

Statement by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, on recent attacks on aid workers

New York, 5 November 2020

This week we have lost six humanitarian workers in targeted violent attacks in Somalia, in two separate incidents in South Sudan, and in Northwest Syria.

This cannot be tolerated. Attacks directed against humanitarians are a violation of international humanitarian law and an obscene act against people working hard, often in extraordinarily difficult circumstances, to help vulnerable people.

Many humanitarian workers are from the communities they serve. In some cases they will already have suffered from the effects of conflict, climate change and natural disasters, just like the people they are helping.

Yet aid workers are increasingly in the line of fire. According to Humanitarian Outcomes' Aid Worker Security Database, major attacks against humanitarian workers last year surpassed all previous years on record. At least 483 relief workers were attacked and 125 killed.

Those who commit these atrocities must be held to account. Governments must investigate these killings and prosecute the suspects where appropriate.

International humanitarian law must be upheld.

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