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Primary Contact

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Assignee In Container 'S-0036-0011-009 (Stephen Abebreseh)' since 11/12/2006 at 2:5

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Notes

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Ed (General)

for SPS attention

A/G

LOHEM

New York, 5 April 2004

Dear Secretary-General,

We, the undersigned staff members of the United Nations Secretariat, are writing to express our concern at your response to the investigation into accountability for the tragic events of 19 August 2003.

We welcome your efforts to determine the causes of the tragedy and to assign responsibility for the lack of measures taken that could have saved lives and prevented injuries. We also welcome many of the findings contained in the summary of the Security in Iraq Accountability Panel's (SIAP) report.

We understand the extraordinarily difficult situation the Organization and you yourself faced in the spring of last year and the political pressures you came under. However, we have four specific sets of concerns:

First, a fundamental flaw of the SIAP summary report, the Ahtisaari report, and your decisions of 29 March 2004, is the lack of acknowledgment and analysis of the wider context of events:

- Neither panel explored sufficiently to what extent the 19 August bombing was the result of a failure by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to carry out its responsibilities towards the UN in respect of security. Moreover, to our knowledge, we still do not know who murdered our colleagues in Iraq, and no results of any investigations by United States authorities appear to have been formally communicated to the UN.
- From the very outset, the parameters for the UN's proposed engagement in Iraq were set by you and by the Steering Group on Iraq (SGI). These parameters were shaped by your early decision that the UN should play a political role in the aftermath of the invasion. Moreover, following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), the role played by you and other senior managers in New York in encouraging senior officials in Iraq to maintain and increase the UN's operational presence in order to fulfill the mandate significantly affected the management of the security situation in Iraq. While the SIAP acknowledged some political influence on the main actors, we believe the full extent of the exceptional internal and external political pressure, and its adverse impact on UN decision-making on the ground in Iraq and at Headquarters, has not been properly taken into account.

Second, in light of the above, we are disappointed by your lack of acknowledgment of your personal responsibility in this matter:

- You were the official ultimately responsible for the key decisions affecting the UN's deployment and posture in Iraq, and were intimately involved in all aspects of the crisis. You are the only official able to declare Phase V, or downgrade from Phase V to Phase IV. You are ultimately responsible for the security of UN staff. We believe that implying – as the SIAP summary report and your Spokesperson have done – that you bear no such responsibility because you were poorly advised, is disingenuous. It is entirely reasonable that the staff of the UN should look to you to take responsibility for your decisions in relation to Iraq.
- We believe that the Security Coordinator and the Designated Official (DO) have been forced to bear a disproportionate amount of responsibility for the tragedy in Iraq. In addition, few if any

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of the failures or omissions specifically attributed by the SIAP to these two officials would have affected the fact that the UN was targeted in this unprecedented manner.

Third, we believe that you have failed to apply fundamental principles of fairness and due process in the case of the Field Security Coordination Officer (FSCO) and of the two senior managers concerned:

- By seeking the resignation of the two senior officials and reassigning the FSCO without any written notification of the charges against them, their right to know the basis of the disciplinary action taken against them and to defend their actions was denied. To our knowledge, none of them has been provided with a full copy of the SIAP report. The Staff Rules clearly outline the rights of individual staff members in this regard.

Fourth, the actions you have taken in response to the SIAP report are very likely to severely restrict the UN's ability to carry out its humanitarian and peacekeeping mandates in the future:

- By disregarding the wider context, including the political pressures from within the Organization as well as those from outside, and by placing excessive emphasis on individual responsibility over and above the United Nations system's shared responsibility for security, we fear that DOs may adopt an overly risk-averse posture simply to avoid a similar sanction.

In conclusion, we feel that your Spokesman's statement on 29 March 2004 was incomplete, and that a review of your decisions following the SIAP report's release is appropriate.

Therefore:

We ask you to state to the staff of the United Nations that you, as our Secretary-General, take responsibility for your decisions in Iraq as well as for the collective failure of the system that you head to protect its staff. In times of crisis, the staff expects you to provide leadership.

We urge you to review your acceptance of the resignations of Mr. Tun Myat and Mr. Ramiro Lopes da Silva and the absence of due process afforded to them.



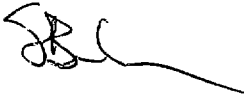

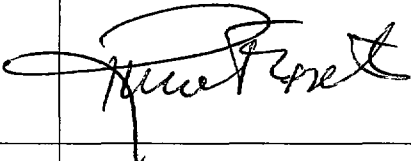
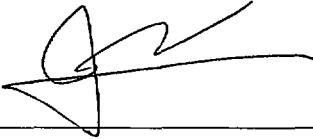

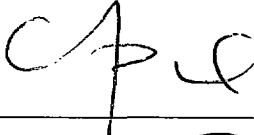

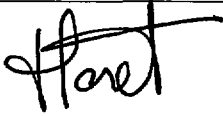
We ask you to pursue vigorously the issue of the role and responsibility of the CPA, as the Occupying Power in Iraq, in providing security to UN premises and staff, and in bringing to justice those who conspired to murder our colleagues.

Yours sincerely,


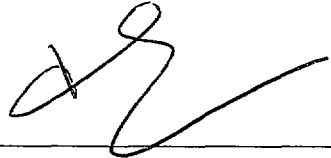
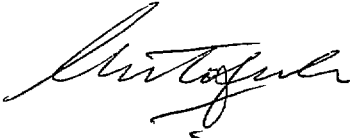

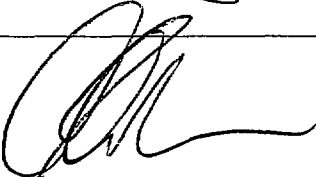
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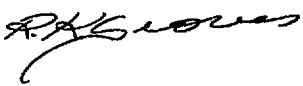
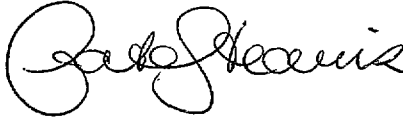
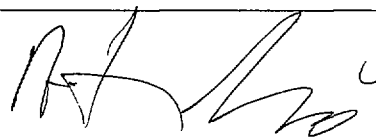


65 signatures

Letter to the Secretary-General regarding actions following the release of the SIAP report

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Stephane Burk	OCHA	
ED TSMI	OCHA	
Rune FROSTH	OCHA	
JAIME GUEVARA	OCHA	
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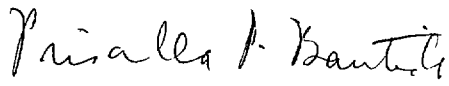


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David Wimhurst	OUSG / DPKO	
Xavier Sticker	OUSG / DPKO	
LISA Kurbiel	PBPU / DPKO	Kurbiel
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HELENA FRASER	OCHA/PDSB	
ROBYN GROVES	OCHA/PDSB	
CATE STEVENS	OCHA/PDSB	
Amjad Abbasbar	OCHA/PDSB	
ALLEGRA BAIOCCHI	OCHA/PDSB	
MARK BOWDEN	OCHA/PDSB	
Manuel Bessler	OCHA/PDSB	


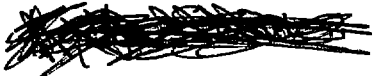
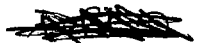
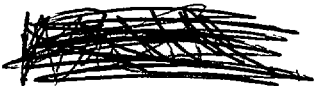

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Oliver Ulrich	OCHA	
K. Gelsdorf	OCHA	
G. DE BRANCOVAN	OCHA	
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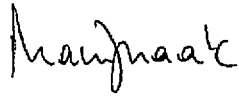

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STEPHEN JOHNSON	HEB / OCHA.	
Steven M. Gleason	HEB/OCHA	


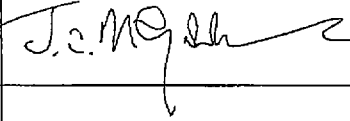


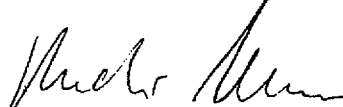
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Name	Department/Division	Signature
ASIF KHAN	DPKO	
		
Arezou Azad	DPKO	


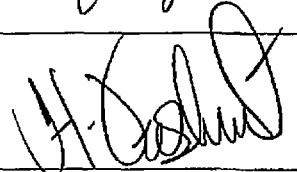
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Mystie TURBIA	OCHA/RCB/GVA	



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Zuzette MULLER	- u -	

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Hamayoon Farhat	OCHA	

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Terry Buckey	UNSECOORD	
ALAN BRIMMERLOW	UNSECOORD	
Annette Leijenaar	UNSECOORD	
G.A. MURPHY	UNSECOORD	
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