



“Raising Awareness and Promoting Respect & Protection for Health Care”

1st Asia – Pacific Health Care in Danger Regional Meeting

Manila, 13 - 15 June 2019



DECLARATION ON PROTECTION OF HEALTH CARE

The 1st Asia – Pacific “Health Care in Danger” (HCiD) Regional Meeting (RM) was organized in Manila by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) to bring together regional, national and local actors and representatives of the Communities of Concern to improve protection of healthcare from violence and attacks on a platform together with the ICRC and the other Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement components. In this context, the RM sought to encourage concrete efforts in the Asia – Pacific region on this issue.

Participants of the RM reaffirmed their conviction that improving the protection of health-care services is a collective responsibility requiring the active participation of many stakeholders, where the States have a primary role to play in mitigating violence against personnel and facilities involved in the provision of health care.

Within this context, there was consensus amongst the participants that concrete measures need to be taken to strengthen the protection of health care systems and their resilience in the face of crises. The following points summarize the main outcome of the deliberations during the RM, which were acknowledged for follow-up and implementation by the respective stakeholders.

- 1. Participants agreed that there is a need to strengthen the respect for safe and secure delivery of healthcare by weapon bearers and that the focus of this engagement should be on practical measures such as training manuals and SOPs allowing for exercise of principles of restraint and proportion in the vicinity of health staff, patients, facilities and transports; for non-disruptive performance of health facility searches and smooth ground evacuations of the wounded and sick. The participants stressed that such measures were at their most effective if approached with the spirit of constructive cooperation between health and security authorities guided by the logic of prevention and therefore they were applicable to all countries, including the ones not experiencing conflict.
2. Preventive and safety measures for protecting the provision of and guaranteeing safer access to healthcare should include encouragement of adoption of new legislations and education and training on, as well as dissemination of the existing domestic legislation – including that pertaining to protection of the emblems. Appropriate measures to train/ educate civil servants, healthcare workers and the population at large about the domestic legislation and relevant legal instruments are to be undertaken by authorities.
3. Participants agreed that there is a need to strengthen the resilience and preparedness of healthcare systems to face violence and attacks with a particular focus on the physical security of health facilities, the training of healthcare staff to prevent and to manage violence, as well as the strengthening of coordination mechanisms between the various components of health systems and other agencies, such as law enforcement. Academic institutions should play a particular role in integrating the topic of protection of healthcare and respect for medical ethics in the context of conflict and other emergencies into training curricula for all medical and health staff.
4. All those with a stake in protecting healthcare - representatives of the national/subnational ministries/departments of health, national medical associations, nursing councils, other allied professional medical bodies, medical universities, public health institutes, representatives of major hospitals/hospital associations, and representatives of ambulance services, RC/RC National Societies, other components of the RC/RC Movement, civil society and private organizations, as well as concerned government departments – should form national or subnational Communities of Concern in order to play a key role in documenting and analyzing violence with the particular goal of devising concrete preventive strategies.
5. All health-care personnel should be adequately informed about their rights and responsibilities prior to, during and after armed conflict and other emergencies. Suitable training manuals, specific to these circumstances and including security considerations, should be drafted and distributed. Proper training for health-care personnel to apply and to respect their ethical duties that are the same in all circumstances, should also be ensured.
6. Participants agreed to promote awareness and to educate the general public on the need to respect healthcare and to launch behavioural change and public communication campaigns to that effect.
7. Participants of the RM agreed to share their best practices and challenges to develop stronger policies and practical means of implementation, particularly through peer-to-peer learning.

International Committee of the Red Cross
Philippine Red Cross
International Federation of Medical Students
Ministry of Public Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Integrated Provincial Health Office – Maguindanao
Integrated Provincial Health Office - Sulu
Integrated Provincial Health Office – Lanao del Sur
Armed Forces of the Philippines Health Service Command
University of the Philippines-Manila College of Nursing
Afghan Red Crescent Society
Afghanistan Islamic Medical Association
Health Emergency Management Bureau, Department of Health, Philippines
Philippine Medical Association
Department of National Defense, Philippines
International Pharmaceutical Students Federation
Ministry of Health, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)
Myanmar Red Cross Society
Philippine Nurses Association
World Health Organization, Philippine Country Office
Indonesian Red Cross Society
Bangsamoro Medical Society

