

Outgoing UN leader Inga-Britt Ahlenius said in a leaked document that the UN is "drifting into irrelevance" under Ban's supervision.

- [Top Norwegian diplomat slams 'weak' UN chief](#)

Aides to Ban Ki-moon were in damage control mode Wednesday as the UN chief reeled from a blistering attack on his leadership by the outgoing head of a UN unit battling internal fraud.

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As Ban returned from a Kabul conference on Afghanistan, his spokesman faced questions about charges by Inga-Britt Ahlenius, the former head of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), that the UN boss sought to thwart her efforts and led the the world body into "decay."

In a 50-page memo to Ban leaked to the Washington Post, Ahlenius accused the secretary general of systematically undercutting her authority, notably by thwarting her efforts to hire her own staff.

Ahlenius, who stepped down last Friday at the end of a five-year term, also launched a rare, personal attack, saying there was no accountability at the United Nations and more broadly questioning Ban's stewardship.

"Your actions are not only deplorable, but seriously reprehensible... Your action is without precedent and in my opinion seriously embarrassing for yourself," she said in the memo quoted by The Washington Post Tuesday.

"I regret to say that the secretariat is in a process of decay," the 72-year-old Swede added.

Swedish diplomat blasts UN chief Ban Ki-moon

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

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UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said Wednesday that "constructive criticism is welcome and necessary to move forward a large organization like (the UN)."

But he charged that Ahlenius's report, which was being studied, contained "inaccuracies and misrepresentations." He also defended Ban's leadership on global issues.

"I think you only have to take a cursory look at this secretary general's record on leadership, on the big questions, to see that he has achieved a lot and is clearly actively engaged on anything from climate change to gender empowerment, Haiti, Gaza, Afghanistan, disarmament," Nesirky said.

He added that a successor to Ahlenius to lead OIOS, where several positions remain unfilled, would be named in a matter of days.

Western diplomats, while strongly backing efforts to combat internal fraud and corruption, said Ahlenius's personal attacks on Ban were "over the top" and "counter-productive."

One diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Wednesday that Ahlenius appeared to have been particularly upset that Ban thwarted her bid to hire Robert Appleton, a former US federal prosecutor who led a UN procurement task force that aggressively probed corruption in UN peacekeeping missions from 2006 to last year.

"It was a long-running bone of contention," he noted, adding that Ahlenius's "personal attacks on Ban's leadership... slightly undermines her case."

"It was wrong because Ban has shown some good leadership in a number of areas," he added.

"She came out as completely hysterical," another diplomat said. "It was so personal. It defeats the purpose."

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When he took office in January 2007, the South Korean UN boss vowed to launch sweeping management reforms to root out fraud in a global agency that was tarnished by revelations of corruption in the oil-for-food program in Iraq and a succession of sexual abuse scandals involving UN peacekeepers around the world.