United Nations Office at Geneva

Multimedia Newsroom

TRANSCRIPT

World Humanitarian Day Commemoration - 19 August 2025

https://unognewsroom.org/story/en/2770/world-humanitarian-day-celebration-19-august-2025

2025-08-19

Check against delivery. This is an automatically generated transcription. It is delivered without human review and does not constitute an official record.

00:00:05:28 - 00:00:16:32
Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, here in this beautiful hall and a tomb following us, we are going on to start this ceremony.

00:00:17:32 - 00:00:39:07
I would like to welcome you all and those, as I said, will follow us from from home to this solemn ceremony to commemorate World Humanitarian Day, which this year is held under the theme, and to attacks on humanitarians and civilians and the end of impunity under international humanitarian law.

00:00:40:56 - 00:00:57:56
As you all know, on 19th of August 2003, a bomb attack to the UN premises at the Baghdad Canal Hotel killed 22 of our colleagues, humanitarian aid workers, local workers and would that many more.

00:00:58:47 - 00:01:09:12
Many of the survivors are here with us today, as are the families and some full of of some fallen colleagues and I would like to recognise them here.

00:01:09:40 - 00:01:10:88
I'll see them sitting here.

00:01:10:92 - 00:01:11:48
[Other language spoken]

00:01:13:28 - 00:01:20:92
Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 of August as World Humanitarian Day.

00:01:21:31 - 00:01:45:87
Therefore, on this day this year, like every other year, the Geneva community comes together to pay tribute to those whose life has been destroyed in the line of duty, to celebrate those who work on the front lines of crisis, and to reaffirm our solidarity with the millions of people whose survival depends on humanitarian assistance.

00:01:46:56 - 00:02:02:12
As the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has pointed out in his statement for today, humanitarian teams are the last lifeline for over 300 million people impacted by conflict and disaster.

00:02:03:23 - 00:02:10:31
However, I don't need to stress with you that this year's commemoration comes amid unprecedented challenges.

00:02:10:63 - 00:02:17:31
Humanitarian operations are increasingly under attack, resources are stretched and needs are escalating globally.

00:02:19:19 - 00:02:31:15
This is why it's so important for us to celebrate this day here today and together, and to express our solidarity and our will to take action to defend humanitarians worldwide.

00:02:31:87 - 00:02:38:79
So let's start this ceremony by honouring colleagues who have lost their life in the line of duty.

00:02:39:47 - 00:02:56:12
I would like to invite Tatiana Valovaya, UN Geneva Director General, Tom Fletcher, Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Nada Al Nashef, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, to come and lay flowers on the table.

00:03:31:68 - 00:03:43:64
Now I would like to invite Mrs Laura Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Union and Geneva Staff Union to join our guests and together light the 4 candles.

00:04:01:36 - 00:04:02:24
Thank you very much.

00:04:02:24 - 00:04:19:19
And now I would like to invite the representatives of the survivors, families and friends of the victims of the attack to the UN office in Baghdad to come in front and pay tribute to their loved ones by laying also flowers on the smaller table.

00:05:13:47 - 00:05:27:31
And now let me invite His Excellency Mr Abdul Karim Hashim Mustafa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq, to the United Nations, to come also to the front and lay flowers on the table.

00:05:58:10 - 00:06:03:86
Let us all join to remember those who perished on the 19 of August 2003.

00:06:14:56 - 00:06:15:73
Thank you very much.

00:06:17:68 - 00:06:20:52
I would like now to invite everybody to regain their seats.

00:06:43:64 - 00:06:44:52
[Other language spoken]

00:06:47:85 - 00:06:54:01
So let us continue this solemn ceremony by hearing some statements from our colleagues.

00:06:54:61 - 00:07:00:73
I will start by inviting Mrs Tatiana Valovaya, Director General of UN Geneva, to come and deliver her remark.

00:07:00:81 - 00:07:21:39
Director General, dear humanitarian workers, dear survivors of attacks on humanitarian workers, dear families and friends of colleagues lost in humanitarian service.

00:07:21:80 - 00:07:39:19
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends, Today, as every year, we gather to commemorate World Humanitarian Day and to pay tribute to all our colleagues who have given their lives in the service of humanity.

00:07:39:80 - 00:07:47:87
We honour their courage, their unwavering dedication and the values they stood for behind me.

00:07:48:04 - 00:08:04:56

The memorial plaques remind us of the devastating attack in Baghdad in 2003, where 22 UN staff members, including the UN Special Representative or the Secretary General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mella, were killed.

00:08:05:00 - 00:08:13:68
And to the tragedy in our year in 2007, where we lost 17 more members of the United Nations family.

00:08:14:51 - 00:08:18:35
They are no longer with us, but their leadership lives on.

00:08:18:92 - 00:08:26:56
Their sacrifice and commitment will stay forever in our hearts and inspire generations to come.

00:08:27:43 - 00:08:30:75
Sadly, the list of names keeps growing.

00:08:31:39 - 00:08:43:07
Humanitarian workers across the world are being killed, injured and kidnapped in unprecedented numbers, with each year tragically more deadly than the last.

00:08:43:79 - 00:08:55:00
In 2024 alone, more than 380 humanitarian workers lost their lives, and 2025 is on track to be even worse.

00:08:55:67 - 00:09:06:35
These are not just numbers, they're individuals, people with families, with dreams, and with an extraordinary commitment to make the world a better place.

00:09:07:20 - 00:09:18:68
I invite you, all those here in Geneva and those following us virtually, to join me in a moment of silence in memory of the humanitarian colleagues we have lost.

00:09:59:91 - 00:10:00:51
[Other language spoken]

00:10:05:48 - 00:10:16:08
I am deeply honoured and humbled to welcome to the Paladinacion today some of the survivors and family members of the victims of attacks against humanitarian workers.

00:10:16:51 - 00:10:26:87

A heartfelt thank you to Mr Dafer Yunis al Hosseini, who will shortly share with us his memories and reflections of the Baghdad Canal Hotel bombing.

00:10:27:60 - 00:11:00:92
It is also a privilege to be joined today by the United Nations Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr Tom Fletcher, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Miss Nada Al Nashef, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations office and other international organisations in Geneva, His Excellency Mr Abdul Kareem Hashim Mustafa and the Executive Secretary of the UNOCH Staff Union, Miss Laura Johnson.

00:11:01:51 - 00:11:08:24
I also take this opportunity to welcome the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Filippo Grandi.

00:11:09:08 - 00:11:20:00
Ladies and gentlemen, the increasing number of conflicts and fragile situations around the world today is placing humanitarian workers in situations of grave risk.

00:11:20:72 - 00:11:34:44
Day after day, our colleagues are being targeted for doing their jobs, protecting civilians, providing food, shelter and healthcare, delivering infrastructure support and more.

00:11:35:03 - 00:11:36:59
This is unacceptable.

00:11:37:00 - 00:11:40:51
International humanitarian law must be respected.

00:11:40:75 - 00:11:45:00
Attacks on UN staff and humanitarian workers must stop.

00:11:45:72 - 00:11:48:20
Their protection must be ensured.

00:11:48:55 - 00:11:51:39
Impunity must not be tolerated.

00:11:52:03 - 00:11:57:91
Humanitarian workers are the face of the United Nations and the broader humanitarian community.

00:11:58:39 - 00:12:11:67
Their commitment is a source of hope for millions, and their dedication strengthens our resolve to ensure that humanitarian workers everywhere are protected and supported in their vital work.

00:12:12:24 - 00:12:21:00
Today, we recognise the importance and courage of the humanitarian community, the risks they face and the sacrifices they make.

00:12:21:51 - 00:12:41:12
Ladies and gentlemen, in the face of shrinking resources, growing mistrust and increasingly volatile world, let us recommit to what unite us at the United Nations and in the wider humanitarian community a shared desire to help others and build a better world.

00:12:41:75 - 00:12:54:00
As we remember the brave colleagues we have lost and honour those who continue their work despite immense risks, we must ensure that their sacrifices are not in vain.

00:12:54:32 - 00:12:54:84
[Other language spoken]

00:13:08:24 - 00:13:13:32
Thank you very much, Director General Valavaya, for your important works and your appeal.

00:13:14:12 - 00:13:23:44
I would now like to invite Mr Tom Fletcher and the Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to come to the post the rostrum for his speech.

00:13:37:04 - 00:13:49:12
Thank you, Director General, dear survivors, families, especially the families, excellencies and colleagues.

00:13:51:15 - 00:13:56:60
We are here to grieve and to honour those we have lost.

00:13:57:72 - 00:13:59:75
They are the best of us.

00:14:02:08 - 00:14:04:96
Humanitarians carry hope where there is despair.

00:14:06:36 - 00:14:09:36

They are selfless in a selfish world.

00:14:10:84 - 00:14:14:63
They seek to mend what others seek to break.

00:14:15:84 - 00:14:19:48
They bring humanity where there is inhumanity.

00:14:21:36 - 00:14:28:51
Yet from that day in Baghdad till now, the best of us are under attack.

00:14:30:44 - 00:14:33:96
Last year, more than 380 humanitarians were killed.

00:14:34:72 - 00:14:36:39
[Other language spoken]

00:14:38:36 - 00:14:39:72
The highest ever recorded.

00:14:41:55 - 00:14:48:35
[Other language spoken]

00:14:49:32 - 00:14:58:68
520 aid workers, mostly unrestaff killed since October 2023.

00:15:00:12 - 00:15:02:27
The deadliest place for humanitarians.

00:15:02:63 - 00:15:12:03
For the second year running, this number doesn't even touch the hundreds of staff who've lost family members.

00:15:12:79 - 00:15:25:71
My colleague Syed, whose wife Ola was killed in our guesthouse in Sudan, 60 colleagues lost their lives, over double the year before.

00:15:27:27 - 00:15:32:15
These include my colleague Sadiq, killed in Al Fascia in November.

00:15:33:72 - 00:15:43:56

Already this year, hundreds more names, each with a family, each with a story.

00:15:45:84 - 00:15:55:28
And this is more than a statistical spike, it is a stain, the normalisation of violence against this community.

00:15:56:79 - 00:16:05:67
Each attack on a colleague is an attack on all of us, and we do not accept it enough.

00:16:08:20 - 00:16:15:20
0 Accountability, an indictment of international inaction and apathy.

00:16:16:84 - 00:16:21:24
The Member States must not accept it enough.

00:16:23:27 - 00:16:33:91
As a humanitarian movement, we demand the protection of civilians and aid workers, and we demand that perpetrators are held to account.

00:16:36:03 - 00:16:39:51
Humanitarians will not retreat despite these dangers.

00:16:40:87 - 00:16:46:08
Last year, despite the risks, we reached more than 116 million people.

00:16:46:84 - 00:16:52:84
Families fed, children in school, sick people cured, communities protected.

00:16:54:48 - 00:16:57:03
[Other language spoken]

00:16:58:15 - 00:17:04:15
It is our way of honouring those who died in 2003 and who have been killed since.

00:17:06:24 - 00:17:11:07
But you, the international community, must must also not let us down.

00:17:13:72 - 00:17:18:88
So we grieve again those we lost and those we continue to lose.

00:17:20:27 - 00:17:23:75

We honour those who defy the dangers.

00:17:24:96 - 00:17:28:96
We demand their protection and an end to impunity.

00:17:30:88 - 00:17:35:36
And we commit afresh to this mission, whatever the risks.

00:17:36:16 - 00:17:48:27
Thank you, Thank you very much.

00:17:48:27 - 00:17:57:87
And the Secretary General Fletcher, for this statement, for this appalling figures that give us a better picture of the attacks against humanitarians.

00:17:57:88 - 00:18:00:72
And for your commitment and call.

00:18:01:72 - 00:18:09:92
I would like now to invite Mrs Nada Al Nashef, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, to come to the rush roof to Labour's statement.

00:18:18:88 - 00:18:36:64
Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear friends, cherished families, honoured to add my voice in paying tribute to those who have lost their lives in the service of others, and to the thousands of colleagues who are working in difficult and dangerous circumstances around the world.

00:18:37:64 - 00:18:47:88
On a visit to Baghdad last month, I managed to find some personal closure, more than two decades after the attack that we marked today.

00:18:48:55 - 00:18:58:59
I retraced my steps on that fateful day, recalling the remarkable colleagues we lost, whom we will remember and mourn always.

00:18:59:51 - 00:19:18:68
But as you've just heard, attacks and killings of humanitarian workers have risen sharply over recent years in utter disregard for international law and in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and the protections that are embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

00:19:19:31 - 00:19:30:72

These violations are taking place in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Sudan, Ukraine and elsewhere.

00:19:31:83 - 00:19:44:15
In Yemen, 23 United Nations staff and five NGO workers have been detained or held incommunicado for more than two years now, including eight of my own colleagues.

00:19:44:75 - 00:19:51:40
We honour them and their families as we continue to work for their immediate and unconditional release.

00:19:52:11 - 00:20:16:19
In Gaza alone also, as you've heard, over 400 aid workers, including 340 honourable staff, have been killed since October 2023, and we continue to witness unspeakable daily tragedies, images that, in the words of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, constitute an affront to our collective humanity.

00:20:17:16 - 00:20:26:36
The weaponisation of food, in addition to restricting or preventing civilian access to life sustaining services, constitute a war crime.

00:20:26:96 - 00:20:31:48
People seeking aid must be able to access it in safety and dignity.

00:20:32:03 - 00:20:36:75
Attacks directed against civilians constitute a grave breach of international law.

00:20:36:75 - 00:20:40:75
They must stop and we need accountability for these crimes.

00:20:42:20 - 00:20:44:88
Distinguished delegates to friends and families.

00:20:45:27 - 00:20:53:87
The very idea of impartial, independent, neutral humanitarian action is being misused, undermined and attacked.

00:20:54:64 - 00:21:06:44
As we navigate this complex and challenging environment, there is an urgent need for all of us to come together to defend the international standards, the norms and the values that govern our work.

00:21:06:96 - 00:21:17:44
All Member States and all those responsible for adhering to the rules of war need to ensure they are upheld everywhere and at all times, for everyone.

00:21:18:27 - 00:21:24:55
International law is not optional, nor is it a luxury to be discarded when times are tough.

00:21:25:24 - 00:21:48:44
International humanitarian and human rights law were born out of horrific circumstances and sacrifices that we honour today as we stand in solidarity with all humanitarian workers and every day through our work to strengthen and renew our commitment to multilateralism and to an effective, robust and vibrant United Nations.

00:21:49:03 - 00:21:49:51
[Other language spoken]

00:22:02:51 - 00:22:03:48
Thank you very much.

00:22:03:48 - 00:22:06:83
Dear Deputy High Commissioner, I've been knowing you for a long time.

00:22:06:83 - 00:22:09:31
I didn't know you were on survival of that terrible day.

00:22:10:00 - 00:22:18:68
Thank you very much for your statement and thanks for reminding us of the importance of accountability in the framework of international humanitarian law.

00:22:20:55 - 00:22:30:07
I would now like to invite His Excellency Mr Abdul Karim Hashim Mustafa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq, to come to the Roast Room to deliver a statement.

00:22:41:99 - 00:22:56:19
Dear Madame de Mello, dear survivors of the terrorist attack, Excellencies, distinguished guests.

00:22:57:34 - 00:23:17:27
On the 19th of August each year, Iraq solemnly recalls a tragedy engraved in our national memory under the collective conscience of the international community, the terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad in 2003.

00:23:19:55 - 00:23:31:79
This heinous act claimed the life of Secretary General Special Representative Mr Sergio de Milo, along with a number of dedicated humanitarian workers.

00:23:32:11 - 00:23:44:79
It was a direct assault on the mission of the United Nations, yet it also strengthened the international community's resolve to protect humanitarian personnel wherever they serve.

00:23:46:55 - 00:24:09:03
Six years later, on the 19th of August 2003, Iraq endured another devastating terrorist attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad, which took the lives of 40 fives of our cherished colleagues and injured nearly 600 others.

00:24:10:24 - 00:24:30:51
We pay heartful tribute to the resilience of our colleagues, who return to their duties with renewed determination, manifesting our nation's resolve to resist forces of darkness and to deny violence in our society today.

00:24:30:51 - 00:24:45:27
As Iraq advances along its path toward peace and sustainable development, we place humanitarian action on the safeguarding of humanitarian personnel at the top of our priorities.

00:24:47:40 - 00:24:56:51
The statistics from recent years reveal the grave dangers for faced by humanitarian personnel.

00:24:58:11 - 00:25:28:19
In 2024 alone, more than 370 lost their lives worldwide and since the beginning of this year, 24 more have perished, most of them in conflict zone such as Raza and Sudan, bringing the total number more than 400 lives lost in less than two years, the highest toll in recent memory.

00:25:29:59 - 00:25:50:43
Beyond these tragic figures lies a deeper reality, persistent challenges, restriction, harassment and unfounded accusation faced by humanitarian organisations such as Honour War in Palestine under the policies of the Occupying Power.

00:25:51:55 - 00:26:13:63
These are not only members, they are stories of lives devoted and ultimately sacrified in service of the highest ideals, of families mourning beloved sons and daughters, of communities deprived of compassions in their most desperate hours.

00:26:14:44 - 00:26:46:55

They are a call to conscience, urging us to strengthen protection mechanisms, hold accountable those who violate international international humanitarian law, ensure accountability for perpetrators, and guarantee that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need safe, safely, swiftly and with dignity.

00:26:48:24 - 00:26:54:92
On this World Humanitarian Day, Iraq stands in full solidarity with all humanitarian workers.

00:26:55:59 - 00:27:11:48
We salute their courage and dedication, and we pledged our full support to all international efforts aimed at safeguarding their life and enabling them to carry out their noble mission.

00:27:12:72 - 00:27:27:88
May the souls of the martyrs of the humanitarian service rest in peace, and may the values of compassion and solidarity continue to guide us to build a more human and peaceful world.

00:27:28:07 - 00:27:28:67
[Other language spoken]

00:27:40:72 - 00:27:43:20
Thank you very much, dear Mr Ambassador.

00:27:44:59 - 00:27:54:24
As you have heard and seen, we have with us a certain number of those who survived this terrible attack in 2003 and I want to recognise them.

00:27:54:24 - 00:28:12:75
Mr Dafer al Rusini, Missus Shabo, Tahir al Talabani, Missus Carol Ray, Missus El Pederuka, Mr Jason Pronik, Missus Nada al Nashif and families of those who have perished.

00:28:13:16 - 00:28:22:88
Laura Dulce could not be with us but his, her son Matthias Salim Kanan is with us and Mrs Anna Ani Viera de Mayo.

00:28:23:75 - 00:28:38:03
And I would like now to invite Mr Dafer Aloussaini and thank him to come to the roast room and share a few words with with us of this terrible day and his insights.

00:28:38:72 - 00:28:40:75
Thank you very much, Mr Elsie.

00:28:56:59 - 00:29:08:59
Director and survivors, colleagues every 19 of August cast a Logue ashing shadow.

00:29:09:44 - 00:29:19:44
20 years ago on that black day in 2003, we lost 22 colleagues in the bombing of the UN office at the Canal Hotel in Badat.

00:29:20:40 - 00:29:31:04
In an instance, their voices were silenced, their love are steeled, their dreams cut short, but definitely their memory never faded.

00:29:31:75 - 00:29:39:31
It beats within us, and every act of justice, every moment of courage, every quiet promise to carry on.

00:29:40:96 - 00:29:49:31
I was there, one of the few national officers who chose to stay when others understandably left.

00:29:51:11 - 00:29:56:07
The fear was real, the grave crashing, but something held me.

00:29:56:20 - 00:30:03:51
A duty, a bond, a fire inside that refuses to let their memory fade into silence.

00:30:04:40 - 00:30:15:72
I stayed not as a hero, but as a witness, as someone who believed then, as I still do, that serving humanity is more than a job.

00:30:16:48 - 00:30:25:40
It's a call, act of act, an act of faith in the dignity of people even in their darkest hour.

00:30:27:27 - 00:30:38:11
In those days before the attack, I remember listening to the radio and hearing the voice that seemed to echo a sorrow and hope of our people.

00:30:38:44 - 00:30:47:84
It was the voice of well known singer called Kava Mossah singing We Want Peace broadcast across the radios in Iraq.

00:30:48:96 - 00:30:58:00
His words were a cry from the head of a winded nation, a play for a unity, dignity and healing.

00:30:58:79 - 00:31:01:27
I listened to that song countless time.

00:31:04:00 - 00:31:11:64
It give a voice that it's a it's give a voice to what many of us felt but could not say.

00:31:13:11 - 00:31:15:19
Aimed to trouble, aimed to blood.

00:31:15:79 - 00:31:23:39
It was whisper of hope, a reminder that even when peace seemed very far, we had not given up on it.

00:31:24:59 - 00:31:31:63
That same year we began to rebuild physically, emotionally and institutionally.

00:31:32:07 - 00:31:39:11
From the ashes of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, we lead the foundation for the UN Human Rights Office in Iraq.

00:31:40:03 - 00:31:43:55
That office became more than a place of work.

00:31:44:31 - 00:31:47:07
It became sacred ground.

00:31:48:31 - 00:31:52:31
We give our strength, our health, our years of exile.

00:31:52:83 - 00:31:53:43
[Other language spoken]

00:31:53:59 - 00:31:54:67
We give it our heart.

00:31:55:24 - 00:32:04:16
For as this mission was a personal, a promise to our following colleagues that we would carry their light forward.

00:32:05:16 - 00:32:19:04
Over 22 decades, I witnessed unspeakable suffering, mass displacement, sectarian violence,

assassination, threaten and terror.

00:32:19:51 - 00:32:24:75
But I also witnessed something just as a powerful the silence.

00:32:25:40 - 00:32:31:56
I saw a young Iraqi race for justice, survivors rebuild their lives and victims.

00:32:31:55 - 00:32:33:75
[Other language spoken]

00:32:34:27 - 00:32:41:35
And I saw my colleagues silent, steadfast, stand by those who needed them.

00:32:41:79 - 00:32:44:79
Not for a prize, but because it was right.

00:32:47:03 - 00:33:01:68
Over all these years, I still believe in the words of Sergio de Millo when he said that UN at its best, when it stays on the ground, when it's listened, when it's stand with the people.

00:33:02:92 - 00:33:10:27
Sergio know that humanity is an abstract, is not written in slogans or spoken in conference rooms.

00:33:10:75 - 00:33:15:79
It's leave it in presence, in compassion, in refusing to walk away.

00:33:17:20 - 00:33:23:68
Let this anniversary be not only time of mourning, but also a call for action.

00:33:24:44 - 00:33:36:16
We, the survivors, those who stayed and those who left, carry responsibility and moral duty to ensure that Iraq is not forgotten.

00:33:36:68 - 00:33:40:36
That sacrifice of our colleague was not in Vienna.

00:33:41:55 - 00:33:44:39
The dream of the justice and dignity lives on.

00:33:44:96 - 00:33:54:51

Let's pay tribute not only to the fallen, but to the living, the brave colleagues who remained, the communities we served.

00:33:54:68 - 00:34:05:72
Let us carry forward the principles of humanity, not in the world alone, but in heart, in memory and in the choice we make everyday.

00:34:06:27 - 00:34:12:44
Let us not only more in the past, let us protect the future, as is our duty.

00:34:12:76 - 00:34:13:12
[Other language spoken]

00:34:26:80 - 00:34:35:96
Thank you very much, Mr Arseni, for sharing with us your remembering and and also this very heartfelt words.

00:34:37:00 - 00:34:44:44
Last but definitely not least, now I would like to give the floor to Mrs Laura Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Staff Union of UN Geneva.

00:34:55:00 - 00:35:08:44
This is the third year that I've had the honour of delivering a statement on behalf of the humanitarians that I represent, and I think it may be the hardest year for those humanitarians.

00:35:09:28 - 00:35:21:00
I'm not humanitarian in my day job and so it can be hard to know what to say to adequately recognise the staff who were victims and survivors of the terrible Canal Hotel bombing.

00:35:21:59 - 00:35:34:36
How to more broadly commemorate humanitarians around the world, especially those who end up paying the ultimate price, and how to effectively make a call for action to save the lives of humanitarians today.

00:35:35:88 - 00:35:50:11
This year the staff federation that our union is a member of, SISWA, which employs many thousands of the humanitarians who work across the UN system, has issued a statement.

00:35:51:23 - 00:35:56:31
And so I would like to echo the main points of that statement.

00:35:57:40 - 00:36:12:84
The theme of this year's Humanitarian Day Act for Humanity is a call to leaders and to the public to confront the normalisation of attacks on civilians, including humanitarians, and the impunity that undermines international humanitarian law.

00:36:13:44 - 00:36:22:00
It's a call to build public support, to pressure all parties to conflict and world leaders to act to protect civilians and humanitarian workers.

00:36:22:71 - 00:36:32:95
We pay special tribute to our Palestinian colleagues in Gaza, where more than 300 UN staff have been killed since October 2023, which is the highest toll in UN history.

00:36:33:48 - 00:36:42:40
They continue to serve under unimaginable conditions, often enduring the same loss, hunger and insecurity as the communities they assist.

00:36:43:28 - 00:36:47:60
At the same time, the humanitarian space itself is under grave threat.

00:36:48:23 - 00:36:54:43
Severe funding cuts are forcing agencies to scale back life saving programmes and reduce their workforce.

00:36:55:36 - 00:37:05:28
Structural reforms and discussions of mergers raise additional fears that humanitarian action may lose its independence, becoming subordinated to political or migration management agendas.

00:37:05:67 - 00:37:11:19
For staff on the ground, this translates into uncertainty, heavier risks and the erosion of trust.

00:37:12:23 - 00:37:26:27
We call for stronger protection of humanitarian workers, accountability for attacks, adequate funding for principled action and genuine consultation of staff on reforms that affect the future of humanitarian response.

00:37:26:96 - 00:37:29:40
The future of humanitarian action is at stake.

00:37:29:96 - 00:37:33:11
To protect it, we must act for humanity.

00:37:33:48 - 00:37:33:88
[Other language spoken]

00:37:44:15 - 00:37:49:71
Thank you very much, dear Laura, for this words and for representing all the staff here.

00:37:52:11 - 00:37:57:71
Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, this brings us to the end of this solemn ceremony.

00:37:58:84 - 00:38:08:32
I would like to express my our gratitude to all of you who have participated in this event, either in person here or also virtually.

00:38:09:15 - 00:38:12:87
And I would like to thank my colleagues who have organised this ceremony.

00:38:13:71 - 00:38:24:43
All those of you who would like to wish and honour the memory of those who have lost their lives at the end of the ceremony, please come here.

00:38:24:44 - 00:38:31:48
There are little candles on the table, and you're welcome to light one and put it and, and leave it there on the table.

00:38:32:84 - 00:38:54:03
For everyone here and at home who wish to continue advocating for the protection of humanitarian workers, I'd like to invite you to please join the global campaign hashtag Act for Humanity, which the United Nations are relaunching today with sharper urgency, demanding protection, accountability, and action.

00:38:55:23 - 00:38:59:43
So let me close this ceremony with the words of the Secretary General.

00:38:59:44 - 00:39:15:55
In his statement for today's commemoration, the Secretary General tells us on this World Humanitarian Day, let's honour the fallen, but let's honour them with action to protect every aid worker and invest in their safety.

00:39:16:11 - 00:39:19:03
To stop the lies that cost lives.

00:39:19:71 - 00:39:23:55
To strengthen accountability and bring perpetrators to justice.

00:39:24:44 - 00:39:29:55
To end arms flows to parties that violate international law.

00:39:30:32 - 00:39:37:20
Together, let us say in one voice, an attack on humanitarians is an attack on humanity.

00:39:37:55 - 00:39:39:84
Let's act for humanity.

00:39:40:03 - 00:39:42:71
Thank you very much and good evening to you all.

00:41:18:71 - 00:41:18:83
[Other language spoken]

00:41:55:55 - 00:41:55:67
[Other language spoken]

00:41:56:96 - 00:41:57:19
[Other language spoken]