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PUBLIC STATEMENT

The Protection of Occupational Therapists and Access to Humanitarian Aid

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) expresses deep sorrow when members of the occupational therapy community lose their lives in situations of conflict, disaster or humanitarian crisis. All occupational therapists, regardless of national affiliation, are part of our global professional community. We honour their dedication to promoting health, dignity and participation, and recognise the profound loss to their families, colleagues and the people they serve.

WFOT recognises the vital role of humanitarian aid in ensuring equitable access to health systems for vulnerable populations. It provides essential care, supplies, and support for communities affected by conflict, natural disasters, and public health emergencies. WFOT supports actions that facilitate safe and effective humanitarian response and works with international partners to promote access to health and rehabilitation services.

WFOT reaffirms that health and rehabilitation professionals must be protected under international humanitarian law. Humanitarian aid is essential to saving lives, providing food and shelter, and helping people regain stability through participation in daily life. Occupational therapists understand the importance of engagement in everyday activities to meet basic needs, support mental health, and build community resilience and recovery.

WFOT advocates for the recognition and protection of occupational therapists in their professional roles, in accordance with humanitarian and ethical principles.

WFOT condemns any actions that obstruct or endanger the delivery of essential aid. Those providing and receiving assistance must be protected from harm. WFOT calls for full adherence.