

Attacks on Health Care

Monthly News Brief

SHCC Attacks on Health Care

The section aligns with the definition of attacks on health care used by the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC).

November
2020

This monthly digest comprises threats and violence as well as protests and other events affecting the delivery of and access to health care.

It is prepared by Insecurity Insight from information available in open sources.

The incidents reported are not a complete nor a representative list of all events that affected the provision of health care and have not been independently verified

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Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

31 October 2020: In Lisasa village, Beni territory, North Kivu province, ADF fighters ransacked a health centre as part of a wider assault in the area during which 21 people were killed and others kidnapped. **Source:** [Vanguard](#)

07 November 2020: In the Kamayi area, Kananga city, Kasai-Central province, a health centre was ransacked by the family members of a patient who died after a medical intervention. The perpetrators stole medical equipment and supplies from the centre, as well as furniture. **Source:** [Radio Okapi](#)

Ethiopia

From 04 November 2020 onwards: In Mekelle city and special zone, Tigray region, in the midst of the conflict between the Ethiopian Federal Government and the regional ruling TPLF, travel restrictions have prevented the import of medical supplies, depriving vulnerable communities of essential healthcare resources. **Source:** [BBC](#)

Around 09 or 11 November 2020: In the Dansha area, Tigray region, three Ethiopian Red Cross Society marked ambulances were fired at by armed men amid active armed conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF). No casualties were reported. **Sources:** [Addis Standard](#), [Ethiopian Red Cross Society](#) and [ICRC](#)

19 November 2020: The Ethiopian National Defence Force chief accused the Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom - who is of Tigrayan ethnicity - of lobbying for and seeking to arm the TPLF. The Director-General has denied the accusations. **Sources:** [BBC](#) and [The New Arab](#)

As reported on 21 November 2020: In an unspecified location, the conflict between the Ethiopian Federal Government and the regional ruling TPLF prompted staff of an unnamed hospital to flee from the building, leaving patients without care. **Source:** [The Telegraph](#)

Mali

As reported on 11 November 2020: In Farabougou and Kourama Koube villages, Segou region, intercommunal violence and government counteractions resulted in the blockade of nearly 4,000 people, cutting them off from basic services, including healthcare. **Source:** [ECHO](#)

Mozambique

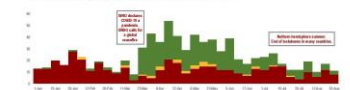
25 November 2020: In Dombe town, Sussundega district, Manica province, a vehicle belonging to the NGO 'The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief' (PEPFAR) was attacked by armed

HEALTH WORKER SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC October 2020 Update

Between January and August 2020, Insecurity Insight is monitoring identified 822 incidents in 68 countries adversely affecting the delivery of health care. Incidents are classified as related to COVID-19 and/or conflict (see the summary at the bottom of page 1). The following two pages discuss the difference in the reported conflict- and COVID-related violence against health care personnel, services, infrastructure and equipment by looking at who commits such violence, what weapons are used and what they can tell us about the perpetrators' underlying motives.

In March 2020, when the WHO declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic, COVID-related violence against health care was reported from 50 countries around the world. Health workers reported threats and assaults, and demonstrations outside health care facilities impeded access to health care. Such violence was frequently reported during the lockdown periods that were imposed in many countries during the second quarter of 2020. The global scale of reported incidents of COVID-related violence against health care is estimated from June until the end of August 2020. However, some countries, notably India, do not follow the global trend.

Attacks on health care (June-August 2020). Reported attacks on health care in the context of COVID-19



**Who commits violence against health care?
What weapons are used?
What does this tell us about the perpetrators' underlying motives?
Find out [here](#)**

men, leaving three employees injured. The governor of Manica blamed the group known as 'Renamo's Military Junta' for the attack. **Source:** [Club of Mozambique](#)

Nigeria

01 November 2020: In Calabar city, Cross River state, unidentified perpetrators kidnapped a doctor of the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital from his residence at Bateba Street for ransom. In response, on 04 November, the Nigerian Medical Association embarked on an indefinite strike until the victim is released. **Source:** [Eons Intelligence](#)

21 November 2020: In Anyigba city, Dekina LGA, Kogi state, a doctor and medical director of the Peace Hospital was abducted in front of his home by unidentified gunmen. The doctor's wife and another man were inside of the car with him but were ordered out by the kidnappers. **Sources:** [Premium Times Nigeria](#) and [Vanguard](#)

Somalia

18 November 2020: In Karan district, Mogadishu, an IED of unidentified origin hit an AU convoy, prompting its forces and Somali troops to open fire on civilians, wounding a pharmacist amongst others. **Source:** [Garowe Online](#)

30 November 2020: In Kismayo city, a male Somalian doctor was assassinated inside his pharmacy in the evening by an unidentified gunman. **Sources:** [Facility for Talo and Leadership](#), [Garowe Online](#) and [Radio Shabelle](#)

Asia

Afghanistan

As reported on 18 November 2020: In Lashkargah city, Helmand province, as the conflict between the Afghan National Security Forces and NSAGs raged on, three unnamed health facilities remained closed, directly affecting more than 87,000 people. 10 other clinics reportedly partially reopened, but thousands of people were still affected due to the limited services available as a result. **Source:** [Humanitarian Response](#)

As reported on 18 November 2020: In Maywand and Zhari districts, Kandahar province, as the conflict between the Afghan National Security Forces and NSAGs raged on, five mobile health teams remained suspended, depriving some 200,000 people of essential health services. **Source:** [Humanitarian Response](#)

As reported on 18 November 2020: In Uruzgan province, the conflict between the Afghan National Security Forces and NSAGs, as well as the presence of IEDs, forced some humanitarian actors to suspend their activities. Moreover, a health facility able to serve 30,000 people remained closed. **Source:** [Humanitarian Response](#)

21 November 2020: In Kabul, 23 rockets struck densely populated parts of the city, damaging several buildings, including the Sana Medical Complex, whose windows were shattered and a wall damaged. A nurse at the facility was thrown off her feet when the rocket struck the hospital. Eight people were killed, and 31 others wounded. While ISIS claimed responsibility for the assault, the Afghan Government attributed it to the Taliban. **Source:** [The New Arab](#)

28 November 2020: In Maidan Wardak province, an unidentified armed group stopped and detained an ICRC aid worker on his way back from a family visit in Kabul. He was released and safely returned home. **Source:** [The Khaama Press News Agency](#)

Azerbaijan

Around 04 November 2020: In an unspecified location, Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, Azerbaijani-Turkish forces disguised in Armenian military uniform shot and killed a doctor who was transporting a wounded soldier in an ambulance. The ambulance rolled down the gorge as a result of intensive fire from the perpetrators, but other Armenian doctors were able to save the lives of the wounded soldier and the driver. **Sources:** [Armenian Weekly](#), [Big News Network](#) and [Yerevan State Medical University](#)

Middle East and North Africa

Israel

15 November 2020: In Kfar Saba city, Sharon region, Central district, five people escorting a patient to the emergency room of the Meir Hospital attacked security personnel, after they were told that only one person was allowed to accompany the patient. **Source:** [Israel National News](#)

Libya

01 November 2020: In Bani Walid town and district, Tripolitania region, a group of armed people fired bullets towards the administration building of the Bani Walid General Hospital, starting a fire in the process. In response, the building was temporarily closed down. **Source:** [OCHA](#)

20 November 2020: In Qatrun village, Murzuq district, Fezzan region, unidentified arsonists attacked the dental clinic and other parts of the Al Backhi Primary Health Care Clinic, destroying equipment, walls, doors, and windows. **Source:** [WHO](#)

22 November 2020: In Abu Qurayn village, Misrata district, Tripolitania region, an unnamed armed group manning a checkpoint stopped and seized an ICU ambulance procured by the WHO. **Source:** [WHO](#)

29 November 2020: In Sabratha city, Zawiya district, Tripolitania region, an unidentified armed group invaded the intensive care room of the Sabratha COVID-19 isolation centre after removing the barriers surrounding the facility. **Source:** [WHO](#)

Occupied Palestinian Territories

24 November 2020: At the Tayaseer checkpoint, Tubas governorate, a group of IDF soldiers attacked an ambulance and team from the Palestine Red Crescent Society whilst the staff were providing first aid to a person who had sustained rubber-coated bullet wounds in the abdomen. As stun and teargas grenades were thrown at the ambulance, several soldiers boarded the vehicle and attempted to arrest the patient by force. **Sources:** [ICRC](#) and [Palestine Red Crescent Society](#)

Syrian Arab Republic

04 November 2020: In Ariha city, Idlib governorate, a male psychological support worker for the LNGO Ihsan Relief and Development Organization, and a male driver, were both killed after Syrian regime forces artillery shelling struck the car they were travelling in. **Source:** [MedGlobal](#) and [SNHR](#)

16 November 2020: In Darat Ezza city, Aleppo governorate, a male Syrian Civil Defence volunteer was wounded when unexploded ordnance from a previous shelling exploded. **Source:** [SNHR](#)

27 November 2020: In Izaz city, Aleppo governorate, a mortar shell fired by SDF artillery struck the ground in front of the city's National Hospital. **Source:** [SNHR](#)

30 November 2020: In Daraa city, Daraa governorate, a male patient in the middle of a treatment at the Daraa City hospital was arrested and taken to an undisclosed location by government agents. **Source:** [SNHR](#)

Yemen

Around 11 November 2020: In Ar Rawdah, Al Qahirah district, Taizz governorate, Ar Rawdah hospital was stormed by armed men. The perpetrators executed a civilian in the hospital. It is unclear if the victim was a patient or a staff member. **Source:** [ACLED](#)¹

17 November 2020: In Bir Basha, Al Mudhaffar district, Taizz governorate, a civilian who was hospitalised following an attack by the 17th Infantry brigade, was abducted by the same brigade from the Al Burayhi hospital. **Source:** [ACLED](#)¹

18 November 2020: In Taiz city and governorate, unidentified gunmen attacked an Emirates Red Crescent mobile health clinic and its staff. **Source:** [The New Arab](#)

The Americas

Haiti

28 November 2020: At the Champ de Mars, Port-au-Prince, Ouest, a young male doctor at the State University of Haiti Hospital was abducted by armed men who demanded a ransom of 300.000 USD for his release. A strike in the main Haiti university hospitals followed as a protest against the doctors' abduction. The doctor was released unharmed on the 30th November. **Source:** [Haiti Libre I](#), [Haiti Libre II](#), [Haiti 24](#), [Toutdetay](#) and [Radio Television Caraibes](#)

Mexico

09 November 2020: In Colonia Magisterial, Playas de Rosarito, Baja California, the Baja MediX clinic was stormed by three armed men. The perpetrators shot and injured a male patient who had been admitted a day earlier with a gunshot wound. **Source:** [ACLED](#)¹

12 November 2020: In Morelia, Michoacan, the Hospital Clinica Universidad de Morelia was stormed by four armed men. The perpetrators shot dead a male patient. **Source:** [ACLED](#)¹

15 November 2020: The Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risk warned that criminals have been illegally selling a flu vaccine called Vaxigrip online. The real vaccine is only distributed by public sector bodies and cannot be legally purchased in private pharmacies and hospitals, or via social media. **Source:** [InSight Crime](#)

Around 21 November 2020: In Zacatepec de Hidalgo, Morelos state, a doctor was killed, and his body was found burned inside his car in the parking outside the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) hospital. It is unclear if the doctor was shot dead first as bullets were found near the vehicle, and only afterwards the perpetrators burned the car with Molotov cocktails, or if he was killed when the perpetrators burned the vehicle. **Source:** [La Jornada](#)

Global Health Insecurity

These events go beyond the definition used by the SHCC to cover a wider range of events that affect the provision of health care including events perpetrated by patients or relatives of patients, private individuals and criminals as well as significant strike action or protests by health care personnel.

Africa

Malawi

16 November 2020: In Dedza township and district, Central region, a health worker at the Dedza District Hospital inappropriately touched a 16-year-old girl. He was later arrested. **Source:** [All Africa](#)

Nigeria

02 November 2020: In Akure city, Ondo state, resident doctors at the Ondo State University Medical Sciences Teaching Hospital launched a three-day warning strike over non-payment of their salaries. **Source:** [All Africa](#)

Sudan

01 November 2020: In Al Fashir city, North Darfur state, two men and a woman assaulted a doctor in the delivery room of the Saudi Hospital. In response, on 02 November, assistant gynaecologist and obstetricians launched a strike, requesting the hospital administration to file a complaint on behalf of the victim, and to take care of all subsequent legal procedures. **Source:** [Dabanga Sudan](#)

02 November 2020: In Al Fashir city, North Darfur state, a surgeon was beaten-up at a petrol station by an employee of the North Darfur Fuel Mechanism. The North Darfur Doctors Committee said in a statement that medics suffer from severe harassment at petrol stations. Doctors and assistant doctors have been given priority access to fuel by the Ministry of Health, the police, and the Fuel Mechanism. **Source:** [Dabanga Sudan](#)

Asia

Bangladesh

09 November 2020: In Adabar neighbourhood, Dhaka, employees of the private mental health Mind Aid Hospital beat to death a senior assistant superintendent of police shortly after he was admitted for treatment. Police immediately closed the facility and have since arrested 13 suspects, including the registrar of the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital, as well as the director of the Mind Aid Hospital. Six suspects admitted to their involvement before the court by 21 November. **Sources:** [BD News 24](#), [New Age I](#), [New Age II](#), [New Age III](#) and [New Age IV](#)

18 November 2020: In Dhaka, a group of doctors and staff of the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital abstained from work for hours to protest against the arrest of the hospital registrar in connection with the murder of a police officer at the Mind Aid Hospital on 09 November. They also besieged the office of the hospital director for a few hours to press home their demands, including the release of their colleague. **Source:** [New Age](#)

21 November 2020: In Narsingdi city and district, Dhaka division, a doctor at the Shibur Upazila Health Complex reportedly beat a couple seeking medical assistance for their ailing seven-month-old baby, after they entered without permission his office, where he was having tea and chatting with two women. **Source:** [New Age](#)

India

21 November 2020: In Pune city and district, Maharashtra state, three men visiting a patient assaulted a doctor and a security guard at the Sassoon General Hospital, after the doctor told them that they should remove their shoes before entering the casualty ward, and that only one person is allowed to visit the patient at a time. The perpetrators also vandalised the doctor's cabin. They were eventually arrested. **Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

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reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

The incidents reported are not a complete nor a representative list of all events that affected the provision of health care and have not been independently verified. All decisions made, on the basis of, or with consideration to, such information remains the responsibility of their respective organisations.

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¹ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) [database attribution policy](#). Accessed 05 December 2020.

WHO SSA reported incidents in November 2020

This table shows the number of incidents reported by the WHO Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA) in countries monitored by the Safeguarding Health Care in Conflict Coalition (SHCC). Incidents are broken down by attack type.

	# of reported incidents	Abduction, arrest, detention of health personnel or patients	Armed or violent search of health care personnel, facility or transport	Assault (without weapon)	Chemical agent	Militarization of civilian health facility	Obstruction to health care delivery	Psychological violence/of violence/intimidation	Removal of health care assets (e.g. transport, supplies, materials)	Setting fire	Sexual assault	Unknown	Violence with heavy weapons	Violence with individual weapons
Afghanistan	1												1	
Burkina Faso	1	1	1				1	1					1	
Libya	4								1	1				2
Mali	5	1		1				2	1				2	2
Ukraine														
Yemen	2													2
Total	13	2	1	1			1	3	1	1			4	6

Date period: October 2020. **Data accessed:** 11 December 2020

See [SHCC Methodology](#) for information on how the SHCC uses this data. This information may change as the WHO SSA is updated.