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Attacks on Health Care in War Zones at All-Time High in 2024

GENEVA – In 2024, attacks on health care in conflict reached the highest level ever recorded since the [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#) (SHCC) began reporting over a decade ago. The SHCC's new report - [Epidemic of Violence](#) - reveals that there were more than 3,600 reported incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in conflict in 2024, a 15% rise compared with the previous year and a 62% rise from 2022. The attacks included the killing of more than 900 health workers, the arrest of over 470 health workers and repeated bombings against health facilities.

This increase was driven by intense and persistent violence against health care in Lebanon, Myanmar, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Sudan, and Ukraine, as well as a rise in the number of countries reporting incidents, reaching 36 in 2024, three more than in 2023.

The coalition found that, for the second year in a row, most reported incidents took place in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) where there were more than 1,300 attacks, far more than the coalition has ever documented in one country or territory in a single year.

“On average, in 2024, health care came under attack ten times a day across the world’s war zones. Each of these assaults brings terror, trauma, and in too many cases, injury, destruction, and death,” said **Leonard Rubenstein, the chair of the SHCC**, which authored the [report](#). “Attacks on health care undermines the ability to care for people when it is needed most, in war.”

Approximately 81% of incidents in 2024 were attributed to state actors, a proportion that has risen overall in recent years. This coincided with an increase in the share of reported attacks on health care involving explosive weapons from 36% in 2023 to 48% in 2024. Similarly, armed drone use with impact on health care rose from 9% to 20% over the same period.

“There has been a complete erosion in the respect for international humanitarian law and the responsibility to protect health care in conflict,” said **Christina Wille, director of [Insecurity Insight](#)**, which led the report’s data collection. “As documentation becomes more systematic, the mounting evidence of attacks on health care demands a decisive response: international humanitarian law that protects health care in conflict must be better enforced. Yet many states continue to disrespect their obligations and the international community and the international community observes without acting”.

The collection of data on violence is impeded by insecurity, communications blockages, and the reluctance of some entities to share data on violence. As a result, this year's numbers are likely an undercount, as in previous years, which further underscores the gravity of the situation.

Among the report's recommendations are that UN Member States:

- Collectively reject efforts to reinterpret international humanitarian law that undermine their purpose of protecting health care in armed conflict;
- End impunity by encouraging investigations, data sharing, prosecutions through the International Criminal Court and empowering monitoring bodies;
- Endorse the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Use of **Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas**;
- Consider ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty and passing legislation repealing counterterrorism laws that are often used to justify attacks on health care; and
- Review military doctrines and protocols, putting greater emphasis on safety for health care and training to ensure rules are followed to allow health care workers to practice safely during war.

The data on attacks on health care compiled by Insecurity Insight and the SHCC can be **downloaded** on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) and explored visually on interactive maps which are **global** and **Ukraine** specific.

Methodology Note: The data in this report is compiled from open sources and partner-agency contributions of information, date, time, and location of incidents of violence and obstruction of health care in 2024 and is based on the WHO definition of attacks on health care. Due to this methodology, there are some differences between the SHCC's numbers and other reports. The data is as of January 15, 2025 and continues to be updated as new information becomes available and reported numbers will change.

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The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition is a group of humanitarian, human rights, and health professional organizations and academic centers working to protect health workers and services threatened by war and civil unrest. It has raised awareness of global attacks on health and pressed United Nations agencies for greater global action to protect the security of health care. The SHCC monitors attacks, strengthens universal norms of respect for the right to health, and demands accountability for perpetrators.