

Statement by the Press Secretary on World Humanitarian Day

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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On this fourth annual World Humanitarian Day, the United States joins the international community in honoring the courage and commitment of the dedicated aid workers who devote their lives to serving their fellow human beings, regardless of who they are and where they are, often in extremely dangerous circumstances.

From Syria to the Sahel, Yemen to Sudan, the eastern Horn of Africa to the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, these unarmed aid workers risk their lives to provide life-saving assistance to millions of men, women and children. When disaster strikes, local and international humanitarians are often the first on the scene.

Today we also honor the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to others. In the past fifteen years, more than 1,000 humanitarian workers have lost their lives while helping innocent civilians in times of conflict and suffering. Since last August, 272 aid workers have been killed, injured or kidnapped. As armed groups increasingly target humanitarians, the United States condemns any effort to harm aid workers and demands that they be given the access they need to reach those in need and save lives.

As we celebrate World Humanitarian Day today, the Syrian regime continues to brutally attack its citizens and restrict the delivery of humanitarian aid to over 2.5 million people in need. Last weekend, the Government of Sudan signed a possible agreement of humanitarian access to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, where over 665,000 people are in need. We strongly urge the Syrian and Sudanese governments to provide unfettered access to help those in need of urgent humanitarian aid.

Around the world, every humanitarian aid worker must be free to serve without fear for their safety, and every human being must be able to pursue their aspirations in peace, dignity and security.

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