	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL): MI-8 helicopter, 24 dead;
7 November 2001	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL): MI-8 helicopter, 7 dead;
14 January 2001	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team in Mongolia: MI-8 helicopter, 9 dead;

His Excellency
Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

cc: Mr. Edoardo Bellando
Mr. Dimitri Samaras

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 14 March 1999 | United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH): MI-8 helicopter, 13 dead; |
| 17 March 1998 | United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA): UH-1 Bell helicopter, 6 dead; |
| 17 September 1997 | United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina: MI-8 helicopter, 12 dead; and, |
| 7 August 1997 | United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL): Bell Augusta helicopter, 5 dead. |

The Staff Union reiterates that the results of all previous investigations must be made public. The families and friends of the victims have a right to know the cause of these accidents.

The Committee believes that safety requirements should be the foremost concern when contracting aircraft for peacekeeping missions. The possibility that other factors were involved in the procurement of air transportation services must be examined, as well as whether United Nations policies related to air safety have been adequate or sufficiently monitored.

The Committee avails itself to assist with the review of safety and security matters, especially in this instance.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Kisambira
President,
United Nations Staff Union