

Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2017

The European Union (EU) is committed to the safety of humanitarian workers. Every year, the EU marks World Humanitarian Day by adding its voice to the global campaign that honours humanitarian workers who, day after day, put their lives on the line to save the lives of others. World Humanitarian Day marks the anniversary of the 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, when 22 humanitarian workers lost their lives.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner Christos **Stylianides**, made the following statement:

"We live in a world increasingly marked by countless attacks and violence against innocent people globally. This should never become the new normal, something we leave unchallenged.

Humanitarian workers who risk their lives to save others are often the targets. We saw this last week in Central African Republic or in Syria countless times.

Ahead of World Humanitarian Day, we pay tribute to and honour all those who risk their lives while bringing assistance to victims of wars and natural disasters worldwide. We commend the bravery of all men and women that continue to work selflessly for the benefit of others.

In long lasting conflicts, where the rules of war are ignored and trampled on, aid delivery is never easy but always indispensable. Humanitarian workers should be able to operate freely, to help those that need it most.

Sadly, more than 4000 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks over the past two decades. Over one third of them were killed. These senseless attacks are a gross violation of International Humanitarian Law.

We will not allow these attacks to deter our commitment to continue to help those in need.

The EU is a world leader in humanitarian assistance and is committed to promoting global understanding of and respect for International Humanitarian Law and the humanitarian principles."

Background

In 2016, the EU mobilised €2.1 billion helping over 120 million people in over 80 countries around the world. This was the largest ever EU humanitarian aid budget to help those most in need, from people affected by severe large-scale crises in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan or the Lake Chad region, to victims of natural disasters such as the El Niño phenomenon, the tropical cyclone Winston in Fiji, the drought in Papua New Guinea, or the earthquake in Equator.

The EU contributes to the global respect for and compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) through advocacy and political measures such as dialogue, statements and initiatives, as well as through funding to ensure humanitarian access. The EU funds IHL dissemination targeting a wide range of stakeholders, as well as activities aimed at increasing the capacities of humanitarian workers in advocating for IHL, and implements large-scale information campaigns to raise awareness of IHL across the general public.

For more information:

[Website of the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations \(ECHO\)](#)

[Website of the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides](#)

[World Humanitarian Day 2017](#)

[ECHO Factsheet: International Humanitarian Law](#)

[Solidarity in Action](#)