The Aid Security Monthly News Brief

Security Incidents

Africa

Burkina Faso

15 January 2016: Al Qaeda-linked gunmen attacked a hotel restaurant in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou and killed 30 people by gun fire. Among them was an American who had run an orphanage and a crisis centre for women, two Swiss who supported the education efforts of the Yelen Association, six Canadian volunteers from the Congrégation des sœurs de Notre-Dame du Perpétuel Secours, and a photographer on mission for Amnesty International. Sources: Wesh, SwissInfo, CBC News I and CBC News II, BJP.

16 January 2016: An Australian doctor and his wife, who had run a clinic in the town of Djibo, near the border with Mali, were kidnapped from their home by members of an al Qaeda-linked militant group. The wife was released soon after. Sources: BBC, Independent, Reuters (1) and Reuters (2).

Kenya

19 January 2016: The director of the Kabgal Foundation was detained for two days in Kenya's capital Nairobi. He is accused of involvement in terrorist activity. Source: Daily Nation.

Mali

08 January 2016: Armed men from an AQIM branch kidnapped a Swiss charity worker from her home in the city of Timbuktu, Northern Mali. Sources: Reuters and Le Monde.

Somalia

01 January 2016: Several gunmen opened fire on a group of workers from a Turkish NGO in Somalia's capital Mogadishu as they left a mosque. The attack killed one national staff and injured four others, including one Turkish citizen. Al Shabaab extremists are suspected of being behind the assault. Sources: Daily Sabah and Today's Zaman.

Somalia contd.

12 January 2016: Unidentified gunmen and local residents looted the premises of an Iranian aid agency in Mogadishu five days after Somalia had cut diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Computers and other unspecified equipment were stolen. Sources: International Business Times and News 24.

21 January 2016: A car packed with explosives was rammed into beach View Hotel on Lido Beach in Mogadishu. Among the 20 people killed, one was a national UN staff member. Source: Aljazeera.

South Sudan

13 January 2016: A national UN staff member was attacked with machete and spears in the Protection of Civilians (PoC) camp in Bentiu, Unity State. No further information available.

31 January 2016: Two UN contracted drivers were injured in a shooting when perpetrators ambushed the convoy and fired at the vehicle. The gunmen fled after robbing the driver. No further information available.

Asia

Afghanistan

Between 1 and 4 January 2016: Four civilian UN staff were injured in vehicle borne IED suicide attacks in Kabul. Source UN.

10 January 2016: The Embassy of the United States of America (USA) in Afghanistan issued a public warning related to a planned kidnapping of unidentified US and European NGO workers of an unspecified NGO in Nangarhar Province, Eastern Afghanistan. Source: Kabul Embassy of the US.

19 January 2016: A national UN staff member was attacked and killed in his Kabul home. No further information available.

27 January 2016: Three deminers and the on-site operations manager from the Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) were attacked and killed by Taliban insurgents whilst performing duties in the district of Seraj, Helmand Province. Sources: Tolo News and Reliefweb.

Bangladesh

22 December 2015: A French humanitarian worker from an organisation known as Barakacity, who was arrested by the paramilitary forces whilst en route to Rohingya Refugee Camps, remains detained under difficult conditions. He is accused of links to terrorism. Source: Al Jazeera.

Myanmar

22 January 2016: A Kachin aid worker was sentenced to six months imprisonment for sharing a picture on Facebook deemed to defame the Myanmar Army. He had been arrested in October 2015. Source: Irrawaddy.

Tajikistan

22 January 2016: An executive member of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation was detained and released the next day. Sources: Humanitarian Relief on Twitter and Jamal on Twitter.

Europe

France
14 January 2016: A British aid worker was fined one thousand euros by a French court for trying to smuggle an Afghan girl into Britain in October 2015. The girl was a resident of the Jungle Refugee Camp in the port city of Calais, Northern France, where the aid worker has helped build shelters. Her father had asked the volunteer aid worker to bring the girl to family members in Leeds, England. Sources: Irish Independent, ITV News and Reuters.

Greece
11 January 2016: Seven volunteers were arrested on Lesbos for stealing lifejackets from a dumpsite, which they intended to use as mattresses for homeless refugees. Source: IRIN.

14 January 2016: two Danish and three Spanish volunteer lifeguards from the charity groups Team Humanity and Proem Aid were arrested by the Greek coastguard while they were looking for a sinking migrant boat off the coast of Lesbos. The volunteers were charged with people smuggling, released on bail on 16 January 2016 and are currently awaiting trial. Source: Al Jazeera and IRIN.

16 January 2016: In a separate incident, a volunteer from an unspecified organisation was arrested for taking a picture with a Frontex patrol boat in the background. Source: Al Jazeera.

Middle-East

Occupied Palestinian Territories
06 January 2016: Israeli forces entered the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in East Jerusalem and arrested two sit-in protestors who had defied an Israeli order that banned them from their hometown for several months. Source: Middle East Net.

Pakistan
13 January 2016: A suicide bomber blew himself up near a UN-backed polio eradication centre in the city of Quetta, Balochistan Province, where an anti-polio team was preparing for a third day of a vaccination campaign. The blast was set off when security forces prevented the perpetrator from entering the building and occurred at the moment when a police van arrived to accompany the vaccinators. The blast killed 15 security personnel guarding the building and injured 24 people. The militant groups Pakistani Taliban and Junduallah separately claimed responsibility for the attack. Sources: BBC, Reuters, The Guardian and The New York Times.

Syrian Arab Republic
10 January 2016: A missile struck the warehouse of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, located in Turkmen Mountain, Latakia Governorate, where relief supplies were stored. Source: Humanitarian Relief on Twitter.

Visit The Guardian to read about the dangers faced by the volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in the Houla Plain, Homs Governorate, whilst working in the midst of civil war.
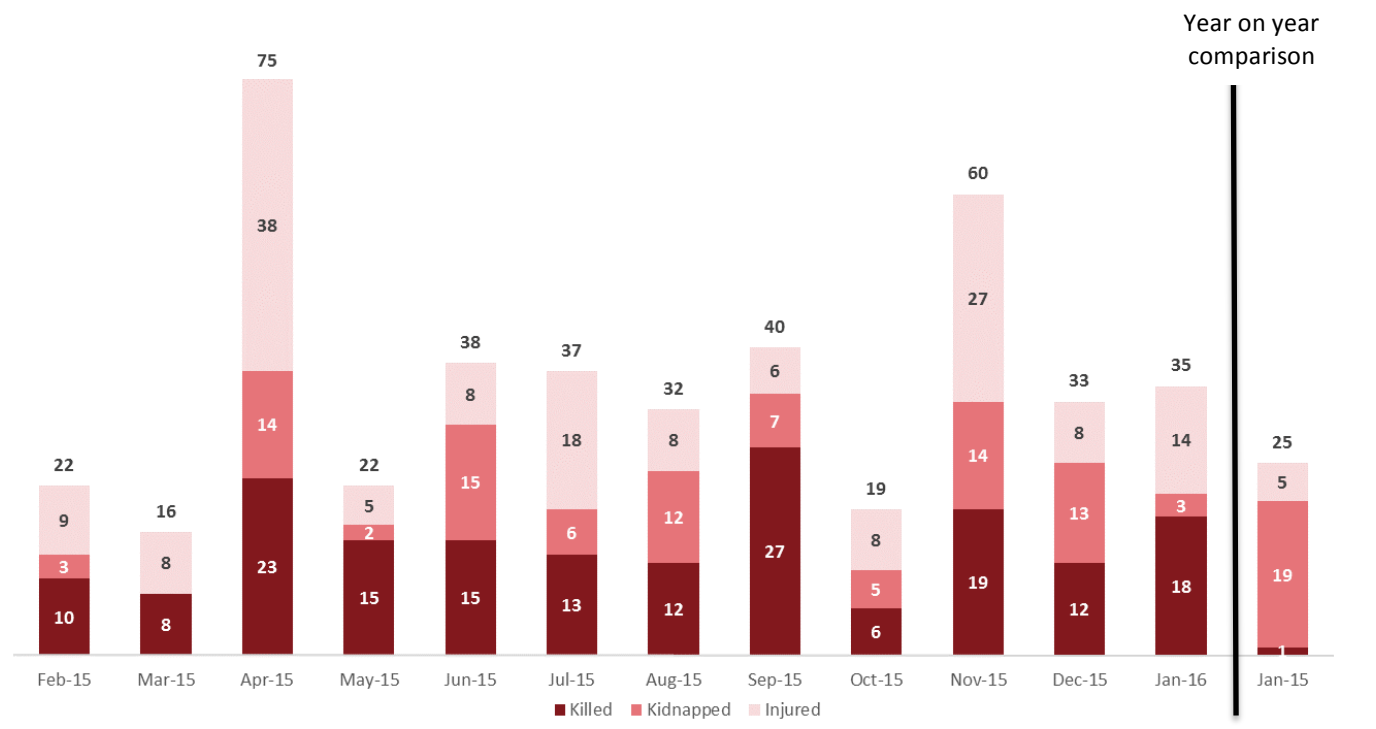
Yemen
05 January 2016: The Al Noor Centre for Care and Rehabilitation of the Blind, located in the area of Alsafyeh in Yemen's capital Sanaa, was bombed in an airstrike carried out by the Saudi-led coalition. Source: VICE News.

Yemen contd.

10 January 2016: Several buildings of the MSF-supported Shiara Hospital in the district of Razeh, Saada Province, Northern Yemen, collapsed after a projectile struck them, resulting in the death of six people and the injury of 10, including three MSF staff members. It remains unclear whether the projectile was fired by warplanes, which were seen flying overhead at the time, or from the ground. Sources: BBC, CNN, France 24, Jason Cone on Twitter, MSF International, MSF UK I, MSF UK II, MSF USA, PBS Newshour, ReliefWeb, Reuters, Thomas Reuters Foundation, UN News Centre, VOA I and VOA II.

21 January 2016: The ambulance service of the MSF-affiliated Al Gamhoury Hospital in the town of Dhayan, Saada Province, was hit in an airstrike as it arrived on site after an earlier bombing, leaving one ambulance driver dead and two dozen people, including civilian rescuers, injured. Sources: Antara News, MSF, MSF UK, Reuters and Russia Today.

Trend Reporting: Humanitarian staff killed, kidnapped and injured in severe events, January 2015 to January 2016

Humanitarian staff is defined as staff of international and local relief and development NGOs and includes programme and administrative staff, drivers and security guards, as well as medical staff (including ambulance drivers and community health workers), employees of UN agencies or contractors and personnel working for humanitarian mine detection or clearance agencies.

Security-related access restraints

Africa

Burundi

26 January 2016: A team of three independent experts, mandated by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to investigate violations and abuses of human rights in Burundi, has not been given permission to enter the country. Source: UN News Centre.

Democratic Republic of Congo

20 January 2016: Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced that it will close its health clinics programme in Mweso, Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province, in response of the kidnapping of staff in mid-December. Sources: Ben Parker on Twitter and MSF.

22 January 2016: The United Nations (UN) declared that kidnapping and attacks on aid convoys have created a general level of insecurity that hinders the delivery of life-saving assistance to vulnerable communities in North Kivu Province. Source: Reuters.

Egypt

3 January 2016: Observers are critical of a new bill and believe that humanitarian actors may face difficulties in Egypt if the newly proposed bill is passed. If enacted into law, the administrative authority reserves the right to dissolve civil society organisations perceived to be a threat to national security, or to stop them from forming in the first place. Sources: Al Monitor.

Somalia

26 January 2016: Non-state armed groups in Somalia continue to impose bans on commercial activities in some areas within the regions of Bakool, Bay, Gedo and Hiiraan, and are disrupting the delivery of humanitarian aid. Source: Thomas Reuters Foundation.

Sudan

13 January 2016: Tearfund announced that its offices across the country will be closed down upon the request of the Sudanese Government. Sources: Tearfund.

27 January 2016: OCHA has requested safe and unhampered humanitarian access to the Darfur, where about 34,000 people have been displaced and are in need of aid. Source: Reuters.

Asia

China

25 January 2016: This year, the Government of China is expected to pass a law that would severely curtail the activities of foreign NGOs, and to give the authorities unlimited powers to detain charity workers. Source: IRIN.

Europe

Greece

19 January 2016: According to a nurse volunteer, the Greek authorities have prohibited the use of beacon lights on the island of Lesbos, which rescue workers use to direct migrant boats ashore. Source: IRIN.

Middle-East

Iraq

28 January 2016: Humanitarian actors are not able to safely work in many parts of central Iraq due to dangers posed by militants from the Islamic State, who now control about a third of the country. Source: Thomas Reuters Foundation.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

4 January 2016: The UN investigator for human rights abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territories announced his resignation, claiming that, for the past 18 months, Israel has repeatedly failed to answer any of his oral and written requests for access into the territories of Gaza and the West Bank. Source: Reuters.

Syrian Arab Republic

11, 14 and 19 January 2016: Warring parties restrained access to several towns and villages across the country, including Madaya, Al-Fu'ah, Kefraya and Deir ez-Zor. On 11 and 14 January 2016, UN and ICRC humanitarian aid trucks were given permission to entered Madaya, Al-Fu'ah and Kefraya. On 19 January, the Russian Air Force airdropped relief assistance into Deir ez-Zor, amongst other unspecified locations. Sources: IRIN, NBC News, Reuters I, Reuters II, Reuters III, Reuters IV, Reuters V, The New York Times, Thomas Reuters Foundation and UN News Centre, Reuters, The Washington Post.

According to allegations, rebel leaders in some towns may have controlled previously delivered humanitarian aid and sold it to those who could afford to pay. Source: Reuters.

Yemen

05 January 2016: OHCHR stated concerns regarding the access restraints to the city of Taiz (200,000 inhabitants) by Houthi forces. According to OHCHR, the strict control of all entry points into the city by the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis has resulted in limited access to essential items, including food, and made conditions extremely difficult for the civilian population. Thousands of tons of food delivered to the vicinity of the city cannot be moved to areas in need. Source: VICE News.

07 January 2016: the Yemeni Government decided to expel the representative of the UN OHCHR from the country. However, the decision was reversed a day later presumably after intervention by the Secretary General of the UN. Sources: The New York Times and VOA.