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COMMEMORATION OF WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
August 19, 2009

Today, the United States is honored to join the international community in commemorating the first World Humanitarian Day. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2008 to increase public awareness about humanitarian activities around the world, World Humanitarian Day is also an occasion to honor aid workers who labor every day on behalf of some of the world's most vulnerable people. This day marks the sixth anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad in which 22 people were killed, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary General's Special Representative in Iraq.

Sadly, situations of dire need exist in every region of the world. The success of our collective response to humanitarian crises rests on the selfless commitment and dedication of professional humanitarian aid workers. Increasingly however, aid workers themselves are targets of attack – in 2008 alone a record 260 humanitarian aid workers were killed, kidnapped or seriously injured in violent attacks. We call upon all governments and parties in conflict to give their highest attention to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. We are inspired by these workers' personal dedication to humanitarian principles, especially in the face of grave danger. We honor their service, and we congratulate their successes.

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