



TIME TO ACT

STOPPING VIOLENCE,
SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE

VIOLENCE AGAINST
HEALTH CARE MUST END

IT'S A
MATTER
OF **LIFE**
& **DEATH**



IT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW ...

Doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and first-aiders are coming under attack while trying to save lives. They are threatened, arrested or beaten, their hospitals looted or bombed. Some are unable to work because medical supplies can't get through; some are forced to flee for their lives. Some are even killed.

Attacks on health-care personnel, facilities and vehicles during armed conflict are wrong. They are prohibited under international humanitarian law (also known as the law of war), because they deprive sick and wounded people of much-needed care.

Preventing violence against health care is a matter of life and death.

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

For civilians already enduring the horrors of war, attacks on health-care services mean:



WE CAN END VIOLENCE AGAINST HEALTH CARE

2011

HCiD initiative – Resolution 5 of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent calls upon the ICRC to begin consultations with experts from States, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) and health-care communities worldwide to formulate recommendations for making the delivery of health care safer in armed conflict. The Health Care in Danger (HCiD) initiative is born.



2012–2014

Consultations with experts – Over 500 participants take part. Members of the Movement, health workers, government officials, armed groups, humanitarian organizations and members of civil society from all over the world share and discuss their experiences and formulate recommendations together to make access to health care and its delivery safer.



2015–2016

Global commitments – Resolution 4 of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and Resolution 2286 of the UN Security Council, adopted in December 2015 and May 2016 respectively, endorse the recommendations developed in the framework of the HCiD initiative and urge States and other actors to implement a series of measures for the protection of health care.

NOW

We can prevent the violence or seek to mitigate its impact. Several health-care and humanitarian organizations have come together under the Health Care in Danger initiative with practical recommendations to make the delivery of health care in armed conflict or other emergencies safer. States, the health-care community and the Movement have committed, to various degrees, to act on the recommendations. But these commitments alone are not enough.

IT'S TIME TO ACT

To make the protection of health care a reality, States, armed forces, health-care services and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies must stand against violence and take action.

PROTECT
HEALTH CARE

IT'S A
MATTER
OF LIFE
& DEATH

STATES

can safeguard health-care services by:

- improving legal protection for patients and health workers, including by adhering to international treaties and strengthening domestic legislation on the red cross and red crescent emblems and medical ethics;
- promoting awareness of and compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law among the general public and the armed forces;
- setting up systems to document attacks on health-care services, e.g. data collection, analysis;
- carrying out full, prompt, impartial and independent investigations into incidents preventing the safe delivery of health care and not letting attacks go unpunished.



WEAPON BEARERS

can protect wounded and sick people's right to health care during armed conflict by:



- incorporating legal and regulatory measures in military doctrine, education and training to ensure uninterrupted delivery of health care during armed conflict;



- taking steps to protect wounded and sick people and health-care personnel, facilities and vehicles when planning and carrying out military operations;



- promoting among their ranks the *Ethical Principles of Health Care in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Emergencies*.

HEALTH-CARE SERVICES

can ensure medical workers are able to do their job by:

- making sure they know their rights and responsibilities;



- increasing everyone's awareness of the *Ethical Principles of Health Care in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Emergencies*;



- adopting protocols and contingency plans for the safety and security of health-care personnel, facilities and vehicles;



- advocating the incorporation, in professional training and academic courses, of international law protecting health-care services and the rights and responsibilities of medical workers;



- promoting research and public discussion on the consequences of violence against health-care services;



- urging governments to enact – and ensure compliance with – laws to protect the provision of health care.



NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

can treat more wounded and sick people, safely and effectively, by:



- taking steps to increase acceptance, access and security for their staff and volunteers – e.g. ensuring everyone abides by the Movement's Fundamental Principles;



- raising awareness of the proper use of the red cross and red crescent emblems and lobbying for domestic legislation to ensure they are protected;



- collecting and analysing data on incidents of violence against the safe delivery of health care.

TOGETHER WE CAN PREVENT THE VIOLENCE



A. Synenko/ICRC

HEALTH CARE IN DANGER

The Health Care in Danger initiative was launched by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

It brings together people from around the world who believe everyone has the right to receive health care during armed conflicts and that health workers should be able to do their job in safety.

Our priority is to ensure States and non-State armed groups take action to protect health-care services so that the Movement and the health-care community can carry out their life-saving activities.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Download the Health Care in Danger campaign kit and help us reach more people and spread the word:

www.healthcareindanger.org/campaign-kit/

Stop the violence. Safeguard health care.



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross
19, avenue de la Paix
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
T +41 22 734 60 01 F +41 22 733 20 57
E-mail: shop@icrc.org www.icrc.org
© ICRC, February 2017

Front cover: W. al-Absi/ICRC

4294/002 02.2017 1000