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100 million people taking part in World Humanitarian Day campaign, so far – UN



Beyoncé films Humanitarian Day video at the United Nations. UN Photo/Cliff Watts

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The United Nations campaign highlighting the work of the world’s humanitarian workers has reached 100 million people through social media so far, the world body [announced](#) today, describing it as its “first milestone” that gets it closer to the one billion mark, which it aims to reach by World Humanitarian Day on 19 August.

The campaign, ‘I Was Here,’ allows transmission of messages of support from people who have registered online across the world pledging humanitarian action, however big or small. Members of the public can then share their individual acts of good through the interactive website www.whd-iwashere.org.

Organized by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the campaign has gained momentum in the past few days following the video recording – in front of more than 1,200 fans, celebrities, humanitarian workers and dignitaries – on Friday night, at the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters in New York, of US performing artist Beyoncé singing the song “I Was Here.”

The video of the song, which Beyoncé and songwriter Diane Warren donated to the campaign, will premiere globally on 19 August, with displays on big screens in the cities of Dubai, Geneva, Addis Ababa, as well as in New York City’s Times Square, among other locales.

“Everyone can be a humanitarian. All it takes is one act to help someone else,” the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, said during the Friday night event, which was hosted by television journalist Anderson Cooper. “That’s the spirit of people helping people.”

During the event, Mr. Cooper interviewing former child soldier Ishmael Beah, who fought in Sierra Leone’s civil war; Pernille Ironside, a UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) child protection officer; New York photographer Erin Dinan, whose non-profit organization One Sandwich at a Time feeds people living on the streets; and Laurent Vieira de Mello, whose father – a senior UN official, Sergio Vieira de Mello – died along with 21 other humanitarians in an attack in Iraq.

The General Assembly proclaimed 19 August as World Humanitarian Day in 2008 to commemorate that attack, which took place at the UN’s offices in Baghdad’s Canal Hotel in 2003. In addition to killing 22 people, another 150 people were injured.

The Day aims to honour those who have lost their lives in humanitarian service and those who continue to bring assistance and relief to millions, in addition to drawing attention to humanitarian needs worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in meeting those needs.

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