

25 March 2014

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
on the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing
Staff Members**

Each year on 25 March, the UN family commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members. This day underscores the need for the international community to do everything it can to protect UN personnel working in places where performing day-to-day tasks may put their lives at risk. It also pays tribute to all UN staff members who have been killed or kidnapped while working in conflict zones and calls on governments to implement much needed security and safety standards.

On this day, I encourage the global community to work more effectively to protect UN staff members who continue to face threats to their freedom and security.

The number of attacks on UN staff members has steadily increased in recent years and at an alarming rate. As of 21 March, the UN records 56 United Nations personnel who are currently detained. In addition, 4 United Nations and associated personnel kidnapped by non-State actors are still held captive.

In light of these disturbing statistics, governments, civil society, NGO's, the media and other stakeholders must come together today to strengthen our resolve in order to protect our colleagues.