

# EMPHNET Emergency Bulletin

## World Humanitarian Day 2024: Remembering those Who Face Death and Save Lives

### Introduction

World Humanitarian Day, observed annually on August 19, is dedicated to acknowledging humanitarian efforts around the globe. This day emphasizes the importance of promoting the well-being, dignity, and survival of those affected by disasters and crises. It also highlights the need for the safety and security of aid workers who risk their lives to assist them.

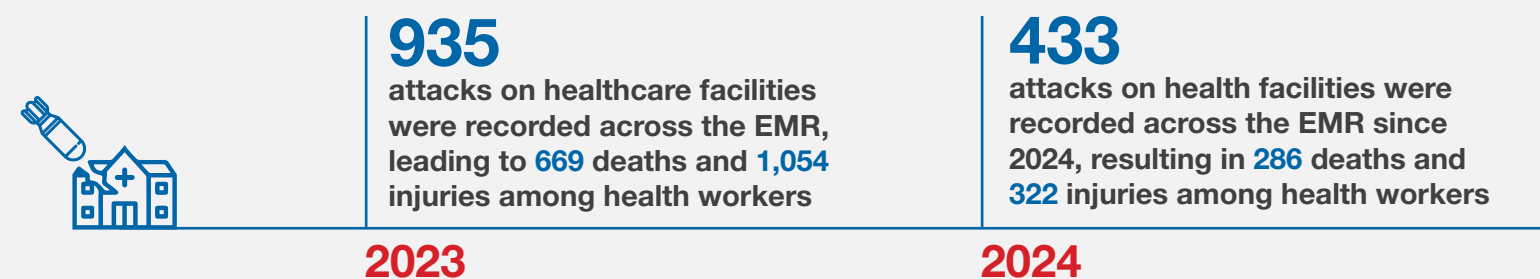
As the world confronts numerous emergencies and crises, the theme for this year's edition of World Humanitarian Day is **"Act for Humanity"**. Within this theme, the focus is placed on the urgent need to address the alarming increase in attacks against humanitarian workers and civilians. It advocates for an end to these violations and urges those in power positions to take immediate action to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones.

As we reflect on the significance of World Humanitarian Day 2024, it is crucial to connect this commemoration to the urgent realities faced by humanitarian workers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). In Gaza and Sudan, crises have intensified, putting immense pressure on those on the front lines. This issue explores the current situation, highlights the vital role of humanitarian workers, and emphasizes the importance of a transition from commemoration to meaningful actions.

### In Numbers

#### EMR

According to WHO



#### Gaza

According to OCHA



According to WHO (As of August 5, 2024)

Watch the third episode of  
"Gaza Health Chronicles:  
Inside the Crisis,"  
produced by EMPHNET



August 25, 2024

#### Sudan

According to OCHA



### Implications and Reflections

As World Humanitarian Day recognizes the invaluable contributions of humanitarian workers and raises global awareness of their critical role, it is equally important to examine the severe challenges these workers face. The escalating conflicts around the globe highlight the urgent need to move beyond advocacy and to take concrete action to protect and support those on the front lines. The dedication of these workers should be celebrated on this day; however, this day should further serve as a call to address the growing threats they encounter, ensuring that the principles we honor are upheld in practice.

This region is affected by escalating conflicts, natural disasters, and a range of health emergencies, all of which contribute to a significant burden of morbidity and mortality. For instance, according to WHO, the EMR is home to 745 million people, with 140 million, nearly 19% of the population, in dire need of humanitarian assistance. These crises not only devastate local populations, but also present immense challenges for those working on the front lines to provide aid.

One of the challenges faced by humanitarian workers in the EMR is limited access to targeted areas, which often prevents critical aid from reaching the most vulnerable populations. This situation is further exacerbated by a widening gap between the growing humanitarian needs and the available resources, limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to respond effectively to

crises. Additionally, the safety of humanitarian workers remains a persistent concern as targeted attacks on aid workers and health facilities continue to increase.

More specifically, in Gaza and Sudan, the situation is particularly dire, with humanitarian workers encountering unprecedented levels of danger and obstruction. In Gaza, despite the protection stated by International Humanitarian Law, aid workers have been tragically caught in violence and have lost their lives. Humanitarian organizations also face severe challenges in accessing those in need and in delivering essential assistance due to ongoing violence, restrictive conditions, and the extensive destruction of critical infrastructure.

Similarly, the situation in Sudan is critical. Humanitarian workers face escalating threats and attacks, making their efforts to provide aid increasingly dangerous. These combined challenges create an environment where delivering timely and effective humanitarian assistance is increasingly difficult, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced international cooperation and innovative approaches to overcome these barriers.

**"The normalization of violence against aid workers and the lack of accountability are unacceptable, unconscionable and enormously harmful for aid operations everywhere,"** said Joyce Msuya, the United Nation's Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator.

### Recommendations

- Enhanced security measures and protocols should be implemented to protect humanitarian workers in conflict zones.
- Safe humanitarian corridors should be established, and the de-escalation of hostilities should be prioritized to facilitate the delivery of aid and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and affected populations.
- Strong coordination between governments, international organizations, and local stakeholders can lead to more effective responses and better protection for aid workers.

### References

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This report is compiled by EMPHNET's Public Health Emergency Management Center (PHEMC)