



Millions of families lose a precious loved one every year due to road traffic accidents. 18 November 2012 – Celebrated this year on Sunday 18 November, the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims 2012 carries the theme: Now is the time to learn from the past. An annual global event, the Remembrance Day is marked to pay respect to the thousands of people who are killed and injured as a result of road crashes every day. It also seeks to recognise the work of all those involved in the aftermath of a crash – fire, police and ambulance personnel, doctors, nurses and counsellors.

Every year, about 1.3 million people are lost due to road crashes and between 20 and 50 million people suffer non-fatal injuries. Road traffic injuries are estimated to account for 1.7% of all years lived with disability. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region road traffic injuries represent a serious public health issue.

Road traffic deaths have been steadily on the rise over the past decade. In 2004, road traffic injury was the sixth leading cause of death in the Region accounting for an estimated 146 000 deaths and 2.8 million non-fatal injuries. Five years later, in 2009, the Global Status Report on Road Safety revealed that the Eastern Mediterranean Region, together with the African Region, had the highest road traffic fatality rates in the world.

The Region is the only region in the world where the road traffic fatality rate is higher in high-income countries than in low-income countries. Thus, road traffic injuries are not just a problem for low- and middle-income countries but rather an issue for all countries in the Region regardless of their level of development.

Road traffic injury and mortality rates are higher among younger people, with lost income directly affecting families and societies. Public remembrance is not only about remembering the

victims but recognizing the loss borne by families.

The Remembrance Day has gained even more momentum as the first year of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 comes to an end. It serves to remind us that much still needs to be done in a collective and concerted fashion towards the achievement of the ultimate goal of the Decade – saving 5 million lives by 2020.

Countries in the Region are encouraged to mark the Day by showing what has been done during the first year and expressing their commitment to further reduce morbidity and mortality as a result of road traffic crashes.

The Remembrance Day is celebrated on the third Sunday in November every year. It was first initiated in 1993 by RoadPeace, a UK-based national charity for road crash victims, and became a global day officially endorsed by the United Nations in 2005.

### **Related links**

[World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims; a guide for organizers \[pdf 867kb\]](#)

[World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims](#)

[World Day of Remembrance Facebook page](#)

[Youtube](#)

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