

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on the Deaths of World Central Kitchen Workers in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

April 2, 2024

I am outraged and heartbroken by the deaths of seven humanitarian workers from World Central Kitchen, including one American, in Gaza yesterday. They were providing food to hungry civilians in the middle of a war. They were brave and selfless. Their deaths are a tragedy.

Israel has pledged to conduct a thorough investigation into why the aid workers' vehicles were hit by airstrikes. That investigation must be swift, it must bring accountability, and its findings must be made public.

Even more tragically, this is not a stand-alone incident. This conflict has been one of the worst in recent memory in terms of how many aid workers have been killed. This is a major reason why distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza has been so difficult, because Israel has not done enough to protect aid workers trying to deliver desperately needed help to civilians. Incidents like yesterday's simply should not happen. Israel has also not done enough to protect civilians. The United States has repeatedly urged Israel to deconflict their military operations against Hamas with humanitarian operations in order to avoid civilian casualties.

The United States will continue to do all we can to deliver humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, through all available means. I will continue to press Israel to do more to facilitate that aid. And we are pushing hard for an immediate cease-fire as part of a hostage deal. I have a team in Cairo working on this right now.

Earlier today I spoke with my friend Chef José Andrés, the founder of World Central Kitchen, to convey my deepest condolences for the deaths of these courageous aid workers and to express my continued support for his and his team's relentless and heroic efforts to get food to hungry people around the globe.

May God bless the humanitarian workers killed yesterday and comfort their families and loved ones in their grief.

NOTE: The statement referred to Saifeddin Issam Ayad Abutaha, Lalzawmi "Zomi" Frankcom, Damian Soból, Jacob Flicking, John Chapman, James Henderson, and James Kirby, World Central Kitchen aid workers who were killed in Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, Palestinian Territories, on April 1.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths of World Central Kitchen workers in Gaza, Palestinian Territories.

Names: Abutaha, Saifeddin Issam Ayad; Andrés Puerta, José Ramón; Chapman, John; Flicking, Jacob; Frankcom, Lalzawmi "Zomi"; Henderson, James; Kirby, James; Soból, Damian.

Subjects: Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, deaths of World Central Kitchen workers; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Gaza, international assistance; Israel, military operations in Gaza; World Central Kitchen.

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