



23 June 2023 – WHO conducted two workshops in Ramallah, West Bank, and Gaza City on strengthening protection of health care against attacks and barriers to access in the context of occupation.

WHO has documented increased attacks on health care in the West Bank, with the surge in incursions and violence in 2023. From January to the end of May 2023, there have been at least 124 health attacks, resulting in 39 health worker injuries and the arrest and/or detention of 9 health workers, 1 patient and 1 companion. At least 117 ambulances were affected in attacks, including 104 obstructed access, 15 damaged, 3 used as a shield, 4 searched and 4 directly targeted without causing damage to vehicle body. Meanwhile, 12 attacks involved damage to health facilities. In Ramallah, 35 participants attended the workshop, which focused on improving and aligning monitoring and documentation of health attacks, and identifying measures to better protect patients, health workers, ambulances, and facilities against acts of violence and interference with care provision.

In the Gaza Strip, ongoing blockade and closure has resulted in systematic obstruction to accessing health care. Patients, companions, and health workers are required to obtain Israeli-issued permits to reach health facilities in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, as well as in Israel and Jordan. In May 2023, 22% of patients were not approved permits in time to reach needed health care, while 53% of companions were not approved in time to accompany patients including children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and those incapacitated by their illness. A total of 31 participants joined the workshop in Gaza, which sought to enhance protection for individuals encountering arbitrary delay and denial of health access, and to bolster collective advocacy.

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