



A Call for the Protection of Aid Workers

1. We, humanitarian organizations delivering essential assistance in insecure environments, deplore the repeated and flagrant violation by armed actors of the right of civilian populations to access their basic needs.
2. Despite the neutral and impartial character of principled humanitarian action, populations are too often denied humanitarian access and aid workers are too often exposed to intolerable risk in their daily work. Attacks that target civilian and humanitarian structures in violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) harm not only human life in the vicinity of the attack but undermine the possibility of a consistent humanitarian presence and the effective delivery by neutral actors of emergency relief.
3. 329 aid workers were victims of major attacks in 2014 - more than six people every week. The large majority of victims are national staff, often working in the absence of national structures willing and able to protect them and pursue their perpetrators.
4. Conflict-affected populations have a right to receive assistance, including from impartial humanitarian organizations. We therefore utterly reject the prevailing impunity surrounding deliberate attacks on humanitarian personnel and facilities, which leads to partial or total obstruction of access by the most vulnerable populations to their essential needs. Such crimes constitute an unacceptable attack on our shared values and the norms that safeguard humanity. They are not an inevitable consequence of war, but represent a failure of parties to conflict to respect and facilitate neutral and principled humanitarian action, which is their obligation under IHL, and a failure of the international community to speak out and demand accountability for the perpetrators of these crimes.
5. Protecting aid workers is a fundamental condition for delivering on the humanitarian imperative at the core of our mandates: saving lives. We believe that concrete action is needed to bolster protection for principled humanitarian action during the conduct of hostilities and other situations of violence.

6. We, therefore, call on Member States to take steps to create a United Nations Special Procedure for the protection of aid workers.

This procedure would allow the appointed Mandate Holder to:

- a. Engage with state and non-state actors at all levels for a better respect and understanding of the humanitarian principles, as well as the neutral and essential role of the humanitarian mission;
 - b. Establish clear accountability of all parties to allow unimpeded humanitarian access;
 - c. Oversee the management of a central and public database for the collection and analysis of all serious and deliberate attacks against aid workers or assets that lead to withdrawal of, or restrictions on access, including follow up investigations and monitoring;
 - d. Develop with concerned actors a specific strategy to fight impunity for serious and deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers and structures.
7. To demonstrate the priority we give to the achievement of a principled humanitarian mission that is respected and protected during the conduct of its essential work, **we make the following joint commitment on the occasion of the WHS:**

“To actively pursue within the year ahead the creation of a Special Procedure for the protection of aid workers, tasked with research and analysis for a richer understanding of context surrounding attacks on humanitarian actors, and dedicated to advancing efforts to respect and protect the humanitarian mission against violence that prevents it from fulfilling its exclusively humanitarian function.”

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