

## Aid agencies rethinking Somali position as attacks increase

Aid agencies are considering suspending operations in conflict-stricken Somalia as deadly attacks against humanitarian workers ramp up, reports said Monday.

Millions of Somalis are reliant upon food aid due to a combination of conflict, drought and rising food prices.

However, the BBC said that unnamed agencies were increasingly concerned by the security situation and were considering their options.

Most agencies are now based in neighbouring Kenya and do not send expatriate workers into Somalia.

Last Friday alone, two workers were killed and another seriously injured in separate attacks.

This followed on from the deadly shootings of the head of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) the previous Sunday and a driver for the World Food Programme last Monday.

The head of the UN refugee agency UNHCR's Mogadishu programme is still being held by gunmen.

German charity Bread for the World (DBG) temporarily suspended its operations after its local deputy director was shot dead near Mogadishu Friday.

'They fired four bullets into his head and he died on the spot,' Elmi Mohamed Dahir, an eyewitness told DPA.

Abukar Sheikh Ali, the director of DBG, told Mogadishu based radio station Shabelle that they would stop all their programmes aimed at helping the internally displaced.

'We cannot work in this atmosphere at the moment,' he said.

However, DBG resumed its relief efforts Sunday.

Another aid worker with an organization affiliated to the World Food Programme was seriously injured in a separate attack.

Aid workers have been increasingly targeted for attacks and abduction since the man believed to be Al Qaeda's top operative in Somalia, Aden Hashi Ayro, was killed May 1 in a US airstrike.

Ayro was the leader of Islamic militant group al-Shabaab, the armed wing of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). Al-Shabaab said it would target foreign troops and workers to avenge Ayro's death.

Militants have been waging a guerrilla war against government troops since the UIC was ousted from power at the beginning of 2007 with Ethiopian assistance.

The interim government has been unable to achieve stability in the Horn of Africa country, which has been plagued by chaos and civil war since dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was toppled in 1991.

A peace deal was agreed between moderate Islamists and the government in early June, but al-Shabaab has not signed the agreement and has vowed to keep fighting until Ethiopian troops leave Somalia.

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