



# World Humanitarian Day

## #NotATarget

*"Around the world, conflict is forcing record numbers of people from their homes, with over 65 million people now displaced. Children are recruited by armed groups and used to fight. Women are abused and humiliated. As humanitarian workers deliver aid and medical workers provide for those in need, they are all too often targeted or treated as threats." — UN Secretary-General, António Guterres*

Did you know, there is a relationship between conflicts and the environment? Yes, there is a close connection between environment and conflicts. In Guyana, we don't have to look very far, as we are all aware of the pervasive border conflicts over natural resources. Sometimes we underestimate the value of clean air, water, land, wildlife and other natural resources, but these are ever so often, sources of contention. In this regard, World Humanitarian Day seeks to bring attention to the millions of people around the world, affected by armed conflicts every day and those who risk their lives to bring relief.

### **Background**

The terrorist attack which hit the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people in 2003, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN's top representative in Iraq; prompted the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution 5 years later, designating August 19 as World Humanitarian Day. While this is just one day, we can't ignore the plight of millions of people around the world. This day seeks to raise awareness on these issues in an effort to expedite the necessary interventions.

### **How is this relevant to the environment?**

You would all agree that crises can lead to conflicts and conflicts can lead to crises. However, in the midst of all of this, there are thousands of persons who risk their lives to bring some relief to those in conflicts. According to the UN, over 4000 aid workers have been killed, injured, detained or kidnapped. During a crises people struggle for the basic needs of food, water, fresh air and shelter and of course other services such as education,

jobs, entertainment etc. are limited or lacking. Many person have to leave their homes and countries in pursuit of safety and survival.

Therefore, during crises, not only are resources lacking but there also arises issues of pollution and poor environmental management. There is the risk of increase pests and diseases. Poor sanitation and hygiene due to lack of basic amenities are also the cause of several indirect deaths due to conflicts.

Let's not take the job of aid workers for granted as they risk their lives to bring relief of food, clothing, medical services etc. to those desperately in need. If we want to achievement environmental sustainability globally and a Green Economy nationally, we must guard against these conflicts and appreciate humanitarian efforts.

Source

<http://www.un.org/en/events/humanitarianday/>