17 February 2016 – WHO is appalled at the recent attacks on health care facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic. These attacks have resulted in at least 14 people being killed, including 4 health care workers, and have left many others severely injured. Our thoughts and condolences are with the families and colleagues of those killed and injured.

On 15 February, 7 hospitals in in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib and Dar'a were reported to be attacked. These include the only remaining functioning hospital in Azaz, Aleppo governorate. A second hospital in Azaz was bombed but was fortunately empty, having been evacuated last week because of its proximity to conflict lines. A 30-bed health facility in Maaret al-Numan in Idlib province, run by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), was bombed twice, killing at least 9 people and wounding many others. In total, these hospitals were providing health services for thousands of patients and performing hundreds of surgeries per month.

In addition, on 12 February, one hospital in rural Damascus was damaged in an aerial attack and is now out of service. This hospital had been providing critical health care services for around 7000 patients each month.

Sadly, such attacks on health facilities and health workers are increasing in both frequency and scale. These attacks have severe immediate and long-term consequences, depriving Syria's most vulnerable populations of life-saving health care. Attacks against health care facilities are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and contravene the right to health that is enshrined in the WHO Constitution. Health facilities must be treated as neutral premises in areas under conflict. It is in the interest of all parties involved to preserve the

neutrality and functionality of health infrastructures, personnel and civilians.

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Attacks on health care

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