

Not Fearless, But Committed: Honoring Those Who Gave Their Lives to Help Others

Since 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has strived to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence while providing them with assistance.

Along with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the organizations have brought together nearly 16 million volunteers across 191 countries to protect humanity at its most vulnerable moments.

On March 25, the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff, the Red Cross remembers those who have been injured or killed while delivering aid and calls for an end to the attacks on humanitarian workers.

The day of solidarity was originally founded on the anniversary of Alec Collett's kidnapping in 1885 while working in Beirut for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Collett was killed one year later, but his body was not recovered until 2009.

Over the past two years, the number of attacks on humanitarian aid workers has rapidly increased, with 18 members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies network having been killed while helping others in 2025.

The American Red Cross joins the global Red Cross and Red Crescent movement to stand in solidarity with the families and colleagues of those who lost their lives.

“Despite these risks, our colleagues continue to show up not because they are fearless, but because the suffering is too urgent to ignore,” wrote Kate Forbes, president of the IFRC, and Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the ICRC. “Yet, courage is not protection, and dedication does not deflect bullets.”

Each attack on a humanitarian worker defies the rules of war and is a grave betrayal of humanity, Forbes and Spoljaric said.

Today, the American Red Cross not only remembers the staff members and volunteers who have died while bringing aid to others but also demands action to prevent this grave betrayal from repeating.

Along with the IFRC, the American Red Cross is continuing to call for:

- States to uphold international laws that protect humanitarians
- Immediate action from authorities to prevent further attacks
- Respect for those who died through consequences for those who killed them

- Donors and organizations to invest in the safety and protection of all humanitarians — including training, protective equipment and insurance Whether delivering aid or being with their families while off duty, humanitarians — and humanity — must be protected