Buan-Ionad na hÉireann chun na Náisiún Aontaithe
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

MISSION OF BRAZIL UN

Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations

Humanitarian Diplomacy that Safeguards International Humanitarian Law

High-level side event during the 81st UN General Assembly

Organized by the European Union and Ireland, and co-sponsored by the African Union, Brazil, Jordan

Date and time: 21 September 9:00-10:30 UN Conference Room 7

Description

The humanitarian community is witnessing an alarming landscape. Globally, there are around 130 armed conflicts, coupled with severe violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. These include attacks on civilians, the destruction of their homes, of hospitals, schools, water systems, energy infrastructure and the natural environment, among others. Widespread dehumanising narratives further erode respect for international humanitarian law and the perception of humanitarian action. Accessing people in need of humanitarian aid is a key challenge across conflicts, particularly due to political considerations or conflict dynamics. Beyond the targeting of civilians that are the beneficiaries of aid, there is a disturbing practice of deliberate targeting of aid workers, who are essential for delivering principled aid.

Fragmented conflicts, territories under control by multiple authorities and non-state armed groups, shifting frontlines, and collapsing infrastructure demand from the international community strengthened humanitarian diplomacy and high-level advocacy for the protection of civilians and principled humanitarian action. Diplomatic engagement can prevent conflict escalation, ensure or restore humanitarian access, support dialogue, facilitate ceasefires and help find political solutions to wars or other outbursts of violence. It also promotes awareness of and respect for international humanitarian law, reducing the harm to civilian populations and advocating for accountability for violations.

The high-level event will focus on the following issues:

- Challenges around respect for IHL and principled humanitarian access in the current geopolitical context
- The case for diplomatic and political tools to address the current humanitarian challenges
- Examples from the ground: humanitarian diplomacy and the safeguarding of IHL; examples on engaging parties to conflicts, including non-state armed groups, de facto authorities, and regional actors; drawing in particular on the experiences made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Lebanon.
- Developments within the UN80 process and the Humanitarian Reset and their implications for humanitarian diplomacy

The event will contribute to raising awareness and fostering greater understanding among UN Member States and the wider international community regarding their role and responsibility in humanitarian diplomacy and the protection of civilians and aid workers in conflict.

Objectives/outcomes

- Examine the intersection of humanitarian diplomacy and the promotion of IHL and humanitarian access. Participants will identify best practices to foster cooperation between diplomatic, political and humanitarian actors.
- Examine how the humanitarian system can enhance leadership, representation, and negotiating capacity to engage *all* relevant actors (state/non-state, local/international) in sustained dialogue in support of IHL and humanitarian access.
- Reflect on the adaptations needed in diplomatic strategies to navigate evolving conflict dynamics, including lessons from recent crises in the DRC and Lebanon.
- Draw lessons learnt from recent humanitarian diplomacy engagements and reflect on successes and challenges.
- Contribute to the broader "Humanitarian Reset" discussion, aligning with the UN system reflections on adapting coordination and diplomacy to modern conflicts.

Format

The high-level event will be 90 minutes, with opening remarks and a keynote address, followed by a moderated discussion, with targeted, solution-focused interventions from ministers, heads of agencies, humanitarian organisations, and civil society. There will be opportunities for short remarks from the floor. Principals may be accompanied by one team member.

RUN OF SHOW

9:02- 9:05 - Welcome remarks/setting the scene by moderator

- Stephanie Filion, editor-in-chief, Envoy Magazine (3 min)

9:05-9:16 - Opening remarks

- Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (3 min)
- Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Jordan (3 min)
- Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management at the European Commission (3 min)

9:16 -9:20 - Keynote

- Mirjana Spoljaric, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (4 min)
- Video (2 min)

9:22-9:25 in case special HL guest participation (3 min)

9:25 – 10:00 – Reserved Speaker interventions (8x3min)

- Representative of Brazil (3 min)
- Amma Twum Amoah Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and social Development African Union Commission (3 min)
- KSRelief Representative (3 min)
- Tom Fletcher, ERC OCHA (3 min)
- Carl Skau, Acting ED WFP (3 min)
- Elie Dagher, Lebanese Red Cross Under Secretary General for Resource Mobilization and Humanitarian Diplomacy (3 min)
- Claudia Fuentes Julio, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights (3 min)
- Petra Hoskovec, Director, Forum des Organisations Non Gouvernementales Internationales (FONGI) DRC (3 min)

10:00 - 10:25- Further Interventions from the floor (2 min for ministerial statements and 1 min for other statements)

- State representatives (2 min)
- Humanitarian community representatives (1 min)

10:25 – 10:30 - Closing remarks

- Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Defence, Helen McEntee, T.D (3 minutes)