



Protection of Civilians Week 2026

Protecting the Protectors – Centering the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel through the Reset

Wednesday 20 May, 13:15 – 14:45pm

United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 7

Organised by: Permanent Mission of Australia and Permanent Mission of Canada

Co-sponsors: Belgium, Brazil, Centre for Protection of Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), Colombia, the EU, Geneva Call, Humanitarian Outcomes, IFRC, Japan, LAW, Netherlands, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Norway, OCHA, Protect Humanitarians, Switzerland and the UK.

Description

Civilians affected by conflicts and crises cannot be protected effectively when those providing assistance are themselves under threat. Violence against humanitarian personnel — predominantly local humanitarians serving their own communities — has risen sharply amid declining respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). At the same time, funding shortfalls and persistently high needs are straining the UN and humanitarian organizations, undermining operational capacity and critical support systems, and leaving humanitarian personnel increasingly exposed, particularly as reliance on local personnel grows. As the humanitarian system adapts to these realities, including through the Humanitarian Reset, protecting personnel requires sustained political will and action by Member States to uphold and promote IHL and ensure accountability for violations.

Objective

This event proposes concrete actions to strengthen the protection of humanitarian personnel, with particular attention to local staff. It will center on the [Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel](#) (Declaration) as a practical framework which complements and reinforces existing efforts to promote respect for IHL, including UN Security Council Resolution 2730. Discussion will focus on how Member States can translate commitments into action by strengthening accountability, supporting system-wide reforms, and ensuring the conditions to enable humanitarian personnel to operate safely and effectively in high-risk and complex environments.

Discussions will advance commitments under the Declaration by:

- Centering frontline voices and survivor perspectives to reflect operational realities and priorities for change.
- Sharing operational insights on working to uphold IHL, strengthen duty of care obligations, and more effectively protect local responders.
- Highlight UN perspectives on how reforms are reshaping protection outcomes and identify where additional Member State support is needed.
- Supporting Member States implement commitments under the Declaration and UNSC Resolution 2730 to improve protection for international, national and local personnel.

RSVP by the 13th of May: [Protecting the protectors](#)

Agenda and speakers

Opening Remarks

13:15 **H.E. James Larsen**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

Mr. Michael Gort, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

Panel Discussion – Risks, Reform and Response

Moderated by **Ms Tiffany Easthom**, Executive Director of Nonviolent Peaceforce

Panelists

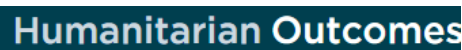
13:25 **Ms Abby Stoddard**, Partner, Humanitarian Outcomes
Mr Joachim Kleinmann, Head of Ukraine Programming, Nonviolent Peaceforce
Mr Hichem Khadhraoui, Executive Director, CIVIC
Mr Nick Leddy, Head of Litigation, Legal Action Worldwide
Ms Edem Wosornu, Director of Crisis Response Division, OCHA

14:15 **Open Discussion / Q&A**

Closing Remarks

14:40 **Mr William Blanchard**, Director of Field Operations, UNDSS

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