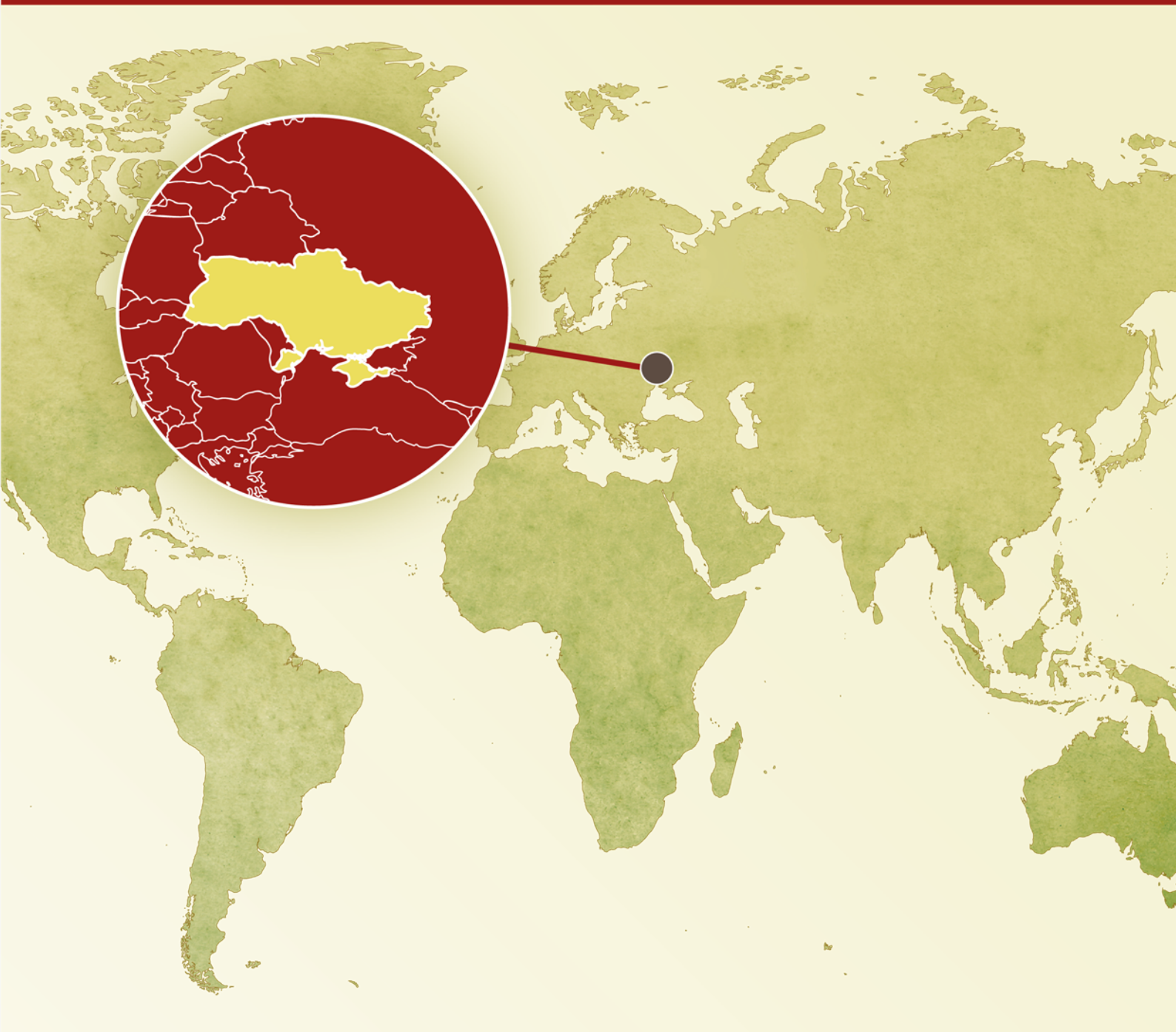


# UKRAINE

## 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.






A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Len Rubenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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 FACILITIES WERE DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	 HEALTH WORKERS KILLED	 ATTACKS ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	 INCIDENTS WHERE HEALTH FACILITIES WERE OCCUPIED
<b>2024</b>				
<b>544</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2023</b>				
<b>478</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2022</b>				
<b>922</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>

↓ Source: 2022–2024 UKR SHCC Health Care Data

## OVERVIEW

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) identified 544 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Ukraine in 2024, compared to 478 in 2023 and 922 in 2022. In these incidents, health facilities were damaged at least 359 times. Emergency medical services were attacked on at least 74 occasions and 78 health workers were killed.



Russian forces regularly launched attacks on Ukraine’s energy system, affecting health services.



The use of drones armed with explosives that impacted health care surged in 2024.



Quick hospital repairs, temporary service relocations, and 12,000 generators kept some health facilities operational despite damage and power outages.

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



## THE CONTEXT

The war that followed Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 continued in 2024. Russian forces had captured almost 4,200 square kilometers of Ukrainian territory and continued to occupy approximately one-fifth of the country.

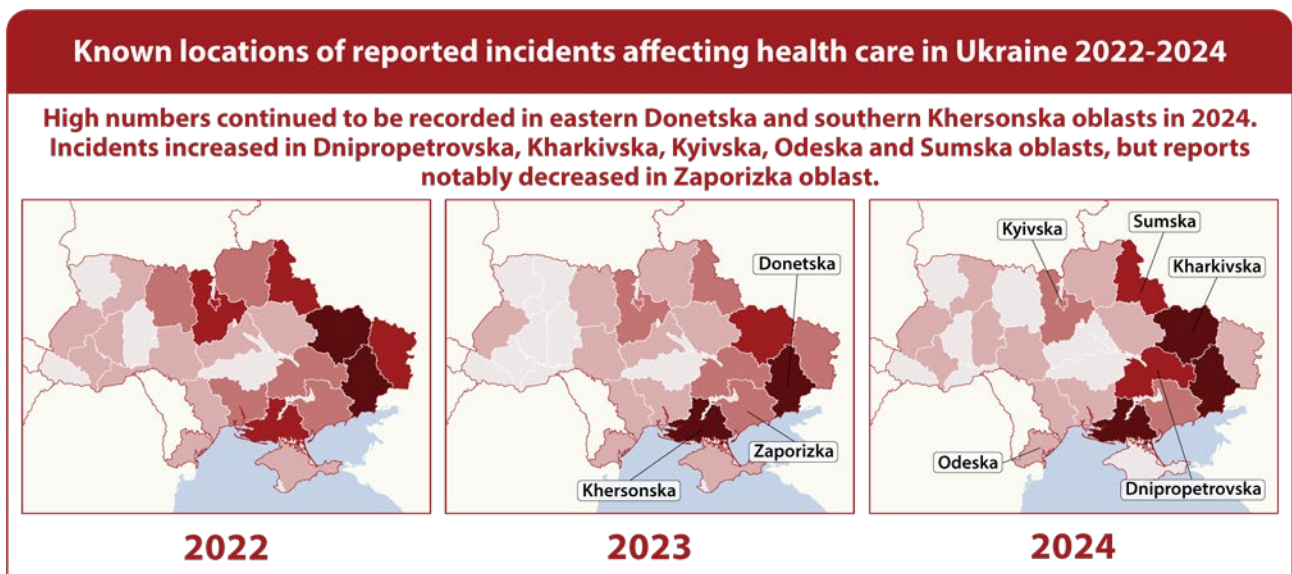
Fighting was primarily concentrated in the east, northeast and south of Ukraine, but Russian attacks on infrastructure, including vital energy infrastructure, were made across the country, resulting in repeated and widespread power outages. Russian attacks had reportedly destroyed all thermal power plants and almost all large hydroelectric power plants by September 2024.

By the end of 2024, estimates suggested that 12.7 million people in Ukraine would require humanitarian assistance in 2025.

Ukraine has launched missiles, and drone strikes inside Russian territory targeting military infrastructure and logistics hubs.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF HEALTH CARE IN 2024

Incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care were recorded throughout 2024 and spread over 19 of Ukraine's 24 oblasts (regions) and Crimea. High numbers continued to be recorded in eastern Donetsk and southern Khersonska oblasts in 2024. Incidents increased in Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Kyivska, Odeska, oblast and Kyiv, Odeska and Sumska oblasts, but reports notably decreased in Zaporizka oblast.



Source: Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

Over 90% of attacks on health care were linked to Russian forces. Ukrainian forces were cited in 16 cases in Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, Kharkivska, and Khersonska oblasts, where artillery and drone strikes near Russian troops hit hospitals, injuring and killing health workers. Other attacks had unidentified perpetrators. In 2024, attacks on emergency medical services more than quadrupled. Damage to and the destruction of health facilities increased, and health worker killings continued.



Russian forces' use of drones armed with explosives that impacted health care surged in 2024, underscoring Russia's growing reliance on these weapons to target critical infrastructure, including health care facilities and ambulances. The drone attacks severely disrupted medical evacuations and the delivery of essential health care services. The nearly constant presence of surveillance and attack drones made rapid medical evacuations nearly impossible during daylight hours, forcing medical teams to adapt by conducting evacuations during brief windows at dawn and dusk.

Most incidents affected health care providers working for national health structures, as in previous years, with NGOs directly affected in nine incidents and a private health care provider and the Ukrainian Red Cross affected in one incident each.

## Health facilities damaged or destroyed

During 2024, health facilities in Ukraine were damaged or destroyed at least 367 times, an increase of 36% from 2023. Hospital wards, equipment and windows were damaged. Most of this damage and destruction impacted children's and maternity hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies in Khersonska oblast, with the number of incidents in Donetsk oblast being second highest. Hospital attacks took place during broader assaults on villages and towns, during which other civilian infrastructure, including energy supplies, was hit. For example, a health facility, six schools, seven kindergartens, and energy infrastructure were damaged in a Russian drone and missile attack on Dnipro city. Over a hundred patients were evacuated from another hospital and seven kindergartens were temporarily closed due to the lack of heating because of attacks on energy infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

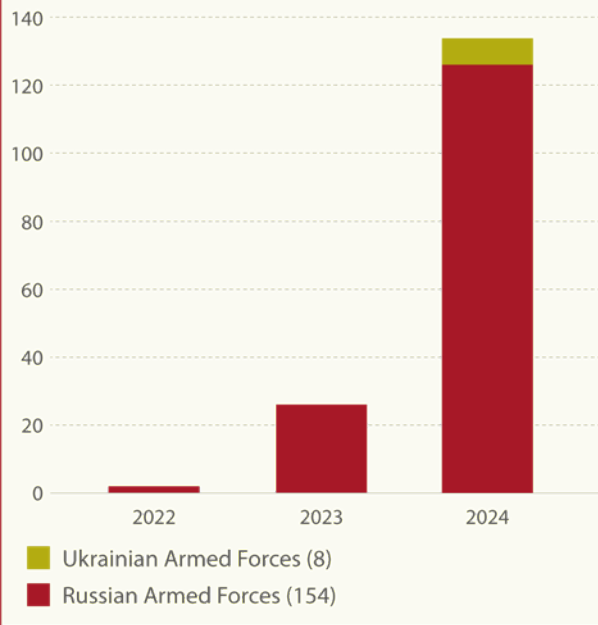
The Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv – Ukraine's largest pediatric medical facility – was struck during a series of Russian missile attacks on July 8, killing two adults, including a doctor, and a child in the intensive care unit, and injuring over 30 others, among them ten children.<sup>2</sup> The strike knocked out the hospital's power and water supplies, leaving it non-functional for days. The hospital was caring for 627 patients at the time.

## Health workers killed and injured

At least 78 health workers were killed in 69 incidents in 2024, compared to 113 in 106 incidents in 2023 and 82 in 64 incidents in 2022. In addition, at least 96 health workers were injured in 63 incidents in 2024, similar to the number in previous years. These incidents occurred across multiple oblasts, with particularly high concentrations in front line oblasts, especially Donetsk, Kharkivska, Zaporizka and Odeska. Urban centers away from the front lines, including Kyiv and Dnipro, were also locations of health worker killings and injuries in 2024. Doctors, military and civilian medics, nurses, and paramedics were killed and injured by Russian missile strikes, drone attacks, and artillery fire.

## Reported use of drones armed with explosive with impact on health care in Ukraine, 2022-2024

Russian forces increasingly used explosive-laden drones impacting Ukraine's health care infrastructure in 2024, disrupting medical evacuations and essential services.





## ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE IN UKRAINE

This [interactive map](#) documents attacks on health care in Ukraine since the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022. It is available in English and Ukrainian and allows viewers to explore where incidents took place and what happened; in some cases, this information is accompanied by photos. Incidents can be filtered by categories, including attacks on child health care and hospitals' energy systems.

This SHCC factsheet reflects data for 2024 current as of January 15, 2025, but the map and dataset are continuously updated. The map includes events where preventive measures were taken to protect staff and programs, which are not counted as incidents in this factsheet.

### Attacks on emergency medical services

Emergency medical services were affected by violence at least 74 times in 2024, over four times the number recorded in 2023. These attacks, often carried out by Russian forces using armed drones, missile strikes, and artillery in Kharkivska and Khersonska oblasts, killed at least ten paramedics, injured 47 others, and damaged or destroyed at least 87 ambulances. Most incidents happened while emergency personnel were conducting recovery and rescue operations and in "double tap" strikes (i.e. striking an area once and then targeting first responders in a second attack). Others took place at health facilities or ambulance stations that were hit by bombs or shelling. For example, a paramedic and an ambulance driver were injured and two ambulances damaged when Russian forces shelled a temporary ambulance station in a village in Kharkivska oblast.<sup>3</sup>



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

## THE IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine continued to seriously affect health care providers, workers and people seeking health care. The available evidence suggests that the worst impacts of Russia's full-scale invasion on Ukraine's health care system were felt during the first months of the war in 2022. While the functionality of health facilities continued to be affected in 2024, overall the health care system showed resilience despite the high and sustained intensity of attacks on it. As of July 2024, among 11,712 [assessed health facilities](#) in Ukraine, 827 (or 7%) were fully or partially damaged and 505 (or 4%) were non-functioning or only partially functioning. The most heavily affected facilities were in eastern Ukraine. The overall resilience of the health care system stems partly from its relatively high base level prior to the full-scale invasion. Additionally, [quick repairs of damaged health facilities](#), the [temporary relocation](#) of some health services and the installation of [12,000 generators](#) at health facilities to guard against power outages have supported the health care system's continued functionality.

Some of the worst impacts of Russia's invasion are likely seen in areas of Ukraine under Russian occupation. As [early as 2014](#), civilians in occupied Crimea who refused to accept Russian citizenship were disqualified



from receiving medical treatment. This practice – known as “passportization” – was expanded across Russian-occupied territory following the full-scale invasion. It has also been reported that health care facilities in these areas only offer services to individuals with Russian health insurance, which is dependent on an individual holding Russian citizenship. Difficulties in freely accessing information on life in Russian-occupied Ukraine mean that the full impact of the war on health care provision in these areas is likely to remain unknown.

In 2024, health care was affected by Russian attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, which led to repeated electricity blackouts. One doctor from a maternity hospital in Zaporizhzhia commented: “Surgeries had to be performed with flashlights in cramped conditions, which meant that instead of a conventional hour, it took about 3 hours to complete the surgery.”

Surveys conducted by Physicians for Human Rights and Truth Hounds showed that in some cases energy blackouts have resulted in patient deaths and permanent health harms. In addition, 82.9% of respondents reported increased stress, burnout, and other challenges due to the attacks on energy infrastructure and service disruptions, with 27.3% facing these hardships daily.

*“Surgeries had to be performed with flashlights in cramped conditions, which meant that instead of a conventional hour, it took about 3 hours to complete the surgery.”*

At a broader level, constant concerns over violent Russian attacks were an impediment to the normal functioning of patient care. For example, missile alerts often required staff to leave health facility premises and, in some cases, spend time traveling to their nearest shelter, thereby disrupting health care provision. The fear of sirens warning of potential imminent attacks is also reported to have contributed to patients feeling unsafe while in hospital wards.



## HEALTH CARE PROVISION DURING RUSSIAN ATTACKS ON UKRAINIAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Some of the worst consequences for health care provision in 2024 resulted from the destruction of vital energy infrastructure. A survey by Physicians for Human Rights and Truth Hounds conducted between July and September 2024 of over 2,000 individuals found that due to Russian attacks on energy infrastructure:

- 92.3% of respondents reported “experiencing power outages at their health facility;”
- 66.3% of respondents reported power outages affecting medical procedures at their health facilities;
- 8.4% observed delays to elective surgeries; and
- permanent health harms (36 reports) and deaths (20 reports) were also said to have resulted from disruptions to Ukraine’s energy infrastructure.



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- 1 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 UKR SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 87280..
  - 2 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 UKR SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 55507.
  - 3 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2024 Report Dataset: 2022-2024 UKR SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 45708.

# 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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