

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS TO THE SOLEMN CEREMONY MARKING THE FIFTH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAGHDAD BOMBING  
New York, 19 August 2008**

Dear family members of victims, dear survivors, dear friends,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Five years have passed since the deadly terrorist attack on our Baghdad headquarters robbed the United Nations of some of its best and bravest staff members.

Their children have grown without a parent. Their other loved ones, many with us now, have suffered the pain of their absence every day. We, too, continue to mourn for them all.

The victims were true heroes, charging into a dangerous situation to help people in desperate need – and paying the ultimate price.

Even as we grieve at their tragic deaths, we take heart from their courageous lives. Their legacy still endures. The lives of those we remember today have inspired many, many artistic, academic, humanitarian and other initiatives.

Nothing could kill their ideals. And nothing can weaken our determination to pursue our noble mission.

Over the past five years, the United Nations has continued to help the people of Iraq and others throughout the world who are suffering from violence, disease and want.

This work is often dangerous, but our resolve is as strong as ever. All of those who died on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003 would have wanted us to go on, and we have.

The United Nations helped organize historic elections and draft a new constitution in 2005. As violence spiraled in the period that followed, our humanitarian agencies

stepped up their aid to Iraqi refugees and others in need. We are also working to hard today to encourage political compromise among the various communities in Iraq.

But the risks remain. The terrorist attack on our offices in Algiers last December was a terrible reminder of the threats we face.

After that atrocious crime, we set up the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide. It found that, and I quote, "Total security has not been achieved anywhere by anyone in the past and will not be achieved by anyone in the future. But security conditions can and must be constantly improved." Unquote.

We are doing just that. We are striving each day to ensure that our staff operate under optimal conditions, with state-of-the-art equipment, the strongest protection and the most extensive safety measures we can possibly take.

But protecting ourselves requires more than barricades and shatterproof glass. We must continue to explain, clearly and consistently, the impartial and objective role of the UN wherever we are.

By keeping alive the memory of those talented, selfless, compassionate and irreplaceable people we lost five years ago, we remind the world of what the UN stands for. And we recall again why the UN's work must be protected and supported: for the sake of peace and justice, now and for generations to come.

Thank you.