

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2019

This is a key year for International Humanitarian Law, as 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. As the risk humanitarian workers face continues to increase, the European Union pays tribute to the commitment of those who risk their lives to deliver humanitarian aid worldwide. The unequivocal respect of international law, the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their unfettered access to those in need are a major concern for the European Union.

At the occasion of the [2019 World Humanitarian Day](#), High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement:

“Violations of International Humanitarian Law continue to be one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians, as well as the protection of humanitarian and medical workers.

Violence against humanitarian workers affects civilians and prevents millions of people from receiving life-saving assistance. Saving lives should not cost lives.

Around 400 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks in 2018, making it the second worst year in history. Over one third of them were killed and the other third was kidnapped. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity to honour these dedicated humanitarians, and to advocate for their safety and security.

Humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality are the principles on which humanitarian aid is grounded. These should protect relief workers, enabling them to operate freely.

The EU and its Members States are the world leader in humanitarian assistance. Promoting principled humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law remains at the core of our international engagement.”

Background

Civilians in conflict zones are routinely killed or wounded in targeted or indiscriminate attacks. More than 70 million people are forcibly displaced by conflict, violence and human rights violations. Over 200 million people are

relying on humanitarian assistance.

The EU contributes to the global respect and compliance with International Humanitarian Law through advocacy and political measures such as dialogue, statements and initiatives, as well as through funding to partner organisations to ensure humanitarian access.

In 2017, the EU mobilised more than €1.75 billion for humanitarian aid operations in over 80 countries around the world.

For More Information

[Factsheet – International Humanitarian Law](#)