

18 August 2016 – #ProtectHealthWorkers is a campaign by WHO focusing on health workers and health facilities, highlighting the challenges and risks they face every day, and monitoring their safety, making sure they remain protected and unharmed.

Syria is now the most dangerous country in the world for health workers. The number of attacks on hospitals and health centres has not gone down in spite of international attention – this year, the number of attacks has gone up. Hundreds of health workers have been killed, and the number of attacks on health facilities is increasing at an alarming rate. In 2016 alone, 71 attacks on health facilities have taken place in Syria.

Thousands of brave, dedicated health workers in Syria have chosen to stay behind and fulfil their oath to save lives. Some have literally gone underground to keep providing care. It is our collective responsibility to keep them safe. We will continue to provide them with the health supplies and support they need, and we ask you to join us in keeping them safe.

### **#ProtectHealthWorkers in: Al-Ihsan Charity health facility, Mogambo, Aleppo**

Aleppo continues to be the target of intense violence: more than half of public hospitals and health care centres are closed or badly damaged. In public facilities throughout the governorate, 1672 doctors work day in and day out to provide life-saving and life-sustaining health services to 1.2–1.5 million people.

Al-Ihsan Charity is one of 6 WHO-supported nongovernmental organizations providing life-saving and essential health services through a network of health centres, medical points, mobile clinics and hospitals in East and West Aleppo.

Every day, health workers in 2 medical teams from Al-Ihsan risk their lives by roaming around Aleppo in 2 mobile clinics to provide urgently required health services. The mobile clinics visit 23 locations providing primary health care services to 4055 people per week targeting vulnerable women and children in impoverished areas, makeshift shelters and shelters for internally displaced people.



**#ProtectHealthWorkers in: primary health care centre, Eastern Aleppo City\***

Many doctors have fled the war zones of Syria, but no city has so few as Eastern Aleppo. Between those who have fled and those attacked and killed, Eastern Aleppo City today has only 15% as many health professionals as the rest of the country. 30 health workers, including 7 doctors, currently serve in one of the city's 20 functioning primary health care centres. Many doctors sleep in the centre due to overwhelming demand, sometimes forced to work without electricity due to limited fuel supplies and power.

These health professionals in the centre provide trauma care, primary health care services and child health services to 100–150 patients a day, more than half of whom are children. On a typical day 35–40 pregnant women are cared for and 4–5 babies are delivered every week. Trauma cases are provided with emergency care and referred to the closest hospital, although due to the ongoing siege and insecurity, they have seen many of their patients die due to lack of specialized care inside the city. Doctors in the centre say the situation is getting worse day by day.



Health facilities in eastern Aleppo are overwhelmed by the demand for services“Colleagues and close friends have been killed as they tried to save the lives of injured patients. Many of us have been inside hospitals and health centres when they have been hit. The attacks are

never-ending.”

“There are no words to describe how we feel when a health facility is bombed. Fear, anger and sadness are a few. Some of our colleagues wish they had never studied medicine and become doctors, to have never seen what they have seen. Others have decided that once the war ends, they will give up their professions. They want to forget the massacres they deal with every day.”

“We have seen the world stay silent as we face death every day. Many of us are unable to sleep, even when we get an exhausted break. But still we give what we can give, regardless of our personal safety.”

We, the international community and WHO, will not stay silent. We will not abandon these brave health workers in this primary health care centre in Eastern Aleppo City, and we ask you to join us in keeping them safe. Every month, WHO will provide an update report on their status, as we work together to protect health workers maintain access to needed health services.

### **Related links**

[Regional Director's statement: Stop the war on hospitals!](#)

[Flyer: Attacks on health care in Syria must stop!](#)

\*The centre has requested not to be named

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