

# MOZAMBIQUE

## Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2024



**SAFEGUARDING  
HEALTH  
IN CONFLICT**



**Insecurity  
Insight**  
Data on People in Danger

# Letter from the Chair



Assaults on health care in conflicts around the world reached new levels of horror in 2024, exceeding 3,600 incidents, 15% more than in 2023. They consisted of air, missile, and drone strikes; shelling; tank fire; shootings; arson; the looting and takeover of health facilities; and the arrest and detention of health workers. As the descriptions in this report show, each incident brings terror, trauma, and - in too many cases - injury, untreated illness, destruction and death.

By far the largest number of attacks on health care – more than 1,300 – took place in Gaza and the West Bank, far more than we have ever reported in one conflict in one year, including more than double the number of health workers killed. Gaza properly drew global attention for the ferocity and relentlessness of assaults on health care. But we must also reckon with the more than 2,300 attacks in other conflicts, including the hundreds in each of Ukraine, Lebanon, Myanmar and Sudan. The cumulative number of attacks over the course of wars that began in the past three years include more than 1,500 in Myanmar since the military coup in 2021; close to 2,000 in Ukraine since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and more than 500 since the outbreak of war in Sudan in 2023.

This onslaught of violence has been accompanied by attempts by perpetrators to limit legal protections for health care and civilians in war, driven, as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) puts it, by a desire to have more “leeway to kill and detain.” Israel has sought to dilute legal requirements of precaution and proportionality during conflict. The new U.S. secretary of defense has called for “a law of war for winners.” Simultaneously, campaigns to delegitimize the International Criminal Court (ICC) are underway. The newly inaugurated U.S. president Donald Trump imposed sanctions on ICC staff and even their families for having charged Israelis with war crimes. In 2023, Russia’s Duma passed legislation criminalizing cooperation with the ICC or any foreign court or ad hoc tribunal that seeks to hold Russians to account. Hungary announced its plan to withdraw from the ICC, falsely alleging political bias.

These terrible developments threaten to make a mockery of the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 2286 in 2026 and the 50th anniversary of the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Conventions (the law protecting health workers and civilians during armed conflict) in 2027. If this resolution and law are to be more than words, the current approach to protection, amounting to mere admonitions, must be replaced by centering accountability, accompanied by the political will to drive it.

That is the approach long taken by the Coalition, and recently taken by a report *In the Line of Fire*, issued in November 2024 by the World Health Organization and the World Innovation Summit for Health. It called for a new alliance of member states, UN agencies, and NGOs. It recognized that the renewal of long-ignored commitments could not possibly suffice. Instead, UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and civil society organizations must rally together to take tough action, including outreach to the International Criminal Court, to impose consequences on the perpetrators of violence. Actions must include states cutting off arms transfers to perpetrators of attacks and employing the power of universal jurisdiction to prosecute. If the laws of humanity are to be upheld and the carnage is to end, governments and all concerned citizens everywhere must find the political courage and will to act.



Len Rubenstein  
Chair, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

[↓](#) [Executive Summary](#) | [Full Report](#) | [Recommendations](#) | [Methodology](#) | [Data](#)




## REPORTED INCIDENTS AND MOST COMMONLY REPORTED CONCERNS


 REPORTED INCIDENTS	 INCIDENTS WHERE HEALTH SUPPLIES WERE LOOTED	 INCIDENTS WHERE HEALTH FACILITIES WERE SET ON FIRE
<b>2024</b>		
<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2023</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2022</b>		
<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>


↓ Source: 2022-2024 MOZ SHCC Health Care Data

## OVERVIEW

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) identified 12 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Mozambique in 2024, compared to two in 2023 and seven in 2022. In these incidents, health facilities were set on fire and medical supplies looted.

 The conflict in Cabo Delgado province has devastated public infrastructure, with towns like Mocimboa da Praia seeing the destruction of hospitals, schools, and water systems, leaving health care and other basic services in disarray.

 Medicines and medical equipment were looted from hospitals and health centers were set on fire amid escalating violence.

 Severe shortages of medical staff and supplies hampered patients' access to care.

Information on incidents of violence against health care in Mozambique is compiled from open sources, aid agency data-sharing mechanisms and information projects. See [Methodology](#) for further information.



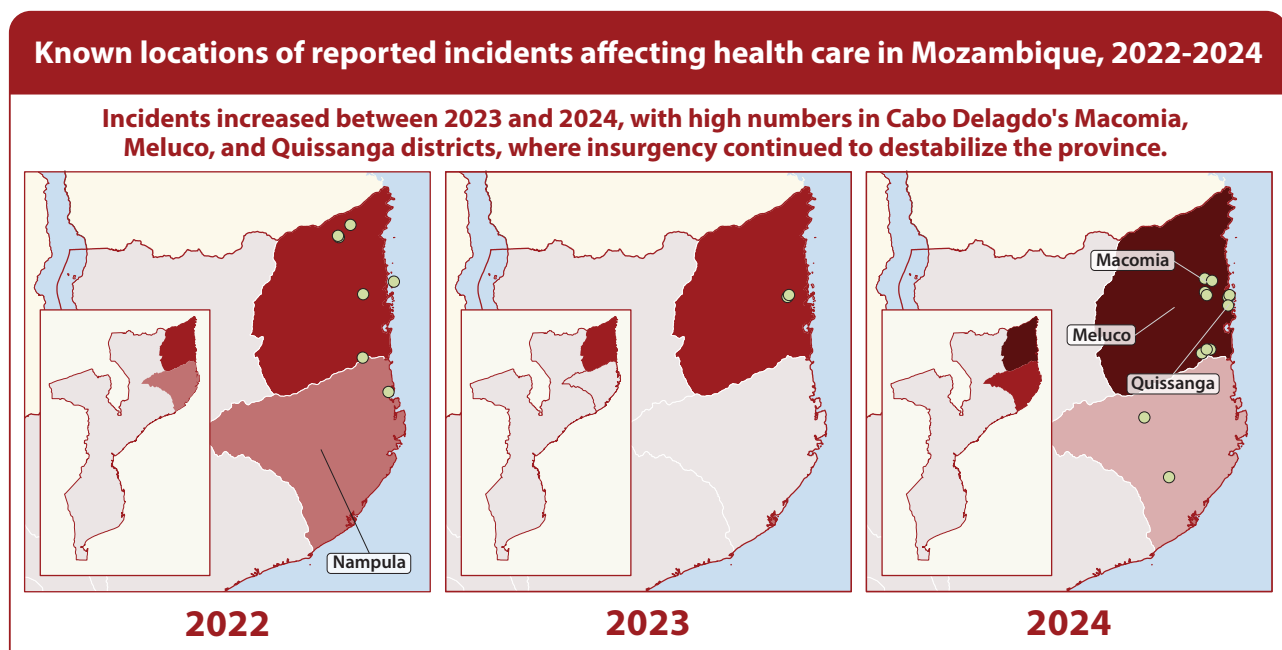
## THE CONTEXT

Mozambique continued to face two internal (non-international) armed conflicts, disrupting public services and access to health care. The Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado province continued to destabilize the country's northern provinces, displacing nearly a million people since 2017. Despite military interventions mitigating the worst of the violence, sporadic attacks persist. The conflict has severely damaged public infrastructure in Cabo Delgado, leaving health and basic services in disarray. In towns like Mocímboa da Praia, hospitals, schools and water systems have been destroyed. Displaced people returning to their homes find themselves without access to essential services, and fears of renewed violence hinder further recovery efforts.

Post-election protests, particularly in Nampula, over alleged fraud by the ruling Frelimo party led to violent crackdowns, leaving at least 300 people dead and forcing tens of thousands to flee, and raising concerns over human rights abuses and political repression.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF HEALTH CARE IN 2024

Incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care increased between 2023 and 2024, reflecting the wider increase in violence in Mozambique over this period. Most incidents were documented in Cabo Delgado province, where insurgency is high, with two reported from neighboring Nampula province.

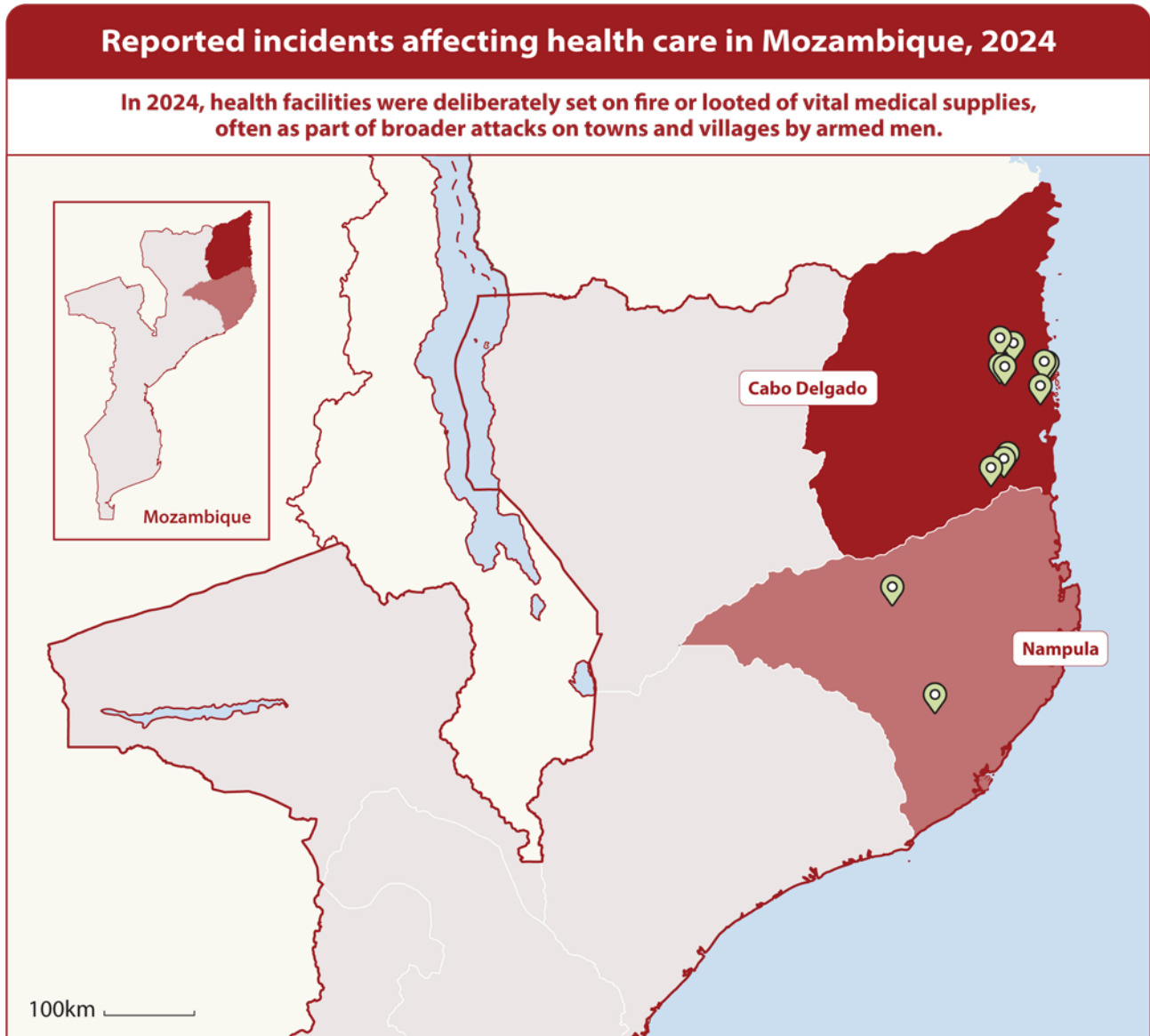


Source: Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

In 2024, attacks on health facilities, including setting them on fire and looting medical supplies, increased, often as part of broader assaults on towns and villages in Cabo Delgado province. These attacks often targeted other civilian infrastructure, including homes and schools, and resulted in the killing, kidnapping, and mass displacement of civilians. In most cases, incidents were attributed to unidentified armed men. On two occasions, Islamic State-affiliated militants looted medical supplies from health centers in wider attacks in Cabo Delgado. The group later claimed responsibility for one of the attacks.<sup>1</sup>



Most incidents affected health care providers working for national health structures, with three affecting NGOs.<sup>2</sup>



Source: Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

## Medical supplies looted

The looting of vital medical supplies, including medicine and equipment from hospitals, health centers, and humanitarian aid storage sites, was reported on seven occasions, mostly in Cabo Delgado province and once in Nampula in 2024. Medical supplies were often looted during broader assaults on local communities. In one looting incident, health workers were kidnapped: six NGO health workers and two aid workers were kidnapped for ransom, and humanitarian food and medical supplies were stolen in Macomia district, Cabo Delgado.<sup>3</sup> At least five of the eight staff members were later released with the fate of the remaining staff not recorded.



## Health facilities set on fire

Health centers, hospitals and medical warehouses were set on fire at least five times in 2024. Incidents mainly occurred in the Cabo Delgado districts of Macomia, Meluco, and Quissanga, and often occurred during wider attacks on civilians that led to killings, kidnappings, and mass displacement. For example, a hospital cubicle and a school were set on fire when Islamist militia attacked Chiure district in Cabo Delgado province for a second day.<sup>4</sup> Six people were killed and around 11,000 residents fled. Health facilities were also set on fire following accusations that community health care providers were spreading cholera. For example, a medical warehouse was set alight and two NGO health workers were physically assaulted by a group of individuals after rumors spread that local health care providers were spreading cholera in Nampula province.<sup>5</sup>



This factsheet is based on 2022-2024 MOZ SHCC Health Care Data. Download the data [here](#) or on the [Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#).

## THE IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE

The ongoing instability has left Mozambique's health care system in crisis, with severe consequences for its population. More than half of Mozambicans walk over an hour to reach the nearest health facility, where medicine shortages are common and the health care workforce is severely under-resourced. Mozambique has one of the world's lowest ratios of doctors to population, with only three doctors per 100,000 people, leaving many people without adequate care.

The destruction of health facilities in the conflict-affected province of Cabo Delgado has further exacerbated this crisis. In Macomia city, only one of the seven health centers that existed before the conflict remains operational.

*Mozambique has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates globally, with 1.2 million adults infected, 58% of whom are women.*

The health crisis affects many patients seeking basic primary health care, including women, children, those with chronic conditions and HIV/AIDS patients. Mozambique has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates globally, with 1.2 million adults infected, 58% of whom are women. Mozambique is also a high-risk malaria zone, with children and pregnant women being particularly vulnerable. Between January and September 2024, MSF treated over 82,000 malaria cases in Cabo Delgado alone. However, periodic suspensions of outreach activities due to security concerns left many without life-saving treatment.

The cumulative impact of these challenges underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to restore and strengthen Mozambique's health care system amid ongoing violence and political turmoil.



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- 1 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 MOZ SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 91729; 56167.
  - 2 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 MOZ Health Care Data. Incident numbers 91728; 59436; 56926.
  - 3 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 MOZ SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 59436.
  - 4 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2023 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 MOZ Health Care Data. Incident number 86578.
  - 5 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 MOZ SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 91728.

# SAFEGUARDING HEALTH IN CONFLICT

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition is a group of more than 40 organizations working to protect health workers and services threatened by war or civil unrest. We have raised awareness of global attacks on health and pressed United Nations agencies for greater global action to protect the security of health care. We monitor attacks, strengthen universal norms of respect for the right to health, and demand accountability for perpetrators.

<https://safeguarding-health.com>

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