

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY



KEY MESSAGES

1. Man-made and natural disasters cause immense suffering for millions of people every year, very often among the world's poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable individuals. There are currently more than 27 million internally displaced people and 10 million refugees in the world. One out of every six people in the world are chronically hungry. Humanitarian aid workers strive to ensure that all those who have experienced a traumatic event and need life-saving assistance receive it, regardless of where they are in the world, and regardless of their religious or social group or nationality.
2. The majority of humanitarian aid workers come from the countries in which they work. Strong professional and independent local partners are fully involved in all humanitarian responses. Humanitarian aid workers are national and international, male and female, and reflect all cultures, ideologies and backgrounds. Their motivations for humanitarian work are diverse, but all aid workers are united by their commitment to humanitarianism.
3. Over many years, humanitarian aid workers have relied on acceptance that they need to be protected by all parties to ensure they can work wherever they are needed. In the past, a United Nations, NGO or Red Cross/Red Crescent flag offered protection for those flying it. Increasingly, however, a perception is spreading that humanitarian aid is delivered exclusively by Western organizations or agencies, or somehow represents one ideological or religious world view. This is entirely wrong, yet is increasingly virulent in many regions of the world. The worst manifestation of this false perception is the increasing number of targeted attacks on humanitarian personnel, killing and injuring more humanitarian aid workers every year. This situation harms the poorest, most vulnerable people the most.
4. Humanitarian aid workers should be respected and helped, not targeted. We face a future in which more humanitarian aid will be needed. If humanitarian aid workers do not have full access to those in need, many hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries will not receive the quantity or quality of assistance they require. The best way to ensure humanitarian aid workers can fulfill their mission is by improving awareness of and respect for the principles on which aid work is conducted: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.