



Attacks on Health Care



facility



provider



transport



patient

PROBLEM

Health care is under attack. The sanctity of health care, the right to health, and International Humanitarian Law are threatened. Such attacks deprive people of urgently needed care, endanger health care providers, and undermine health systems.

In 2012, World Health Assembly Resolution 65.20 was adopted, which requested WHO to provide leadership at the global level in collecting and reporting information on attacks on health care. WHO subsequently created the Attacks on Health Care initiative to systematically collect evidence on attacks on health care, to advocate for the end of such attacks, and to promote best practices for safeguarding health care from attacks.

TARGET AREA & BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of this initiative are the health facilities, health workers and patients who are attacked, and the emergency-affected populations who are deprived of health care due to the resulting disruptions to health care delivery.

The initiative is global, but its main geographic focus is at the country level. Emergency and fragile-affected countries are prioritized for the roll-out of the initiative, with planned expansion to wider geographic areas that experience attacks. This approach is in line with the Global Health Workforce 2030 and key to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

GOAL

The vision of the initiative is that essential life-saving health services must be provided to emergency-affected populations unhindered by any form of violence or obstruction.

Ultimately, WHO seeks to ensure that:

- health workers everywhere can provide health care in a safe and protected environment;
- health workers are protected, resilient and equipped with knowledge and resources;
- parties to conflict understand and uphold their responsibilities under International Humanitarian Law;
- health care delivery is not disrupted by attacks; and
- all forms of violence against health care stop.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this mission, three main objectives and work streams of the initiative have been established:

1

Develop a body of evidence on the nature and extent of attacks on health care;

2

Increase commitment to action through strong advocacy to end attacks;

3

Assess the impact of attacks on health care delivery, and document best practices to prevent and mitigate consequences of attacks.



PHOTO: WHO/ Chris Black



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APPROACH

Evidence

- Systematic collection of primary information at the country level using the Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA)
- Daily monitoring of secondary data sources at the global level
- Quarterly global analysis of the trend and nature of attacks, linked with situation analyses and health resource information

Advocacy

- Development of an advocacy strategy which designates action at the global, regional and country level
- Participation in relevant global-level fora, such as the World Health Assembly
- Systematic development and dissemination of communications products
- Utilization of different media such as social media and news agencies to reach varied audiences
- Coordination with other agencies advocating on this issue

Impact Analysis and Best Practices

- Identification of impact questions that explore different facets of the effects of attacks on health care
- Development of a global framework for systematic best practice collection at the country-level
- Analysis of the impact of attacks and documentation of best practices through on-site information collection
- Implementation of safeguarding measures through linking with established programmes such as the Safe Hospital Programme
- Promotion and provision of technical assistance to Member States, WHO country offices, and partners, for the application of best practices
- Inclusion of attacks as a key issue in country-level Humanitarian Needs Overviews
- Adaptation of programmatic priorities and operational plans to minimize attacks



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