

DECLARATION

Given the current humanitarian crisis in Syria where patients, healthcare workers, and hospitals are under attack, we the undersigned, without presumption of authority or judgment, stand in solidarity with our healthcare colleagues and declare their right to international health neutrality. For many decades, we have provided global healthcare professionals with education and training in humanitarian assistance in sudden onset disasters and conflicts worldwide. In this training and education, each and every healthcare provider, both civilian and military, is made aware of the inherent protections provided to them under international humanitarian law (IHL), including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as the principles and rules of IHL applicable to the conduct of hostilities, including the targeting of hospitals and medical facilities. These must be upheld.

These international laws are also clearly referenced in the Hague Statement on Respect for Humanitarian Principles (1991), UN Security Council Resolution 2286 on attacks against medical workers (2016) and military manuals of many States. As an example, the Russian Federation's Military Manual (1990) states that attacks against medical personnel constitute a prohibited method of warfare. The Russian Federation's Regulations on the Application of IHL (2001) states: "Persons protected by international humanitarian law include medical and religious personnel. Attacks against such persons are prohibited."

As of June 2016, 757 healthcare personnel have been killed and 382 attacks have occurred on 269 separate medical facilities across Syria— 122 hospitals have been struck multiple times. All participants in the combat, as well as the Assad government and the Russian Federation, must recognize that all healthcare providers enjoy protection against direct attack themselves (see rules 25 to 30 of the ICRC's customary IHL study, as well as protections in the Geneva Conventions and, where applicable, their Additional Protocols). IHL requires all Parties to both respect and to ensure respect for IHL, including under common Article 1 to the four Geneva Conventions. Failure to do so risks moral, ethical and legal consequences and penalties of their actions and inactions.

We join our healthcare professionals worldwide in condemning absolutely these deplorable actions in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and in many other countries, and demand their immediate cessation. We further advocate for the following remedies:

1. The establishment of healthcare safe zones in conflict regions to ensure the integrity of hospitals, clinics, and health centers.
2. Allow safe and unfettered passage of medical supplies, equipment, and personnel.
3. Cessation of all attacks on patients, pre-hospital personnel, and hospital medical staff.
4. Recognition by all parties of the neutrality of healthcare workers and their rights and responsibilities to care for any sick and injured patient, regardless of their nationality, race, religion, or political point of view.

Frederick M. Burkle, Jr., MD, MPH
Professor, Senior Fellow and Scientist
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
Woodrow Wilson Senior International
Public Policy Scholar

Josyann Abisaab, MD
Department of Emergency Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine
New York, NY

Satchit Balsari, MD, MPH
Chief, Global Emergency Medicine Division
Weill Cornell Medicine
Fellow, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights

David A. Bradt, MD, MPH
Sr. Associate, Department of International Health
School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

Brendan Cahill
Executive Director
Institute, International Humanitarian Affairs
Fordham University

Nieves Amat Camacho, RN, MsC
Centre for Research in
Health Care in Disasters
Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

Jennifer Chan, MD, MPH
Director, Global Emergency Medicine
Department of Emergency Medicine
Northwestern University

Francesco Della Corte, MD
CRIMEDIM Research Center
Emergency and Disaster Medicine
Università del Piemonte Orientale, Novara Italy

Dabney P. Evans, PhD, MPH
Director
Center for Humanitarian Emergencies
Emory University, Atlanta

P. Gregg Greenough, MD, MPH
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
Harvard University
T.C. Chan School of Public Health

Pier Luigi Ingrassia, MD, PhD
CRIMEDIM- Research Center
Emergency and Disaster Medicine
Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italy

Stephanie Kayden, MD, MPH
Chief, International Emergency Medicine
and Humanitarian Programs; Brigham and
Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Rachel T. Moresky, MD, MPH
Director, International EM Fellowship
sidHARTE Program, Migration & Health
Columbia U Mailman School of Public Health

Elizabeth Newnham, MPsyCh, PhD
Research Fellow
FXB Center for Health & Human Rights
School of Psychology, University W. Australia

Anthony D. Redmond, MD
Professor, International Emergency Medicine
Head WHO Collaborating Centre EMed Teams
Director, Humanitarian and Conflict Response
University of Manchester, UK

Timothy B. Erickson, MD, FACEP
Chief, Division of Medical Toxicology
Department of Emergency Medicine
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Miriam T. Aschkenasy, MD, MPH
Deputy Director
Global Disaster Response
Massachusetts General Hospital

Jacqueline Bhabha
Professor & Director, Research Center for
Health & Human Rights
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Colin M. Bucks, MD
Medical Director for Disaster Preparedness
Department of Emergency Medicine
Stanford University

Kevin M. Cahill, MD
Professor
Institute, International Humanitarian Affairs
Fordham University

Bruce G. Carruthers
Director
Buffett Institute for Global Studies
Northwestern University

Nicholas Comminellis, MD MPH
President & CEO
Institute of International Medicine
Kansas City, MO

Christina M. Drummond, MBBS
Disaster Medical Coordination
Burnet Center
Prahran, Victoria, Australia

Paul Farrell CD, MB, BCh
President
World Association for Disaster and
Emergency Medicine

Kathleen Hamill, Esq, JD, MALD
Scholar & Fellow
FXB Center for Health & Human Rights
Harvard T.C. Chan School of Public Health

Kirsten Johnson, MD, MPH
Humanitarian U Studies Initiative
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

Jennifer Leaning, MD, SMH
Professor, Practice of Health & Human Rights
Director, FXB Center, Health & Human Rights
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Hani Mowafi, MD, MPH
Chief, Global Health Director
Department of Emergency Medicine
Yale University School of Medicine

Ronak B. Patel, MD MPH
Department of Emergency Medicine
Director, Urbanization & Crisis Program
Stanford University

Leslie Roberts, MSPH, PhD
Professor, Program on Forced Migration
and Health, Columbia University
Mailman School of Public Health

Johan Von Schreeb, MD, PhD
Surgery and Disaster Medicine
Global Health Policy, Dept of Public Health
Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

Michael J. VanRooyen, MD, MPH
Professor and Chairman
Department of Emergency Medicine
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Director: Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Samer Attar, MD
Department of Surgery
Northwestern University
Chicago, IL

Neil G. Boothby, Ed.D
Director, Program on
Forced Migration & Health, Columbia University
Mailman School of Public Health

Gilbert Burnham, MD
International Health, Center for Global Health
Center for Refugee and Disaster Response
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

Melani Cammett
Professor
Department of Government
Harvard University

Emily Y Chan MD, SMPIH, DFPH
Director Collaborating Centre Oxford University
Chinese University of Hong Kong Disaster
Medical Humanitarian Response

Hilarie H. Cranmer, MD, MPH
Director, Global Disaster Response
MGH Global Health
Massachusetts General Hospital

M. James Eliades, MD, MPH
Program on Forced Migration & Health
Columbia University
Mailman School of Public Health

Alba Ripoll Gallardo, MD
CRIMEDIM- Research Center
Emergency and Disaster Medicine
Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italy

Bulat Idrisov, MD, MS
NIDA INVEST Research Fellow
Boston Medical Center, Boston U, MA
Physician, Bashkir State Medical U, Ufa, Russia

M. Ihsan Kaadan, MD, MS
Clinical Research Coordinator
Corrigan Minehan Heart Center
Massachusetts General Hospital

Adam C. Levine, MD, MPH, FACEP
Director, Global Emergency Med Fellowship
Director, Humanitarian Innovation Initiative
Brown University

Robert Murphy, MD
Professor Medicine and Biomedical Engineering
Director, Center for Global Health
Northwestern University

Luca Ragazzoni, MD, PhD
CRIMEDIM Research Center
Emergency and Disaster Medicine
Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italy

Paul Spiegel, MD, MPH
Professor Health Systems International Health
Director, Center Refugee & Disaster Response
Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University