

**World Humanitarian Day:
Calling for the Protection and Care of Humanitarian Personnel Worldwide**
Press Statement

On World Humanitarian Day, Protect Aid Workers, Protect Humanitarians and Legal Action Worldwide join forces to call on States, the United Nations, donors and the humanitarian community to better protect humanitarian personnel and push for concrete and innovative action.

Brussels / Geneva / Paris, 19 August 2024 – Today marks World Humanitarian Day - a day to honour the courage of humanitarian personnel who work tirelessly to alleviate human suffering and remember those who have tragically lost their lives while serving humanity. This day serves as a stark reminder that attacks, acts of violence, and threats against humanitarian personnel continue without almost no accountability.

The violence against humanitarian personnel has never been so high. 2023 was the deadliest year on record for aid workers, as a total of 595 were victim of attacks and 280 were killed¹. National staff pay the highest price with over 95% of incidents involving local personnel working for international or local organisations.

Through the adoption of Resolution 2730 in May 2024², the United Nations Security Council expressed grave concern over the increasing attacks and called upon all States to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, in accordance with their obligations under international law, recalling States' obligations under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Crucially, the Security Council urged States to conduct independent, full, prompt and impartial investigations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed against humanitarian personnel and to prosecute persons allegedly responsible for those violations, holding them accountable. However, more concrete and innovative actions need to be taken.

Today, we, Protect Humanitarians, Protect Aid Workers and Legal Action Worldwide are joining forces and using our combined expertise to urge States, the United Nations, donors, and the humanitarian community to translate into action the following priorities:

- Fund qualified, independent and free legal aid and make it accessible to affected humanitarian personnel and their families.
- Increase investment in staff care and mental health support for humanitarian personnel as well as context-adapted trauma support for survivors of attacks. Fund efforts to document, develop and disseminate evidence-based coping and resilience strategies in support of humanitarian personnel.
- Place victims and survivors of attacks at the forefront of advocacy and protection efforts. Their experiences can guide the development of more supportive and equitable strategies to safeguard humanitarians. Their testimonies are powerful tools to mobilize support.
- Help raise awareness about the escalating violence against humanitarian personnel and support efforts to achieve justice and accountability, ensuring a coordinated response through annual and ad hoc formal dialogues.

¹ Humanitarian Outcomes, Aid Worker Security Database, aidworkersecurity.org

² See <https://press.un.org/en/2024/15707.doc.htm>

- Ensure humanitarian organisations have sufficient resources to guarantee the safest possible conditions for their personnel. Attacks against humanitarian personnel remain a daily risk, and local organisations often lack the funding needed to prevent and respond to such incidents.
- Comply to States' international commitments, including the Geneva Conventions and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. It is crucial to maintain a clear distinction between political agendas and principled humanitarian action, avoiding politicisation of aid.

Only by pursuing accountability, increase investments in staff care and mental health support, strengthening coordination and respect for international humanitarian law, and amplifying survivors' voices, can we work toward creating a safer, more supportive and equitable environment for humanitarian personnel worldwide.

About us

Protect Humanitarians (PH) - Protect Humanitarians is an independent NGO advocating for better protection and support of humanitarian personnel. Through a dedicated emergency fund, Protect Humanitarians provides concrete support to NGOs and their staff, survivors of attacks and/or victims' relatives. We develop research and learning to promote best practices in staff care, mental health and legal assistance to survivors after incidents.

For more information, visit www.protecthumanitarians.org

For media interviews and requests, please contact communication@protecthumanitarians.org

Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) - LAW is an independent, non-profit organisation of human rights lawyers and jurists working in fragile and conflict-affected areas. LAW provides legal aid to victims and communities that have suffered human rights violations and abuses in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

For questions or further details, please contact Camille Delbourgo
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Protect Aid Workers (PAW) - Protect Aid Workers is a rapid-response mechanism created for aid workers and their families who have suffered critical incidents. It provides financial assistance and legal advice to aid workers who faced different types of security incidents, through protection grants for up to €10,000, allocated to victims and their families.

For more information, visit www.protectaidworkers.org

For media interviews and requests, please contact direct@protectaidworkers.org