

1 June 2021 – This year marks the ninth anniversary of World Health Assembly resolution 65.20 (2012) in relation to the protection of health care in complex humanitarian emergencies.

With deep regret, we note that violence against health care personnel and attacks on health care continues to be reported, including incidents linked to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic across the world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than ever, protecting the health, welfare and lives of health care workers on the frontline is critical to enabling a better response.

WHO will continue to expand and refine its coordinated efforts to collect data on the incidence and types of attacks on health care, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in all complex humanitarian emergencies. By so doing we will further advance our understanding of the scope and nature of the problem in different contexts and better inform the design of mechanisms to prevent and respond to the attacks.

WHO also takes this opportunity to underscore that all parties in armed conflicts must avoid militarizing health care facilities and health transportation, including ambulances and other types of mobile medical units. Such acts are totally unacceptable. They undermine the vital humanitarian work being undertaken and irresponsibly increase the risk of exposing patients and health care workers to potential attacks.

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