MEDIA RELEASE

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Oxfam Australia welcomes Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Workers

Oxfam Australia welcomes the Australian Government's effort to champion a declaration aimed at safeguarding humanitarian personnel at the United Nations General Assembly in New York this week.

Oxfam Australia Chief Executive Officer Lyn Morgain acknowledged the importance of the declaration in the protection of frontline aid workers.

"We commend the Australian Government's leadership in highlighting the critical need to protect humanitarian workers. Minister Wong's advocacy on this issue is timely and necessary.

"As we consider the need for protection, we remember the hundreds of humanitarian workers who have tragically lost their lives in Gaza, but also in other conflict areas such as Yemen, Syria, and among the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

"On World Humanitarian Day this August, humanitarian organisations, including Oxfam, came together to call for stronger action to protect aid workers in conflict situations. We are pleased to see that the Australian Government has now responded to our calls.

"Civilians, including humanitarian and health-care workers, continue to suffer from attacks in violation of the laws of war and human rights. Far too often, these breaches go unpunished.

"The Australian Government, alongside others, has the ability to apply immediate pressure on states failing to adhere to international humanitarian law.

"We call on the Australian Government to take further action by ensuring that existing accountability mechanisms are effectively used to hold perpetrators of these violations accountable."

For interviews with spokespeople, please contact Lucy Brown at lucyb@oxfam.org.au or 0478 190 099.