

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR,
STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

Remarks to Event marking World Humanitarian Day

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Good evening and welcome.

Thank you for being part of our ceremony tonight. It is wonderful to see so many people gathered here in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters, to honour World Humanitarian Day.

As we all join together here, events to mark the day are still underway in Panama, Colombia and Los Angeles, and have drawn to a close in 30 countries across the rest of the world, from Syria to Iraq, Mali to Nigeria, and Geneva to Myanmar.

In our hearts, this World Humanitarian Day, are all the aid workers and volunteers who have made the ultimate sacrifice,

losing their lives selflessly, carrying out their duties, helping people on our planet. We salute thank them for their bravery, their commitment, and we honour their memory. They are our daily inspiration.

And we are also here to show our solidarity and Share our Humanity with the 130 million crisis-affected people around the world today who we serve.

As we gather here, at this very same moment, 300,000 people in eastern Aleppo are under siege, at risk of death by bullet, bombing, starvation and sickness.

Two million people in South Sudan who have fled in terror of being killed or raped are displaced and desperate for protection.

As recently as last month, there was a brutal attack on aid workers in Juba, where one of our fellow humanitarians was killed and several were raped and assaulted. This is a grave atrocity on aid workers who have committed their lives to serving humanity. We must pursue and bring to justice the perpetrators.

Syria and South Sudan are just two cases of the humanitarian tragedies that are taking place around the world.

This year's World Humanitarian Day comes on the heels of the very successful World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul earlier this year which drew high level representation from over 180 of the 193 countries of the world, and thousands of members of the world's family of humanitarians in the UN, NGOs, private sector and academia.

There, leaders committed to the Secretary General's Agenda for Humanity to better protect civilians in crisis; to uphold the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality; to reinforce respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights laws and to leave no one behind.

They also confirmed that preventing and ending conflict is the single most effective way to reduce humanitarian suffering.

They, and we, in urging all leaders on, have much, much more work to do to translate their ambitions into actions to deliver on this goal.

But it is not too late to do so.

Leaders: millions of people around the world are looking to you to act with compassion and conviction. The big prize from the Summit will be in the transformation it brings to the lives of the 130 million people, our fellow citizens of the world, who need of humanitarian assistance and protection now, tonight.

I would now like to welcome to the stage Deputy-Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson.

Thank you and enjoy the night.