

Palestinian hardliners reject Abbas's call

AFP, Gaza

Palestinian hardliners rejected Wednesday a call by new PLO chief Mahmud Abbas to lay down their weapons as a spiralling death toll in Gaza threatened to undermine his efforts to bring calm to the region.

Armed factions have so far rebuffed efforts by Abbas, the favourite to be elected Palestinian Authority president on January 9, to institute a new ceasefire and firmly rejected his argument Wednesday that the use of weapons since the September 2000 start of the second intifada had been a mistake.

His comments in a newspaper interview received short shrift from both the radical Islamic movement Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad movement.

"Such declarations run counter to the consensus among our people over the legitimacy of the resistance," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told AFP. "The problem is the Israeli occupation and not the resistance."

Mohammed al-Hindi, a leader of Jihad in its Gaza stronghold, said "the Palestinians need weapons of

resistance against the Israeli occupation."

"It is illogical that we are killed without having any measure of legitimate self-defence," he told AFP.

In an interview published Tuesday with the pan-Arab newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, Abbas said "the use of weapons is harmful and it should stop."

Instead he urged Palestinians to "reject the occupation by popular and social means" and follow the example of the first intifada between 1987 and 1993 that was mostly confined to stone-throwing.

Abbas has previously criticised the "militarisation" of the struggle against occupation but it was his most clear-cut condemnation of the armed factions' tactics since taking the PLO helm after Yasser Arafat's death on November 11.

Abbas's willingness to upset the armed factions appears to reflect confidence over his election prospects and taps into a growing disillusionment among middle-class Palestinians over their plight after four years of violence.

It also won him praise from within Israel.

"It is a position that reflects leadership, worries about the Palestinian situation and is also a mark of responsibility," President Moshe Katsav told reporters. "It is an approach that deserves respect."

Abbas's comments were also warmly welcomed by the administration of US President George W. Bush, which refused to meet Arafat after accusing him of failing his people.

"Fighting terrorism and ending the violence is critical to moving forward on building the institutions for a viable (Palestinian) state to emerge," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters.

Bush hosted Abbas at the White House during his brief stint as Palestinian premier last year.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who also boycotted Arafat, is another who is expected to reopen talks with Abbas after next month's election.

Sharon has indicated he is willing to coordinate next year's planned pullout of Israeli troops and settlers from the Gaza Strip with the new Palestinian leadership -- but only if it cracks down on the armed factions.

Iraq election campaign under way

BBC NEWS ONLINE

Political parties in Iraq begin their first official day of campaigning for national elections on Wednesday. On 30 January, voters will elect a 275-member assembly that will appoint a government and draft a constitution.

The electoral authorities say about 80 blocs have registered to take part, including Sunni Muslim groups which had threatened to boycott the poll.

There are fears that the vote could be disrupted by the violent insurgency that continues to rage in Sunni areas.

BBC correspondent Peter Grete in Baghdad says it is hard to overstate the scale of the mountain that Iraq's democracy still has to climb.

The authorities must set up the physical electoral infrastructure across the country, including in places where the insurgency is still highly active.

More than 230 parties and

groups, gathered into about 80 blocs or alliances have to try to sell their messages amid the violence and chaos.

Correspondents say that, as Wednesday is also the last day for registration, candidates and parties will be busy with administrative issues rather than public campaigning, so no rallies have been planned.

Poland announces it will cut the size of its force in Iraq from 2,500 troops to 1,700 in mid-February while the US says its troop numbers will rise from 138,000 to 150,000 ahead of the elections.

Iraq's interim deputy foreign minister, Hamid al-Bayati, told the BBC that January's vote was intended to create a government in which none of the main communities in Iraq - the Sunni, Shia or Kurds - would be able to dominate.

The Shia - who make up 60% of the total population - have in the past been excluded from power in Iraq and many see this a chance to redress that situation.



A US security man walks past a poster of Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's list, called the Iraqi List, which will run for the coming national election, prior to Allawi's press conference in Baghdad yesterday. Campaigning opened yesterday for Iraq's landmark general elections to be held on January 30. The poll is billed as the first free Iraqi vote in half a century, but ongoing insurgent violence in Iraq is threatening the vote. Poster reads in Arabic: "Strong leadership."

Greece bus hijackers demand ransom

AFP, Athens

Two armed men holding more than 20 people hostage on a bus in an Athens suburb are demanding a million euro (1.3 million US dollars) ransom, the Greek private radio Skai reported.

The bus, with 25 people on board, was hijacked early Wednesday in an Athens suburb by two armed men demanding to be flown back to Russia, police and government officials said.

The two men, armed with rifles, boarded the bus in the early hours, firing shots into its roof and halting the vehicle on a thoroughfare in the suburb of Gerakas, where police surrounded it, a government spokesman said.

About six hours after the drama unfolded, the hijackers released two men and three women who were seen leaving the bus from the driver's side. One of the freed hostages, identified as Yannis Bratsiakos, 55, was said to suffer from heart problems and the second man could be seen limping. Later the hijackers freed one more man and a woman.

Police said 20 hostages remained on the bus. The private radio station Alpha said someone claiming to be one of the hostage-takers had called it via a mobile phone taken from a woman passenger on the bus.



A hostage is released from the public bus as police special forces vehicles surround the bus hijacked by armed men near Athens yesterday.

Document reveals more abuse in Iraq jail

REUTERS, Washington

US Marines fired a pistol in a mock execution involving four young Iraqi looters and shocked another Iraqi detainee with an electric transformer until he "danced," a document made public on Tuesday showed.

The June 16 US Navy document detailed 10 "substantiated" incidents of detainee abuse in Iraq involving 24 Marines dating back to May 2003. The Marine Corps said 13 Marines were convicted in court-martial stemming from the incidents, getting prison sentences of up to 15 months.

The document was written seven weeks after pictures of US Army soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib jail became public, triggering worldwide condemnation.

It was one of numerous Navy documents released by the American Civil Liberties Union, which obtained them under the Freedom of Information Act. In a June 14 e-mail, a Navy criminal investigator wrote that his Iraq "caseload is exploding, high visibility cases are on the rise."

"The Defence Department has insisted from the outset that abuse, to the extent that it occurs at all, is aberrational," said Jameel Jaffer, an ACLU lawyer. "I think we now have overwhelming evidence that that's not true, but that abuse was widespread and that it was systemic in the sense that it was the result of policies adopted by the Defense Department."

Air Force Lt. Col. John Skinner, a Pentagon spokesman, said, "We've never denied that misconduct sometimes occurs. But in all instances, we thoroughly investigate cases to determine the facts and hold responsible individuals accountable."

The June 16 document listed a series of previously unknown incidents of detainee abuse by Marines, as well as 10 cases that Navy investigators, who handle cases involving Marines, examined as possible abuse but deemed "unsubstantiated."

It described an April 2004 incident at Al Mahmudiya in which Marines shocked an Iraqi detainee with an electric transformer, placing live electrical wires on the detainee's shoulder, noting that "the detainee 'danced' as he was shocked."

The Marine Corps said four Marines were convicted of charges including assault, cruelty, maltreatment, and making a false official statement, with prison sentences ranging from 60 days to 15 months. A fifth Marine was given administrative punishment.

The document described incidents in June and July 2003 in Adiwaniyah. It stated that Marines "ordered 4 juvenile Iraqi looters to kneel beside 2 shallow fighting holes & a pistol was discharged to conduct a mock execution." It did not give the age of the Iraqis. Marines in the case also were accused of locking looters in an abandoned tank and spraying looters with a fire extinguisher.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Bandarban Hill District

Memo No. Lged/xen/B-Ban/B/3-81/97/1499, Dated: 08-12-2004
CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CHTRDP) UPGRADING AND REHABILITATION OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE (URRI).

Corrigendum of Invitation for Bid (IFB)
No: 02/2004-2005, Dated: 20-11-2004

In partial modifications of Invitation for Bid (IFB) No: 02/2004-2005 invited vide Memo No. Lged/xen/B-Ban/B/3-81/97/1451, Dated: 20-11-2004 following Para No. 01 & 5 of the IFB are replaced as follows:

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project (CHTRDP) Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure (URRI) Component and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the upgrading & rehabilitation of Hansamapara-Bagmara-Antapara-Rajasthali Border road Package Nos. 09 under Sadar & Rowangchari Upazila District Bandarban Hill Tracts. Bidding is open to all pre-qualified bidders from eligible source countries of the ADB under the CHTRDP (URRI). LGED for the FY 2004-2005.
- All bids must be accompanied by a security of minimum 2% (two percent) of quoted price an equivalent amount in Bangladeshi Taka Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh drawn in favour of Executive Engineer, LGED, Bandarban Hill District & submitted of the same at the office of the undersigned on or before 13:00 hours on 03-01-2005. Bids will be opened at 14:00 hours on the same day in the presence of member of TOC, Consultant's representative & the bidders or their authorised representatives (who choose to attend). All other terms & conditions shall remain unchanged and this corrigendum notice will be integral part of the bid.

DPP-29982-12/12/04
G-1263

Executive Engineer
LGED, Bandarban

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Food Security Coordinator - (1 position)

Job Summary: The incumbent will be responsible for:

- Identifying the reasons of food insecurity in the most disadvantaged areas (haor, char, coastal regions, and urban slums) in 18 Districts of Bangladesh.
- Developing strategies for addressing the major causes of food insecurity and ensuring that they are in compliance with the local reality, community needs and aspirations.
- Addressing livelihood capacities at household and community levels, which consider skill building, alternative livelihood options, access to credit and markets and infrastructural improvements.

Core Qualifications and Competencies:

- Masters' in Social Sciences or equivalent.
- Minimum 8 years professional experience including 3 years of practical experience in a large food security program.
- Should be well conversant with the international/national food policy and donor's strategies for food security programs in the country.
- Should have an understanding of trade and aid issues around food security.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Bengali.
- Should have good understanding of MS Office applications.

Compensation: Gross Salary is Tk. 62,000 p.m., plus other admissible benefits. Salary is negotiable for highly deserving candidate.

THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED BEFORE FOR THIS POSITION, NEED NOT TO APPLY AGAIN

Technical Assistance Coordinator - Environment & GIS (1 position)

Job Summary: The incumbent will be responsible for:

- Identifying the environmental issues of haor, char, coastal zones and urban slums in 18 Districts, which have direct & indirect linkage with the livelihood options of the poorest people and addressing the issues through various program strategies and activities with participation of the community.
- S/he will also be responsible for aligning environmental activities of the program with best practices of the regions, and within the framework of GOB, and donor's environmental policies.

Core Qualifications and Competencies:

- Masters' in Social Sciences preferably in Environmental Science/Environmental Engineering or equivalent.
- Minimum 7 years professional experience including 2 years in the relevant field.
- Good knowledge and experience on issues of bio-diversity, eco-systems, protection measures, etc.
- Ability to train partner NGOs, GOB officials and program staff on environmental and geographic information system issues.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Bengali.
- Should have good understanding of MS Office applications.

Compensation: Gross Salary is Tk. 36,000 p.m., plus other admissible benefits. Salary is negotiable for highly deserving candidate.

Technical Officer - GIS (1 position)

Job Summary: The incumbent will be responsible for planning and implementation of geographic information system (GIS) related activities of the program. S/he will also be responsible for needs assessment and providing GIS training to CARE and partner organizations staff.

Core Qualifications and Competencies:

- Graduate in Civil Engineering or equivalent.
- Minimum 4 years professional experience in using GIS and Remote sensing, and dealing with GIS software like ArcInfo/ArcView/ArcGIS etc.
- Ability to apply GIS technology for mapping various program features.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Bengali.
- Should have good understanding of MS Office applications.

Compensation: Gross Salary for both positions is Tk. 19,000 p.m., plus other admissible benefits. Salary is negotiable for highly deserving candidate.

Technical Officer - MIS (1 position)

Job Summary: The incumbent will be responsible for providing extensive support in designing, implementing and maintaining proper Information System for management of the program. S/he should also be required to design, develop and implement application software for day-to-day activities and incorporate changes as required.

Core Qualifications and Competencies:

- Bachelor degree/Masters' in Computer Science/Statistics/Social Sciences or equivalent.
- Minimum 4 years professional experience in the relevant field.
- Ability to design and implement database system, analyzing, interpreting and presenting program data.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Bengali.
- Should have good understanding of MS Office applications.

Compensation: Gross Salary for both positions is Tk. 19,000 p.m., plus other admissible benefits. Salary is negotiable for highly deserving candidate.

Interested candidates who fulfill the above requirements are requested to drop their CVs (with a cover letter, recent passport size photograph, and names' addresses of two non-relative referees) in the application box placed at the ground floor of CARE-Bangladesh, 20-21, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka or mail/post to -

Section Manager - Recruitment, HRD&M Department, CARE-Bangladesh, Pragati RPR Centre, 20-21, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka, on or before December 28, 2004

Note: Women are particularly encouraged to apply. Any persuasion will disqualify the candidates. Internal and external applicants shall be treated equally in the entire selection process. Applicants who have relatives in CARE are discouraged from applying. Only short listed candidates shall be invited for the interview. In case of experienced and qualified candidate educational qualification can be relaxed. Please write the position applied for at the top right hand corner of the envelope.

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