



IAM

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION
Serving Afghans - Building Capacity, since 1966

Press Release 3
International Assistance Mission
On the death of 10 Nuristan Eye Camp team members
(12 August 2010, Kabul, Afghanistan)

We want to update you on developments following the brutal killing of 10 of the IAM Nuristan Eye Camp team members.

Since our first press release and conference on 9 August we have received hundreds of emails, phone calls, and letters from well wishers. All but a few have paid tribute to the team members who were killed, to their selfless service and to IAM's commitment to continue working alongside the Afghan people. Representatives of various organizations and dignitaries have visited us and pledged their support. We are overwhelmed by this response, the practical help offered and given and by the prayers of so many around the world. We ask that the press respect the privacy of the families during this time of bereavement.

In the meantime we have conducted further investigations into what happened. As an NGO we are not in a position to determine who committed this crime. We await the outcome of the official investigation by the relevant departments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its partners.

Our own research suggests that the murders were not a robbery as initially reported in the press. We are now working on the assumption that the attack was an opportunistic ambush by a group of non-local fighters. A group of guides from the community that invited the team accompanied them from the village where the road ended to Parun in Nuristan. As per local etiquette the guides also accompanied the team back. Shortly after the team boarded their vehicles they were ambushed. They had just managed to drive their three vehicles across a river swollen by the heavy rains in the area. After making it safely to the other side of the river they got out of their vehicles obviously relieved at the successful crossing and end of the difficult part of their trip. It was then that a group of armed men attacked the team killing all but one of its members on the spot.

The government has released Mr Safiullah, the lone survivor. No doubt many would like to interview him. However, please realize that he has been through the traumatizing experience of seeing all his colleagues killed. We therefore kindly request the press to respect him, his privacy and security.

IAM is revisiting its security directives. Due to this incident our ability to conduct eye camps like this has been curtailed because we have lost both the veterans as well as the younger workers being trained to do these difficult assignments.

The IAM eye care work alone has benefited an estimated 5 million Afghans since 1966. The vast majority of the local people welcome IAM's work in their communities. God-willing, we will continue to serve the Afghan people.

Dirk R Frans
Executive Director, International Assistance Mission

PS. 1 For more information on IAM and its work see the IAM website: www.iam-afghanistan.org
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