

13 June 2021 – The World Health Organization (WHO) forcefully condemns the attack on a hospital in Afrin, northwest Syria, on 12 June. According to reports, the hospital was struck by artillery shells on Saturday evening killing at least 13 people, including one physician, other health workers, and 2 children. Twenty-three (23) people were also reportedly wounded, of whom 11 were staff, including one midwife who remains in critical condition.

According to the management of the hospital, most of the victims died immediately as a result of the shelling. Emergency services expect to find more injured and dead as search and rescue efforts continue.

The hospital, including the labour and delivery rooms, was badly damaged as a result of the shelling. All hospital services were subsequently suspended, and patients and health care workers were immediately evacuated.

Al-Shifaa Hospital is one of the largest medical facilities in northern Syria, providing more than 10 000 medical services every month. This includes 350 newborn deliveries and 250 surgical procedures.

WHO urges all parties to the conflict in northwest Syria to respect the safety and neutrality of health workers and health facilities. Tragedies like this can and should be avoided by warring parties as obligated under International Humanitarian Law. Protecting the health, welfare and lives of health care workers and resources is critical to enabling a better response to the health needs of all.

### **Related link**

[Statement on protection of health care in complex humanitarian emergencies](#)

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