

NGO Forum statement on the protection of humanitarian aid workers in Northwest Syria

Gaziantep, 14 January 2019

We as NGO Forum members in northwest Syria condemn all acts of violence against humanitarian aid workers such as abduction, killing and bombardment. Humanitarian aid workers in northwest Syria work in an extremely difficult environment and risk their lives daily to ensure that aid reaches targeted communities and individuals, and incidents of violence against them is an unacceptable additional risk.

Humanitarian aid workers are the forefront of the humanitarian response. Their skills go beyond the narrow description of ‘humanitarian aid workers’: not only do they provide life-saving assistance, but are also the teachers, nurses and civil servants who maintain services essential to a robust and functioning society.

Humanitarian aid workers in Syria have suffered from violent acts for the past 8 years as they work to help save lives of Syrians affected by the crisis. Such intolerable acts, have affected the workers, their families and their communities and consequently vulnerable people in need.

In a constantly changing context, the resilient networks built by these skilled professionals to deliver their services to populations in need, supported by international and national NGOs, and eager to maintain the standards of principled humanitarian action, are more needed than ever and should be cherished and protected.

The NGO Forum membership demands the international community and parties to the conflict take all legitimate actions to protect and allow humanitarian workers to continue to provide aid in its current form.

The NGO forum members in Northwest Syria demand that hostility and violence against humanitarian aid workers in Syria is immediately stopped and that they are protected in line with international humanitarian law.