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UN Volunteers celebrating International Volunteer Day in Sana'a, Yemen, were joined by UNV Executive Coordinator, Toily Kurbanov, and UNV Regional Manager for the Arab States, Christian Hainzl, on 5 December 2022.

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Celebrating IVD 2022 in Yemen: Together, we bring hope to our communities

International Volunteer Day (IVD) focused this year on solidarity through volunteering. Toily Kurbanov, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, joined UN Volunteers in celebrating their day on 5 December 2022 in Sana'a, Yemen. This was the first visit of the Head of UNV to the country since 1982. UNV Regional Manager for the Arab States, Christian Hainzl, accompanied Mr Kurbanov on his three-day visit to Yemen.

Today, Yemen remains the [largest humanitarian crisis in the world](#), with 24.1 million people – 80 per cent of the population – in need of humanitarian aid and protection. The country is still struggling with a protracted political, humanitarian and developmental crisis.

Acknowledging the contributions of UN Volunteers serving in such contexts, Mr Kurbanov chose to be at their side on IVD.

“ Today, all UNV is in solidarity with you. But we are also in solidarity with all UN Volunteers in other countries with great challenges: in Sudan and Somalia, in Myanmar and Mauritania, in Ukraine and Afghanistan. For them, today will be another difficult day. --Toily Kurbanov, UNV Executive Coordinator

Mr Kurbanov addressed UN Volunteers serving across the globe in his [statement](#) at an IVD event at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Sana'a. The event was attended by UN Volunteers serving in Yemen, alongside representatives of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNDP and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, Mr David Gressly, saluted UN Volunteers serving in Yemen.

“ Whether serving nationally or internationally, UN Volunteers provide tremendous service to a country in dire need of their professional support. --David Gressly, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen

"The volunteer spirit is everywhere and tapping into that spirit is extremely important," Mr Gressly added as he reflected on his first introduction to the concept of volunteering. He shared how, at a very early age, he heard from his great aunt and uncle stories of their volunteer work in India in 1962. "It was a very real inspiration for me to do what I'm doing today".

Mr Gressly continued, "You are an inspiration, not only to the people that you work with, but to your families and future generations, just as it was for me."

In recognition of their volunteer service, UN Volunteers received certificates of appreciation from UNV's Regional Manager for the Arab States, Christian Hainzl, joined by the Head of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Pierre Fallavier, UNDP Yemen Officer-In-Charge, Tracy Vienings, UNICEF Chief of Human Resources in Yemen, Bettina Hasel, and former UN Volunteer Aleen Hamaza, who is currently pursuing her career with UNDP Yemen as a Project Officer. UN representatives gave a few words of appreciation to UN Volunteers while handing them the certificates.

“ Let's not take volunteerism and volunteers for granted. --Christian Hainzl, UNV Regional Manager for the Arab States

Navigating the audience through the event's agenda, the UNV Country Coordinator in Yemen, Abdullah Al-Duraibi, highlighted a few figures about the UN Volunteers serving in the country. Despite the country's challenging context, the number of UN Volunteers serving there has been steadily rising since 2018. In 2022 to date, 155 UN Volunteers have been deployed with nine UN partners in nine different duty stations across the country.

UN Volunteers Shatha Al Eryani, Murad Moqbel, Faida Garmouz and Feras Al Sayghi spoke briefly about their experiences as they assisted Al-Duraibi in introducing different segments of the programme. Traditional Yemeni dance performances from Sanaa, Aden and Hodeida brought an energizing flavour to roundup the event.

In his closing remarks, Mr Kurbanov said:

“ As all UN Volunteers are in solidarity with you, I trust you will be also in solidarity with them. Because we stand together. We act together. And together, we will bring hope to our communities.

Arab States

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)