

Caritas Australia joins humanitarian agencies in condemning aid worker deaths.

Several Australian humanitarian agencies have collectively condemned the rising aid worker death toll in Gaza following the deaths of seven international aid workers killed while working for the World Central Kitchen.

The agencies include Caritas Australia, Oxfam Australia, Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA, Save the Children Australia, ActionAid Australia, Plan International Australia, and Care Australia, as well as the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Australian Zomi Frankcom was one of the seven killed, making her one of hundreds of humanitarian workers killed by this conflict. The [UN reports](#) 174 of its staff have been killed since October, with some of the named agencies also mourning their own colleagues.

The World Central Kitchen workers were part of an international effort to address the food crisis threatening the lives of millions of Palestinians, created by blockages to the supply of aid, especially in the North of Gaza. Between 1st and 29th March, the UN also reports close to 70 aid missions being impeded, denied, postponed, or withdrawn. Since October 7th, 348 health workers have also been killed and 155 health facilities damaged, with 13,000 children among the 32,623 fatalities.

At its most basic level, International Humanitarian Law demands rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, freedom of movement for humanitarian workers, and the protection of civilians including medical and aid workers. It also demands the protection of refugees, prisoners, the wounded and sick.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese denounced the World Central Kitchen deaths as unacceptable and demanded accountability from the Government of Israel, sentiments echoed by Foreign Minister Penny Wong today.

In turn, humanitarian agencies are urging the Australian Government to use all diplomatic means available to ensure Israel complies with International Humanitarian Law and the ICJ ruling, and to advocate for the release of all hostages. This diplomatic action should support a permanent ceasefire and a path to peace and justice for all, with equal rights for Palestinian and Israeli people.

In mid-February, the same group of agencies conducted polling that revealed four in five Australians are in favour of a ceasefire in Gaza (81%) with the majority (53%) expressing support for the Australian Government taking more action to achieve that goal.

Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson: “Inside Gaza civilians are experiencing suffering on a mass scale. The injured lack access to basic medicines and pain relief

and parents are watching their children starve. The psychological toll of this conflict is set to leave an unprecedented and tragic legacy on Gaza's young population, over half of whom are under 15 years old. Protecting humanitarians as they try to alleviate some of this suffering is the bare minimum that we should expect as international community, and a human family."

Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal can be supported by visiting www.caritas.org.au/gaza or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

ENDS

Media contact: Tara Harvey 0484 002 021 tara.harvey@caritas.org.au or caritasmedia@caritas.org.au

Notes to editor:

YouGov conducted the polling from 15 - 19 February 2024. 1,060 Australians aged 18+ were surveyed. A detailed Australian Polling Council Methodology providing full transparency is available [here](#).