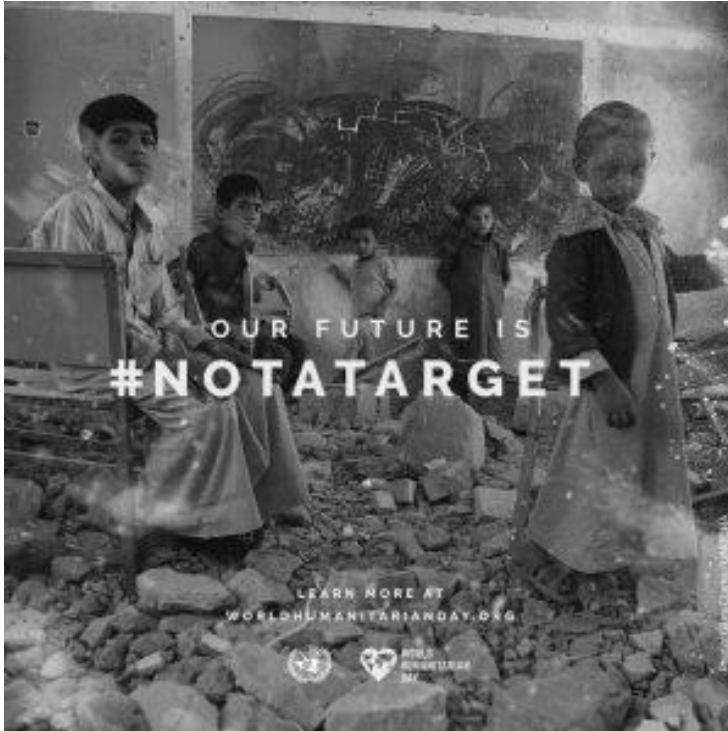


**On Sunday, 19th August, we'll be remembering the UN's World Humanitarian Day.**

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Their key theme this year is **#NotATarget**, reflecting upon the appalling reality that frequently a host of the most vulnerable become targets in armed conflicts around the world. Sometimes people most involved in bringing aid and help to those suffering amidst conflict are, themselves, the targets. The UN are highlighting the ways in which children (girls especially) and women, civilians, aid workers, displaced people and refugees, journalists, medical workers, schools, ambulances and hospitals are targeted so often and with such deadly consequences.

**They are showing us evil.**

At a time when we are caught up in the rise of many forces that drag us towards the politics and culture of an increasingly isolationist, my-country-first vision of the world, it's vital that we affirm a very different story of who we are, where we come from, and where we wish to go. The world's great faiths have, at our best, consistently affirmed the infinite worth of human life and the need to especially protect and support the vulnerable and those at most risk in our world. As I've thought about the UN's call and read some of the stories they have gathered of those on the world's front lines I've turned to other words as well. In his book **The Dignity of Difference**, former **Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** writes:

**“One of the most important distinctions I have learned in the course of reflection on Jewish history is the difference between optimism and hope. Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the faith that, together, we can make things better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope an active one... Hope is the knowledge that we can choose; that we can learn from our mistakes and act differently next time; that history is not what Joseph Heller called it, a ‘trashbag of random coincidences blown open by the wind’, but a long, slow journey to redemption, whatever the digressions and false turns along the way.”**

I think the UN rests upon a great deal of hope. I think the current state of the world requires a very great deal of hope to feed and fuel and foster our actions so that we

turn away from the twilight that labels others as collateral damage and into the bright sunlight of the love for one another that is God's gift to us. In another Jew, Jesus the rabbi in Galilee, I believe that God's profound hope took human flesh and lived amongst us. The attacks the UN are highlighting in their campaign turn precious children of God, which I believe everyone is, into pawns in games of power and ideology waged by some to benefit a few. The Bible tells first the Jewish story and then the Christian story of what God says into such contexts. When Jesus was asked to sum up life in all its fullness, life obedient to the will of God, he reached back deep into his Jewish tradition and scripture and found the summary that still stands today as test and possibility:

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”**

That's the text I want to hold in my heart, and carry through in my living and supporting, as I honour those the UN is honouring, remember those the UN is remembering, and encourage those the UN is encouraging. **Evil doesn't speak the last word, ever.**

**-Neil Thorogood, Principal**