



Statement on Israeli Attacks on Humanitarian Workers

April 4, 2024

On April 1st, seven people working for the World Central Kitchen (WCK) were tragically targeted and killed by Israeli air strikes. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the WCK strike as "unintentional," committing to an investigation. However, the incident was described by WCK CEO Erin Gore as a "targeted attack," emphasizing the gravity of the situation. WCK noted that they provided their coordinates to the Israeli government and they also set their logo on the top of the car to increase visibility.

This strike was the latest in a series of Israeli attacks targeting of humanitarian aid and medical providers in Gaza and has since compelled several humanitarian organizations to suspend their operations. Since October, over 200 aid workers have been killed, significantly impacting the delivery of essential services to the besieged region and making it the deadliest year for aid workers ever. Furthermore, the attacks on aid workers have precipitated a halt in critical aid deliveries and aid operational services amidst an already dire humanitarian crisis.

The WCK announced the cessation of its activities in Gaza after these Israeli strikes killed six of its international workers along with a Palestinian aid worker accompanying them. UNRWA has repeatedly been targeted and has now been defunded by the U.S. rendering it unable to provide adequate aid to Gaza. The American Near East Refugee Aid organization and Project HOPE have similarly paused their operations, citing safety concerns for their personnel. This collective step back occurs at a pivotal moment, as Gaza faces the imminent threat of famine with millions depending on international aid.

The targeting of humanitarian workers and the subsequent disruption of aid underscore the full intentions of Israel in further escalating the severity of the food insecurity, causing a deadly famine and imposing untold suffering on Gaza's civilian population. The obstruction of humanitarian efforts not only exacerbates the suffering of civilians but also stands in violation of international law. The UN Security Council has called for the lifting of all barriers to humanitarian assistance, a mandate flouted by the Israeli government. Such actions have been identified as potential war crimes by the International Criminal Court.

The present situation in Gaza represents a critical juncture in the conflict, demanding a concerted effort from the international community to protect humanitarian operations and prioritize the welfare of the civilian population amidst ongoing hostilities. Israel cannot be allowed to continue to dismantle the food and health systems in their genocide of the Palestinian people. We call on our elected officials to demand accountability for these war crimes and to work to ensure the safety of humanitarian aid providers and medical providers in Gaza alike.