

We must honour the dedication of humanitarian and UN personnel on the front lines through action to protect them: UK statement at the UN Security Council

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Statement by Archie Young, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at the UN Security Council meeting on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

In conflict and crises around the world, humanitarian and UN personnel are often the first to arrive and the last to leave, risking their lives to save others.

2024 was the deadliest year on record, with 383 aid workers killed.

In 2025, over 320 were killed. And, already, in 2026, the devastation continues with aid workers killed across the Middle East, the DRC, and Sudan.

This cannot continue.

The United Kingdom was proud to co-sponsor Resolution 2730 in May 2024.

We hoped it would mark a turning point.

Instead, threats to humanitarian personnel have intensified.

We must act urgently.

Resolution 2730 must be implemented fully, without delay.

In all humanitarian crises, local personnel bear the greatest risk.

In Yemen, local humanitarian personnel remain arbitrarily detained.

We reiterate calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

In Sudan, local aid workers continue to sustain the response amid relentless insecurity, obstruction, and violence.

And in Gaza, the overwhelming majority of the more than 589 aid workers killed since 7 October 2023 were local staff, including 391 UNRWA staff.

Behind every aid worker killed is a family and a community left grieving.

President, implementation of resolution 2730 requires sustained investment in practical protection to keep humanitarian workers safe.

This includes civil-military coordination, robust security and duty of care, and consistent support to frontline agencies.

The UK supports global platforms such as INSO, the Global Interagency Security Forum and the Aid Worker Security Database, alongside our support to frontline agencies, and we urge others to do the same.

We must also address emerging risks.

The growing use of Uncrewed Aerial Systems by those not acting within the confines of international humanitarian law is making fragile environments even more dangerous.

This has had fatal consequences in the DRC, Sudan, and Ukraine.

Disinformation further erodes trust and shrinks humanitarian space.

We must call out disinformation and counter false narratives that endanger those delivering lifesaving assistance.

Finally, International humanitarian law must be upheld by all parties to armed conflict.

The UK is proud to co-chair a workstream under the ICRC's Global International Humanitarian Law Initiative and to have co-launched, with Australia, the Political Declaration on the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel.

We call for full compliance with IHL and for transparent, timely investigations when aid workers are harmed.

Two years since the World Central Kitchen strike in Gaza, in which three British nationals were killed, we are still waiting for Israel to conclude and publish its findings into this attack.

Israel has a responsibility to provide answers as to how and why this happened.

President, we must honour the dedication of those on the front lines by showing the same level of commitment in our actions.

Resolution 2730 must be more than a paper promise; it must be a practical priority and implemented fully by all.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-must-honour-the-dedication-of-humanitarian-and-un-personnel-on-the-front-lines-through-action-to-protect-them-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-coun>