

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

ADVOCACY STATEMENT

19 AUGUST 2025



Every day, in the world's most precarious and desperate places, humanitarian workers choose courage over comfort. They cross frontlines to deliver food, shield children from violence, rebuild shattered communities, and bring hope where hope is all but gone. They are the last lifeline for over **300 million people** caught in conflict, disaster, and displacement. Yet, that lifeline is fraying.

2024 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers: **383 lives lost** in 20 countries. In crisis zones across the world, aid workers have been targeted, harmed, and killed, despite international law being clear: humanitarian workers must be protected, always and everywhere. An attack on an aid worker is not only a violation of law; it is an attack on humanity itself.

At the same time, the funding that sustains their work is disappearing. Across the globe, aid budgets are being cut just as needs are exploding. In fragile contexts, children face heightened risks: eight times more likely to be forced into labor and six times more likely to be married early: while health clinics shut down and protection systems crumble. In West and Central Africa, a complex and interconnected web of crises is deepening humanitarian needs, eroding resilience, and fueling the spread of instability. Violence, insecurity, and the growing impacts of climate change threaten lives and livelihoods, undermine protection, drive displacement, and limit access to basic services. The region's two main epicentres of crisis are the Central Sahel in the west and the Lake Chad Basin in the east. Porous borders and transnational challenges make this a truly regional emergency, spilling over from the Sahel into neighbouring countries such as Mauritania and the coastal states of the Gulf of Guinea, where competition for scarce resources and limited services is increasing social tensions. Meanwhile in the east, ongoing violence in Sudan is driving a worsening humanitarian crisis in eastern Chad, where large numbers of people fleeing conflict are seeking refuge.

And yet, humanitarian workers do not give up.

They keep going, often in dangerous, exhausting conditions, because they know that behind every statistic is a person with a name, a story, and a future of a child worth fighting for. Many of these quiet heroes are **local leaders, local women**, the soul-keepers of their communities. Women who lead without recognition: a teacher risking her life to educate girls in secret, a widow protecting orphans in the camps, a mother feeding a stranger's child.

These women are leaders. And we know just how when women lead, communities not only survive, they heal and they thrive.

ACT FOR HUMANITY

In West Africa, humanitarian workers are responding to one of the fastest-growing crises in the world: from the Sahel to coastal countries. Armed conflict, political instability, and climate shocks are uprooting millions across the region, and beyond. Entire villages are emptying as people flee violence. Farmers have lost their land to drought and floods. Children are forced out of classrooms and into dangerous survival strategies. Food insecurity has reached catastrophic levels, with millions one step away from famine.

The courage of aid workers here is matched only by the urgency of the need. They risk their lives daily to reach communities trapped by insecurity, delivering life-saving food, clean water, and protection services, even as attacks on humanitarians rise and resources shrink.

This burden cannot be carried alone. **Crises, whether driven by conflict, climate change, or catastrophe, demand global HUMAN solidarity.** Supporting humanitarian efforts and acting for humanity is a shared responsibility to protect dignity, human rights, and hope itself.

To act for humanity is to stand with people in crisis, conflict, or disaster, no matter how far away they are. It means protecting human dignity by ensuring that everyone can access safety, food, water, healthcare, and hope. It means defending human rights and speaking out when they are violated. It means confronting injustice by holding perpetrators accountable and dismantling the systems that cause harm. And it means embracing both personal and collective responsibility: through advocacy, donations, volunteering, or shaping policies.

This is not optional; it is our shared duty to protect the very essence of our humanity.

This World Humanitarian Day, World Vision West Africa calls for urgent action to:



Protect every aid worker: safety is not optional.



Fund the frontlines: prioritize life-saving aid, especially in underfunded crises.



Empower women-led, community-driven responses: give funding and space to ensure they have the authority and space and the resources to lead.



Hold perpetrators accountable: end impunity for attacks on humanitarians.



Ensure every child in crisis has the safety and opportunity to learn, even in the midst of conflict.

We have the rules. We have the tools. What's missing is the political will, the moral courage, the human heart, and the God-fearing faith to act.

This is our moment to stand with those who refuse to turn away from suffering, to invest in hope where hope is under siege, and to defend the principle that every life matters.

On this World Humanitarian Day, we chose to stand as one, for the safety of those who serve, for the dignity of those they serve, and for the humanity we all share. In West Africa and across the world, together as humans, is the only way forward.