

5 April 2019 – The World Health Organization (WHO) strongly condemns the consecutive reported attacks on 3 health facilities in north-west Syria on 28 and 30 April. The attacks resulted in damage to infrastructure, putting them out of service.

Of the 3 facilities attacked, 2 were hospitals located in northern Hama providing life-saving medical services to thousands of vulnerable populations affected by increased hostilities over the past weeks. The first hospital hit, in the early hours of 28 April, offered general surgery, maternal and child care services to approximately 8000 beneficiaries per month.

On the same day, in the late afternoon, the second hospital was hit which provided, on average, 1300 medical outpatient consultations and over 300 major and minor surgeries per month. With these hospitals out of service, there is only one other hospital remaining in the area to provide secondary healthcare services. The other facility was located in Idlib, providing on average 1500 primary healthcare consultations per month.

These attacks reflect a worrying trend: 3 hospitals attacked in just 3 days and the latest in a total of 11 attacks on health in Syria this year.

“We are extremely concerned about the delivery of life-saving health services in the face of these attacks. Not only are the health facilities attacked, but health workers working on the front-line with extremely limited resources are put in grave danger as well,” said Rick Brennan, Regional Emergency Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

WHO urges all parties in the conflict in 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.

For more information, contact:

Lieke Visser

Communication Officer in Gaziantep
Turkey
Mobile: +90 53 85 44 29 57

Email: visserl@who.int

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