

# Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel

- PARA1      We commit, at the highest political level, to take action and uphold the principles outlined in this Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel before, during and after conflict. We reaffirm our commitments to respect and uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to champion the protection of all humanitarian personnel, and to preserve the irreplaceable role of principled humanitarian action as a lifeline for all civilians in times of conflict.
- PARA2      We must reverse deadly trends impacting the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel.
- PARA3      International humanitarian law is the legal foundation for alleviating human suffering in conflict. It limits the effects of armed conflict, protecting persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities. It regulates the conduct of hostilities and provides rules related to humanitarian assistance, preserving access by ensuring that humanitarian personnel can reach all civilians.
- PARA4      International humanitarian law applies to all parties to armed conflict in all circumstances. Adherence is an obligation placed on all parties, including States and non-State armed groups. Parties to armed conflict must respect international humanitarian law, even if the other parties to the conflict do not.
- PARA5      Humanitarian personnel are experiencing increased risks to their safety and security as they seek to deliver assistance and life-saving support. 2024 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian personnel, who faced growing numbers of attacks, acts of violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, and threats by State and non-State actors; grave concerns were expressed in UN Security Council Resolution 2730 (2024). The spread of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech targeting humanitarian organisations is also disrupting humanitarian activities, undermining trust in their work, and threatening the safety and security of their personnel.
- PARA6      Despite the obligations in international humanitarian law to allow and facilitate humanitarian assistance, humanitarian personnel are facing increasingly difficult and politicised operating environments. This can include restrictive or punitive measures and practices that impede principled humanitarian assistance. Such actions undermine the delivery of safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian assistance and expose civilians to

further harm. National and local personnel, including volunteers, are at heightened exposure to security risks, including through criminalisation of their activities, while security incidents involving them receive significantly less attention than incidents involving international staff.

- PARA7 The existing international legal framework is clear and comprehensive. Yet meaningful accountability and justice is lacking for violations of international law that harm humanitarian personnel or impede their activities. Political commitment to adequately address violations of international humanitarian law are often limited, and many incidents are not appropriately reported, investigated or prosecuted.
- PARA8 Attacks that deliberately threaten the safety and security of humanitarian personnel must stop.
- PARA9 We commit to practical action to ensure greater respect for and protection of humanitarian personnel.
- PARA10 We reaffirm the fundamental obligation, in all circumstances, of full and strict adherence to international law, and call upon all States and parties to armed conflict to respect and ensure respect for applicable international humanitarian law in all circumstances.
- PARA11 We reaffirm our commitment to respecting and protecting humanitarian personnel, and to facilitating their role in the full, safe, rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance, in accordance with our relevant obligations under international humanitarian law, in all current and future armed conflicts.
- PARA12 We recognise gender equality as fundamental to equitable and gender-responsive humanitarian assistance, and therefore, we commit to ensure the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of female humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel in humanitarian activities, including in decisions related to their safety and security.
- PARA13 We recall existing obligations and commitments in support of the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, including as expressed by State Parties through the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols thereto; and as recalled by Security Council Resolutions 868 (1993), 1502 (2003), 2175 (2014) and Resolution 2730 (2024).
- PARA14 We acknowledge with appreciation the UN Secretary-General's recommendations to the Security Council pursuant to Resolution 2730 (2024) on measures to prevent and respond to incidents, ensure accountability, and enhance protection of humanitarian

personnel, premises and assets, articulated in his letter of 22 November 2024 to the President of the Security Council. In the context of follow-up to this Declaration, we commit to duly consider these recommendations, to work towards their implementation and to support the UN Secretary-General's endeavours to improve the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

- PARA15 We recognise UN Member States' existing efforts, individually and collectively, to uphold international humanitarian law and to allow and facilitate humanitarian assistance during armed conflict, including situations of occupation. We encourage States to strengthen cooperation with international mechanisms mandated to uphold accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and to support parties to armed conflict in restoring an attitude of respect for international humanitarian law.
- PARA16 We recognise an urgent need for practical improvements to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law. We commit to enhance cooperation and to share and learn from good policies, including practices that go beyond minimum legal compliance, where feasible, to afford more effective protection for humanitarian personnel.
- PARA17 We commit to working with humanitarian organisations to support and enhance the safety and security of their staff, including through advocacy informed by the perspectives of humanitarian personnel who are survivors or victims, and to support the development and implementation of measures to prevent and respond to incidents.
- PARA18 We commit to condemn all acts and forms of violence in violation of international law, including conflict related sexual-violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, threats, and intimidation against humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel and volunteers.
- PARA19 We reaffirm our determination to put an end to impunity and to ensure accountability for all attacks on humanitarian personnel that amount to violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
- PARA20 We urge the international community to consider bolstering humanitarian financing mechanisms by providing adequate, predictable and flexible resources for the security and protection of humanitarian personnel who are part of UN bodies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other impartial humanitarian organisations, including local and national organisations. This funding will contribute to protecting humanitarian personnel and their ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to all civilians in need.

PARA21 We commit to taking practical action to increase the protection of humanitarian personnel, with signatories to this Declaration taking into account our individual country contexts and determining our capacity to undertake such actions, in the following areas:

- (1) Respect for and adherence to international humanitarian law;
- (2) Allowing and facilitating full, safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with relevant international law obligations;
- (3) Alignment of actions to strengthen protection for international, national and local humanitarian personnel;
- (4) Commitment to pursuing greater accountability and justice in response to incidents.

PARA21.1 **Respect for and adherence to international humanitarian law**

- a. Take domestic action to implement and promote **full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law**, that protects humanitarian personnel including through domestic laws, policies and procedures.
- b. **Promote respect for and strengthen implementation of international humanitarian law**, including through the sharing of best practices and collective advocacy. This will support parties to armed conflict to better adhere to and implement international humanitarian law, improving legal protections afforded to humanitarian personnel and enabling humanitarian organisations to act in line with humanitarian principles
- c. **Strengthen understanding and awareness of international humanitarian law** and the role, contribution and protections afforded to humanitarian personnel, including in our own governments, security agencies and armed forces and by working with humanitarian organisations, civil society, educational institutions and the media.
- d. **Support better tracking and information exchange about emerging risks or threats to humanitarian personnel** in conflict zones at the local, regional and international level.

PARA21.2 **Allowing and facilitating full, safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with relevant international law obligations**

- a. **Advocate internationally for State and non-State parties to armed conflict to allow and facilitate humanitarian access to all civilians in need**, including where such access has been limited or denied in contravention of international humanitarian law.
- b. **Use all available diplomatic tools, as feasible, to enhance humanitarian access** and encourage parties to armed conflict to allow and facilitate principled humanitarian action.

- c. Allow and facilitate **access for humanitarian personnel and their assets**, including appropriate security and communications equipment that enables humanitarian activities, in accordance with international law and taking into account domestic law. This includes streamlining bureaucratic and administrative processes that may unduly delay or impede the provision of humanitarian assistance, such as necessary and appropriate visa and customs clearances, and by implementing legal and practical measures, such as humanitarian exemptions to sanctions and counter-terrorism measures.
- d. Work with States to **ensure that humanitarian activities carried out by humanitarian organisations are not criminalised** where those activities are consistent with international law, and that measures are taken to prevent harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention and reprisals against humanitarian personnel for carrying out their mission.
- e. **Support civil-military training and coordination** that promotes an enabling environment for humanitarian assistance in line with humanitarian principles and minimises risks of incidental harm to humanitarian personnel, including by facilitating real-time communication between parties to armed conflict and humanitarian organisations.
- f. **Counter misinformation and combat disinformation, information manipulation and hate speech** targeting humanitarian organisations, personnel and activities; and actively de-politicise humanitarian action, including by building understanding with local authorities and the media, protecting the independence of journalists, raising awareness and calling out actors that perpetuate disinformation and hate speech, and working with technology companies to support these efforts.
- g. Commit to **assess the potential that exported weapons could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law** including those involving harm to humanitarian personnel. Where there is an overriding risk of such consequences, States are encouraged to refrain from authorising such exports.

PARA21.3 **Alignment of actions to strengthen protection for international, national and local humanitarian personnel**

- a. Work with States, non-State actors and humanitarian organisations to **uphold and promote the respect for and protection of all humanitarian personnel**. We commit to addressing the inequitable risk borne by national and locally recruited personnel including personnel of local and national organisations, volunteers, women, and people with disabilities who face greater levels of risk in conflict settings.
- b. Strengthen support for the United Nations Security Management System and **capacity of humanitarian organisations to conduct assessment of security risks and training**,

particularly for national and locally recruited personnel including for local and national organisations.

- c. Provide support that allows international, national and local humanitarian personnel to **access timely and relevant information**, training and systems, to promote measures to **support the physical and mental well-being** of humanitarian personnel.
- d. Encourage and enable humanitarian organisations to **leverage existing and emerging technologies, and to undertake collaborative security risk management planning** that addresses safety and security considerations for their own personnel and personnel of their partner organisations.
- e. Where possible, **adopt adequate, flexible funding mechanisms** that enable humanitarian organisations to respond to shifting security dynamics and adapt security management strategies as needed for international, national and local staff.

PARA21.4      **Commitment to pursuing greater accountability and justice in response to incidents**

- a. Commit to **conducting full, prompt, impartial, independent, transparent and effective investigations** into incidents affecting the security of humanitarian personnel and use national and international legal mechanisms, as appropriate, to hold perpetrators to account, taking into account the primary responsibility of states to investigate, prosecute and bring to justice perpetrators of international crimes.
- b. **Strengthen the capacity of national and international institutions to develop and carry out oversight and support improved accountability measures** through the exchange of expertise and good practices, capacity building and technical assistance, as well as through the deployment of independent investigators in agreement with national authorities.
- c. Take a **victim/survivor-centred approach to justice and accountability**, including, where available, through appropriate remedies and support for victims and their families, including funding for independent legal assistance and by amplifying the voices of victims, survivors and witnesses in relevant fora.
- d. **Support and contribute to systematic and transparent monitoring and reporting of data** on incidents involving harm to humanitarian personnel which helps to review actions taken to address incidents, with a view to promoting accountability and implementing appropriate remedial action to prevent recurrence, including in support of Security Council Resolution 2730 (2024).
- e. Support the Security Council's consideration of measures, including those **under Article 41 of the UN Charter** where appropriate, against individuals or entities responsible for harm to humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel, in violation of international law.

- PARA22 We will work together to promote sustained high-level commitment to the protection of humanitarian personnel.
- PARA23 We will identify further actions that States and the United Nations can support to help realise the commitments in this Declaration and review progress on this Declaration, as well as support for further action by the UN Secretary-General under Security Council Resolution 2730.
- PARA24 We will work toward strengthening the capacity of States, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to prevent and respond to violations of the protections afforded to humanitarian personnel under international law, with a focus on accountability and justice, to support the implementation of the commitments in this Declaration.
- PARA25 We commit to engage with humanitarian organisations in the context of current and future armed conflicts, with a view to identifying and taking additional practical actions as appropriate.
- PARA26 Signatories to this Declaration are invited to join the Group of Friends on the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel in Geneva to coordinate advocacy, exchange good practice, share lessons learned, reinforce collective action, and promote taking up actions contained in the Declaration with wider stakeholders.