HMS Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) Student Chapter

*Human Rights, Health Neutrality, and Medical Education in War-Torn Syria*

Thursday December 15, 2016 from 5:30pm-7:00pm
Armenise Auditorium 125(D), Harvard Medical School

Recent high-profile attacks on humanitarian professionals and operations in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq call attention to the growing vulnerabilities of humanitarian staff and medical operations in conflict zones. As of June 2016, 757 healthcare personnel have been killed and 382 attacks have occurred on 269 separate medical facilities across Syria alone. One-hundred and twenty-two hospitals have been hit multiple times. The attacks endanger lives, violate international humanitarian law, and jeopardize the effective delivery of emergency relief to populations in need. In such contexts, humanitarian organizations face difficult legal and operational challenges in reaching populations, while ensuring protection of their own staff and local partners from targeted violence. National civilians and healthcare providers are particularly vulnerable; yet tend to receive significantly less protection. Also profoundly impacted are educational programs at all levels of training, including those related the health sciences.

This panel discussion will explore the topic of medical neutrality as a human rights issue and International Humanitarian Law as it relates to the status of health care providers, health care trainees, as well as civilian noncombatants.

**Michael VanRooyen (Panel Chair)**

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Director, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
Chairman, Brigham and Women's Hospital Department of Emergency Medicine
Professor, Harvard Medical School and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Dr. VanRooyen has worked as an emergency physician with numerous relief organizations in over thirty countries affected by war and disaster, including Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Iraq, North Korea, Darfur-Sudan, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo. He has worked in the field as a relief expert with several non-governmental organizations, including CARE, Save the Children, Oxfam, Physicians for Human Rights and Samaritans Purse International Relief. He has been a policy advisor to several organizations, including the World Health Organization and UN OCHA. He is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Health Cluster. He serves on the Board of Directors for the International Rescue Committee. He has testified before Congress and at numerous UN briefings on policy issues related to Iraq, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and served on a National Academies/GAO review of mortality in Darfur.

Domestically, Dr. VanRooyen worked with the American Red Cross to provide relief assistance at the site of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11th, 2001. He also helped to coordinate the American Red Cross public health response to Hurricane Katrina, and oversaw the development of a 400 bed surgical field hospital in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. He worked as a physician with the US Secret Service, NASA and with the US Public Health Service with the Navajo and Apache tribes in Arizona and New Mexico, respectively.
Dr. VanRooyen is a Professor at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health, where he teaches courses on humanitarian operations in war and disaster. In 2012, he founded the Humanitarian Academy at Harvard, an educational program to advance humanitarian professionalism. He has authored the textbook “Emergent Field Medicine” and written over than 70 publications related to international emergency medicine development and humanitarian assistance. He has served on numerous academic advisory panels and boards and is on the Editorial Advisory Board of the New England Journal of Medicine.

**Adrienne Fricke (Panelist)**
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Senior HHI Fellow
Visiting Scientist, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Adrienne Fricke is a Senior Fellow at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative where she is studying policy initiatives to improve access to healthcare for Syrian refugees, and a consultant specializing in human rights and refugee-related issues in the Middle East and Africa. Since 2007, she has worked with Physicians for Human Rights, serving most recently as Syria Advisor, designing and implementing projects for Syrian healthcare workers and human rights defenders. Adrienne previously assessed the health impacts on Sudanese refugee women living in Eastern Chad, and from 2006-07 was a Clinical Fellow at Harvard Law School’s Human Rights Program. She is the co-author of a series of studies by the Institute of International Education and the UC Davis Human Rights Initiative evaluating the impact of the Syrian conflict on access to higher education in Syria, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Adrienne holds a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from New York University, and a B.A. in African Studies from Yale University. She has lived and worked in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon and is fluent in Arabic and French.

**Julia Brooks (Panelist)**
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Legal Research Associate, Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action

Julia Brooks is a Legal Research Associate at Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), where she focuses on international humanitarian law, policy and education. For the Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA), she serves as host and producer of the Humanitarian Assistance Podcast series; a researcher focusing on international humanitarian law and humanitarian protection; and a managing editor and contributor to the ATHA blog and paper series. She also contributes as a writer, teaching fellow and consultant to curriculum development for e-learning tools, online and in-person courses developed by the Humanitarian Academy at Harvard.

Previously, Julia worked in Berlin, Germany at the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility & Future" (Stiftung EVZ), Adelphi Research & Consult, the German Parliament (Bundestag), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a Senior Fellow with Humanity in Action. She has also worked at the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) in Sarajevo, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, The Netherlands. She holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD) from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where she received the Alfred P. Rubin Prize and Leo Gross Prize for excellence in international law, and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Public Policy from Brown University, magna cum laude.
Dr. Mahmoud Hariri holds a Doctorate of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Aleppo University, and a Master Degree in General Surgery, faculty of Medicine, Aleppo University.

Mahmoud goes by the name Abdulaziz and has been a trauma surgeon in Syria. He is joined HHI this year through the Harvard Scholars at Risk (SAR) program. This program is intended to provide a safe environment for a scholar to pursue research and scholarly or artistic interests; it is not envisaged as an opportunity to mobilize political support on the issues giving rise to the scholar's predicament (though such activity is not excluded). The Scholars at Risk Program has been the largest, most vigorously active, and most successful program of its kind in the country, and perhaps in the world. A member of an international network of participating universities, Harvard SAR has provided sanctuary to dozens of professors, lecturers, researchers, writers, and other intellectuals who are at risk.

Dr. Hariri is a surgeon and former faculty member of Aleppo University Faculty of Medicine. Since the start of the war, he has dedicated his life to providing trauma care to all in need, as well as training junior physicians under his supervision to do the same. In addition, Dr. Hariri was the Director of Research for the Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations and was a focal point for most NGOs operating inside Syria. In this role, he leads a nationwide survey of hospitals to identify their capacity to provide trauma care. That study was published in JAMA SURGERY this June. There is a forthcoming article on trauma care provided and factors contributing to mortality in the Syrian war Which Dr. Hariri will presenting in Washington DC this spring at the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Symposium.

Dr. Timothy B. Erickson is a new HHI Core Faculty member with expertise in environmental toxicology and crisis in climate change. He also has active humanitarian health projects in conflict regions of Ukraine and Syria. He is an emergency medicine physician at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital where he serves as the Chief of Medical Toxicology in the Department of Emergency Medicine. He is also a faculty member at Harvard Medical School.

Previously, Dr. Erickson served as the Director for the UIC Center for Global Health and Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medical Toxicology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He also served as the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Graduate Medical Education, at the UIC College of Medicine.

Dr. Erickson has been a member of multiple editorial boards and has an academic history including publishing over 120 original journal articles and book chapters as well as editing 4 major textbooks. He has presented over 100 national and international invited lectures related to emergency medicine, toxicology, humanitarian global health, and wilderness/expedition medicine. His federal grant funding includes HRSA sponsored grants related to global preparedness and bioterrorism and a Medtronic foundation grant addressing acute cardiovascular disease in India. He has extensive international experience in Africa (Rwanda, Sudan, Kenya), Asia (India, Vietnam, Nepal), South America (Brazil, Peru, Argentina), Europe (Kosovo, Ukraine, France) and Antarctica.