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U.N. observes tribute to fallen

By Edith M. Lederer
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — The business of the United Nations came to a standstill for 30 minutes Tuesday as 2,000 U.N. staff, joined by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Security Council ambassadors, marched in silent tribute to their fallen colleagues.

Another 3,000 U.N. staff members, many in tears and carrying white roses, marched earlier in the day in Geneva to remember those who died in last week's bombing of the world body's Baghdad headquarters.

Tributes at the two largest U.N. offices and at smaller U.N. missions around the world put a spotlight on the close ties among U.N. staff and the anger of many members that more wasn't done to protect the 23 people who died, including top U.N. envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The U.N. Staff Union, which organized the silent marches, demanded "a full and independent investigation to determine why adequate security was not in place at United Nations headquarters in Baghdad."

The union's standing committee on security issued a statement after the march demanding to know why so many U.N. personnel were in Baghdad despite a high-level security alert. It again called on Annan to suspend all U.N. operations in Iraq and withdraw staff "until such time as measures are taken to improve security."

Annan, wearing a black suit and tie, walked alongside Catherine Bertini, the U.N.'s chief financial officer, around the traffic circle in front of the 39-story Secretariat Building. The head of U.N. peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guehenno, and the head of its political affairs department, Kieran Prendergast, also joined the march.

"When one of us is hurt, the whole family is affected."

— Agnes Marcaillou
France U.N. member

Annan has said repeatedly that the United Nations won't leave Iraq because of the attack. But the secretary-general said he was reassessing security issues — and Prendergast indicated that a much wider reappraisal is under way.

"It can't be business as usual," Prendergast told The Associated Press, "and we are going to have to assess very thoroughly and very carefully and in no great rush what are the full implications for the United Nations of our future activities and profile in Iraq."

His special assistant, Richard Hooper of Walnut Creek, Calif., was among the victims. "He was doing what he wanted to do which I suppose is some very, very slight consolation but not

much," Prendergast said.

For Agnes Marcaillou of France, a close friend of Vieira de Mello and his chief of staff Nadia Younes, who was also killed, the bombing "was my 9/11."

"When one of us is hurt, the whole family is affected, and we are reliving a second time as U.N. what 9/11 put us through as New Yorkers," said Marcaillou, who works in the Department of Disarmament Affairs.

Guy Candusso, an officer in the Staff Union, carried a placard that read, "When will it end? It must." He said the Baghdad bombing highlights "the need for security in the field."

"It was certainly a mistake not to have more eye on security," said Mary Hughes, a member of the union's security committee. She carried a placard saying "We will never forget you."

"Whose fault it is, that is not yet determined," she said.

Salim Lone, the U.N. spokesman in Baghdad who returned to New York on Monday, recounted the selfless devotion and "heroism" of one U.N. staffer, Marwan Ali, who rushed into Vieira de Mello's bombed office and carried out Marilyn Manuel, of the Philippines. She was initially reported dead by the United Nations but later discovered alive at a remote medical facility.

"To go into an area which he knew had been severely bombed, he could easily have died himself," Lone said. "He's the one who saved her."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lawsuit asks to remove Bible

HOUSTON (AP) — A woman has sued Harris County in federal court demanding a Bible contained within a monument near an entrance to the civil courthouse be removed.

The Bible has been part of the lighted display since 1995 when the monument that contains it was refurbished. It was originally erect-

ed in 1956 to honor industrialist William Mosher for his contributions to homeless programs.

After months of negotiations with county officials, Staley said she decided to sue after seeing the controversy in Alabama surrounding a judge's refusal to remove a monument bearing the Ten Commandments from the state's judicial building.

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