

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY 2019:

HONORING WOMEN HUMANITARIANS



BACKGROUND

Every day, humanitarian workers stand on the front lines of war and disaster, braving tremendous dangers and difficulties to deliver assistance to those who need it most.

World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is the day on which we honor humanitarian workers who have lost their lives, and those that continue to take risks everyday in order to provide aid to people in need.

The United Nations General Assembly designated 19 August as World Humanitarian Day to mark the date in 2003 when 22 people died in the bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq.

The day has a mandate to honor aid workers, and to remind the nations of the world of their obligations to protect those who have devoted their lives to providing aid for others.

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY 2019

Tapping into the global momentum in focusing on the strength, power and perseverance of women, now is the right time to honor the many women who have been the first responders during the darkest hours of crisis.

Women continue to make up a large number of those who risk their own lives to save others. These women deserve our praise and admiration. They are needed as much today as ever before to help further strengthen the global humanitarian response. And world leaders must ensure that they – and all humanitarians – are guaranteed the protection afforded to them under international law.

Their stories become stark reminders of the cost of war and the resilience of humanity.

The strategic objective is that through a series of targeted actions aimed at key audiences, that are rooted in the stories and experiences of women humanitarians, governments are reminded of, and recommit to, their obligations to protect and to not target humanitarian workers.

Audiences:

1. **Member States of the United Nations**
Primary targets
2. **The Humanitarian community**
to honor and commemorate colleagues
3. **Media**
to influence member states
4. **'Enlightened globalists'**
digitally-connected, internationally-engaged people to honor/commemorate and put pressure on member states)



Why women? Why now?

As we mark both the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 10th World Humanitarian Day, the protection of civilians – and those who bring relief to civilians in distress – is at the forefront of our minds.

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To devote one's life to the humanitarian cause is to sacrifice home comforts, relationships and material gain to help others.

It is second only to the ultimate sacrificial act: to give one's life.

Unfortunately, over the years, too many of our colleagues have fallen in pursuit of humanitarian service. It is they who we commemorate on this day.

World leaders must ensure that they – and all humanitarians – are guaranteed the protection afforded to them under international law.

KEY PLANNING DATES

- 26 March** Concept note shared with partners
- 2 Apr** First partner call to brainstorm ideas and develop plan
- 22 April** Sign off creative concept
- May-June** Story and content gathering
- 1 June** Promotional toolkit available (graphics, social media plan)
- 10 June** Speakers and guestlist for event confirmed
- 29 June** Website goes live
- 1 July** Creative content shared and requests for stories go public
- 1 August** WHD promo film available
- 4 August** Launch of WHD media campaign to generate public awareness
- 19 August - World Humanitarian Day**
High-level event, SG speech



ACTIONS

High-level event

High-level event hosted by a key partner that will mark World Humanitarian Day and provide a platform for the UN's Emergency Response Coordinator to honor woman humanitarians and push forward the agenda on addressing gender in humanitarian action. The Secretary-General will be invited to speak to reinforce the points he makes in his Protection of Civilians report this year. The invitation list is high-level, with ambassadors, partner principals and agency heads, 'intellectual' celebrities with high social followings.

Media work

Compelling profiles and stories about women humanitarians, with stunning photography, in influential press in key locations – New York Times, Asharq Al-Awsat, The East African, etc. We will work to create a careful narrative that honors women and recognizes that while they take daily risks to deliver aid, under international law, most of those risks should not exist. We will also engage new partners, e.g. CNN to produce a '[CNN Heroes](#)' series specifically about women humanitarians, and invite some of those humanitarians to speak of their experiences to the group.

Social Media

Creative engagement that enables and encourages the public to tell the stories of amazing women who have taught them, fed them, inspired them – or even saved them. We encourage these stories to be uplifting, positive and ideally visual, with partners leading the way. We will launch a simple but compelling story-driven website that acts as a platform for the incredible women of our sector and their stories.

This website will also have a simple call-to-action that allows people to directly tweet at their world leaders from within the site, demanding that they do all they can to protect humanitarians. We will work with the coalition to ensure that we deploy creative approaches to multimedia and/or interactivity, to drive our messages home.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU!

Creative thinking: Especially simple and engaging action that we could ask of the public to honor someone amazing in their lives.

Stories & Content: WHD 2019 is all about amazing women humanitarians all around the world. Help us tell their stories by thinking about specific individuals who have an amazing story, or a way with words, and who we should be profiling on social or even traditional media.

People & time: WHD is a day for the wider humanitarian community. What resources you can bring to this campaign - your people, your ideas, your financial resources, your social media platforms?

Organisational buy-in: We know you have a lot of priorities this year, but we think World Humanitarian Day is profoundly important, as the one day that serves to honor your colleagues, and remind the international community of their obligations to protect them, and the life-saving work they do.



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