DECLARATION BY THE HEALTH CARE IN DANGER COMMUNITY OF CONCERN

ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST HEALTH CARE

First, we would like to express our heartfelt support for all the health workers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for those working tirelessly in so many other areas of health care as well. Health-care workers and facilities and medical vehicles should never be a target of violence, and we urge governments, communities and weapon bearers to respect and protect health care at all times, and to contribute to creating a protective environment in which health care can be provided safely.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that health workers have for a long time been subject to many shocking forms of violence. The recent displays of public support for COVID-19 responders are heart warming, but many responders are nevertheless experiencing harassment, stigmatization and physical violence. Some health-care professionals and the people they were caring for have even been killed. At least 208 reports of such incidents have emerged since the beginning of the pandemic, and each day brings new stories of intimidation and harm.

Violence against health care must not be tolerated. We stand firmly against it, and are working as a global community to build a world where health workers and patients are safe and respected. We call on everyone reading this message to join with us and protect health care from violence. And not only individuals: we call on all governments to act against misinformation and to ensure that health care is protected by domestic law, that all health-care professionals have a safe working environment, and that mental health support is offered not only to victims of violence, but also to those working under increased levels of stress.

Robert Mardini
Director General
International Committee of the Red Cross

Jagan Chapagain
Secretary General
International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Christina Wille
Director
Insecurity Insight

Major General Geert Laire
Secretary-General
International Committee of Military Medicine

Annette Kennedy
President
International Council of Nurses

Eric de Roodenbeke
C.E.O
International Hospital Federation

Tammy Yu
Liason Officer for Human Rights and Peace Issues
International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations

Philippe de Botton
President
Médecins du Monde

Donna McKay
Executive Director
Physicians for Human Rights

Leonard Rubenstein
Chair
Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

Emma K. Stokes
President
World Confederation for Physical Therapy

David Gordon
President
World Federation of Medical Education

Chair of the Council, Frank Ulrich Montgomery
World Medical Association