

For World Humanitarian Day, General Assembly becomes music video location



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon meets Beyoncé during rehearsals in the General Assembly Hall for the recording, in front of a live audience, of the song 'I Was Here.' UN Photo/Mark Garten

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While the usual focus of events taking place in the United Nations General Assembly Hall is on international affairs, on Friday evening the venue will be play host to an international event of a slightly different nature – the recording of a music video clip for the upcoming [World Humanitarian Day](#).

Over the past few days, lighting and backstage technicians have been working around the clock to prepare the Hall, located at UN Headquarters in New York, for the recording, in front of a live audience, of the song 'I Was Here' by performing artist Beyoncé.

Along with songwriter Diane Warren, Beyoncé is donating the video to the campaign for World Humanitarian Day, which falls on Sunday, 19 August – the same day on which the video will be released around the world, 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.

The General Assembly proclaimed 19 August as World Humanitarian Day in 2008 to commemorate the 2003 Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, which claimed the lives of 22 UN staff members, including the world body’s top envoy to the Middle Eastern country, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and wounded more than 150 people.

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.

During rehearsals in the General Assembly Hall on Thursday night, Beyoncé met [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#).

“This is where I talk to all presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers on the importance of humanitarian assistance and I’ll talk about you and your very noble humanitarian role,” Mr. Ban said, while thanking the artist for her contribution.

Beyoncé responded that it was “so exciting to be standing here in the General Assembly. This is really a great memory for me.”

More than a thousand people, including many high profile humanitarians, are expected to attend the music video recording this evening.

In order to help highlight the Day, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) has launched a web and social media campaign, that will transmit messages of support from people who have registered across the world pledging a humanitarian action, however big or small.

A central part of the campaign is an interactive web platform website – www.whd-iwashere.org – where members of the public can unite and share their individual acts of good. On the Day itself, the campaign aims to reach one billion people in a day with a single message.

“We want the message of people helping people to be so loud that it can’t be ignored. This year we are asking people to commit to one act that will help someone else,” said a spokesperson for World Humanitarian Day, Kirsten Mildren.

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