

## [Long-time Russian Ambassador to UN, Vitaly Churkin, dies suddenly in New York](#)



Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, briefing journalists late last year at Headquarters. UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

20 February 2017 – The General Assembly today held a moment of silence honouring the memory of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, who died suddenly this morning in New York.

During a meeting of the Assembly on the reform of the world body, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative, Petr Ilichev, informed those present about Ambassador Churkin's sudden passing.

The seasoned diplomat, who would have turned 65 tomorrow, served as Permanent Representative since 2006.

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## [UN Security Council condemns latest terrorist attack in Mogadishu](#)

20 February 2017 – Strongly condemning the latest deadly terrorist attack in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, the United Nations Security Council today reiterated that its determination to support peace, security and development in the long-troubled country would not be swayed by this, or any other such attack.

In a press statement that follows yesterday's terrorist attack at a market in Mogadishu that killed at least 39 people and injured many more, the members of the Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and Government of Somalia. They also wished a speedy recovery to those injured.

The Council went on to commend the swift response of Somalia's security and first responders.

It also reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and

security and underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice, as well as reaffirmed the need to combat the scourges in accordance with international law.

Further to the statement, the Security Council paid tribute to all Somali and international actors working to bring peace and stability in Somalia. The 15-nation body reiterated its determination to support peace, stability and development in Somalia and underlined that "neither this nor any other terrorist attack would weaken that determination."

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## [DR Congo: UN rights chief calls on Government to halt violence by security forces](#)

20 February 2017 – The United Nations human rights chief today called on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to take immediate steps to halt widespread human rights violations, including apparent summary executions, by the country's armed forces.

"It is time to stop a blunt military response that does nothing to tackle the root causes of the conflict between the Government and local militias but instead targets civilians on the basis of their presumed links to the militias," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in a news release from his office (OHCHR).

Mr. Zeid said that there are multiple, credible allegations of massive human rights violations in the provinces of Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental and Lomami amid a sharp deterioration in security situation there.

A local militia linked to a customary chief, Kamuina Nsapu, who was killed by the African country's armed forces in August 2016 has been increasingly active in Kasai Central Province, mostly attacking government buildings and churches, and national security forces. The militia also reportedly recruits and uses children.

According to OCHR, horrific video footage emerged over the weekend apparently showing soldiers of the Government security forces, known as FARDC, shooting repeatedly and without warning at men and women, who purportedly belonged to the militia in Muenza Nsapu village.

The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC is not in a position to verify the origin and authenticity of the video. However, the DRC Government spokesperson has stated that FARDC officers are under judicial investigation.

The UN Joint Human Rights Office in the country has documented the killings of more than 280 individuals since July 2016 in the context of this violence.

Amid a worrying escalation of violence in provinces considered relatively calm, I call again on the Government to redouble its efforts to tackle impunity that feeds further violence and human rights violations," said Mr. Zeid.

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## [Attack in Somali capital a reminder of extremists' indifference towards human life – UN envoy](#)

19 February 2017 – Strongly condemning today's terrorist attack at a marketplace in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, which reportedly killed at least 25 people and injured dozens more, the United Nations envoy in the country stressed that incident is a brutal reminder of the retrograde tactics employed by violent extremists.

"Killing civilians is despicable and achieves nothing except to remind Somalia of the indifference of extremists to human life and suffering," underscored Michael Keating, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and the head of the UN mission in the country (UNSOM), in a statement.

"The perpetrators need to be brought to justice swiftly," he added.

Earlier today, at about 13:00 local time, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated at the Abagedo market near Kawa Guudey in the Dharkenley district of Mogadishu, claiming the lives of pedestrians and shopkeepers in the vicinity.

According to UNSOM, no group has yet claimed responsibility.

The attack comes at a time when Somalia is preparing for the inaugural celebrations of its newly elected Federal President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmajo', who came to office earlier this month amid an extraordinary public outpouring of euphoria marking the beginning of a new chapter in Somali history that is ripe with opportunity and promise," noted the statement.

In the statement, Mr. Keating also praised the work of the country's security forces and first responders in the aftermath of the attack, and offered his condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed.

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## UN, international organizations condemn attacks on civilians in parts of Central African Republic

19 February 2017 – Voicing deep concern over the security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), in particular in the Ouaka and Haute-Kotto prefectures, the United Nations together with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union (AU), the Organization of La Francophonie (IOF) and the European Union (EU) have commended the acts of violence that have exasperated an already alarming humanitarian situation.

According to a joint statement issued by the five organizations, violence perpetrated by the *Front populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique* and its allies, as well as *Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Paix en Centrafrique* caused heavy civilian casualties as well as significant population displacement, adding to the humanitarian woes in the region.

Demanding that the belligerents cease the hostilities immediately, the organizations emphasized that all attacks against the civilian population, UN and humanitarian personnel may be subject to judicial prosecution, in line with the [national] legislation and international law.

They also expressed their deep appreciation for robust action undertaken by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR, popularly known by its French acronym MINUSCA to protect civilians and help put an end to violence in the areas threatened by the belligerents and encouraged the mission to continue its efforts.

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In the joint statement, the organizations also welcomed the measures put in place for the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court.

They also underlined that only dialogue, in strict adherence with the constitutional and democratic order, will allow the concerned Central African actors to find the appropriate and sustainable responses to their legitimate grievances.

In this regard, they reiterate the importance of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation led by the AU, ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and supported by Angola, the Republic of Congo and Chad, noted the joint statement.

In addition, expressing their commitment to work together for the success of

the Initiative, in support of the efforts of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra aimed at sustainably promoting reconciliation and inclusive governance in line with the conclusions of the Bangui Forum, the five partner organizations underscored that those armed groups that engage in new violent acts run the risk of excluding themselves from the African Initiative and expose themselves to additional international sanctions.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013. Despite significant progress and successful elections, CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest.