

MEDIA RELEASE

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE UNICEF REPRESENTATIVES IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND UGANDA

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The United Nations Children's Fund offers its condolences for the loss of the two staff members with the nongovernmental organization, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), killed in a reported ambush by members of the Lord's Resistance Army on 21 September 2009, in Haut Mbomou, Central Republican Republic. Our hearts go out, first and foremost, to the families, colleagues and friends of the deceased.

UNICEF, furthermore, expresses its concern for the well-being of another COOPI staff member who was injured in the same incident along the Bangui-Obo road.

It is simply unacceptable that aid workers are attacked or killed while providing life-saving assistance and protection to the communities they serve. That our colleagues in COOPI were killed and wounded while transporting materials for the reconstruction of schools in Obo – yet another reminder about the constant dangers that humanitarian workers face around the world – makes the incident all the more tragic.

UNICEF reaffirms its solidarity with COOPI, with whom we partner to deliver critical assistance for children affected by conflict in these three countries and elsewhere. We laud the dedication and humanitarian spirit of COOPI, and stand with the organization during this difficult time.

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About UNICEF:

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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