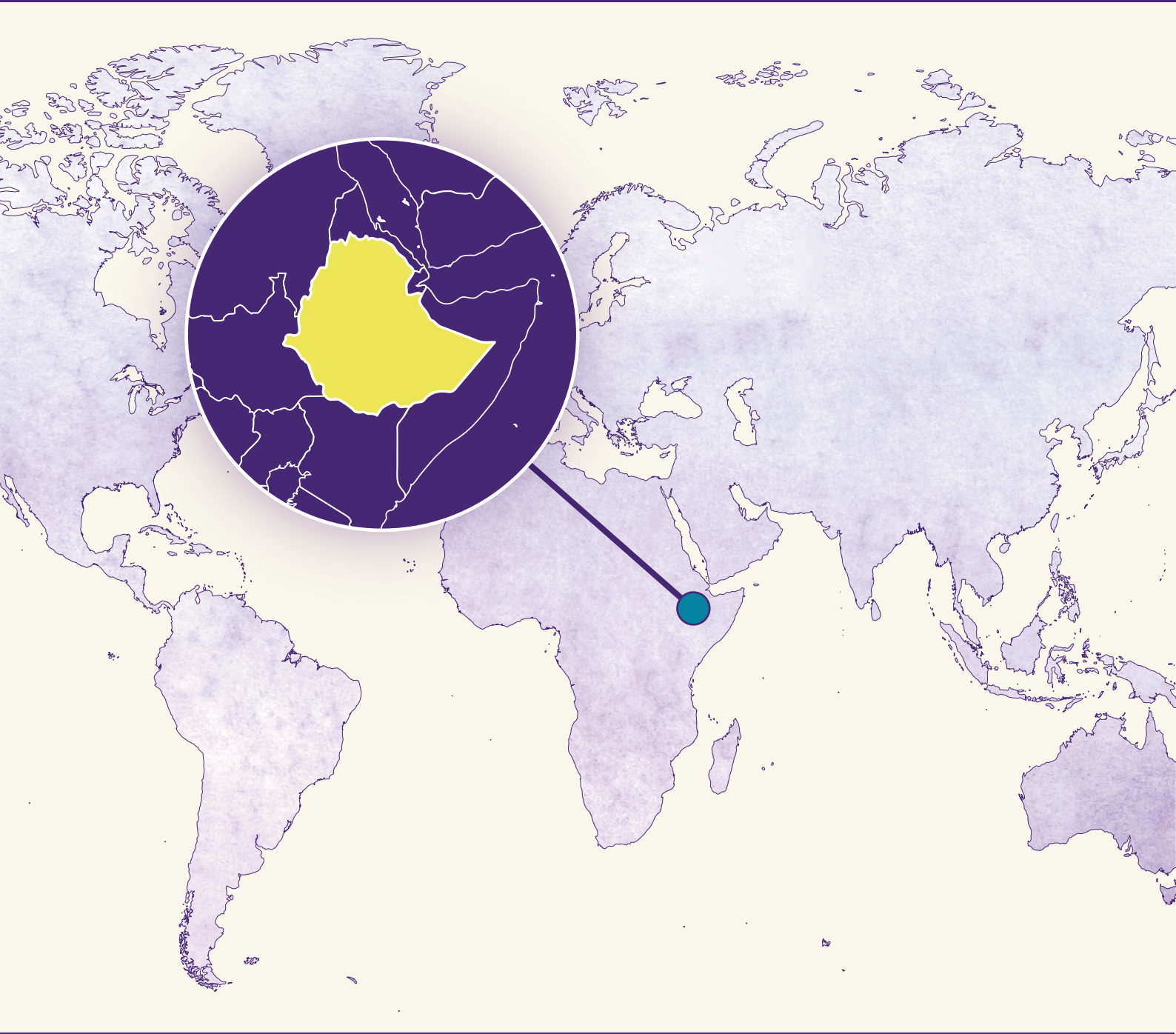


ETHIOPIA

Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2025



**SAFEGUARDING
HEALTH
IN CONFLICT**



**Insecurity
Insight**
Data on People in Danger



REPORTED INCIDENTS AND MOST COMMONLY REPORTED CONCERNS

 REPORTED INCIDENTS	 HEALTH WORKERS KILLED	 HEALTH WORKERS ARRESTED	 RAID/SEARCH INCIDENTS IN HEALTH FACILITIES WHEN CARE WAS DISRUPTED
2025			
69	17	73	12
2024			
62	28	12	5
2023			
17	5	3	1

Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.

OVERVIEW

Using data collected by Insecurity Insight, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) identified 69 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Ethiopia in 2025, compared to 62 in 2024 and 17 in 2023.¹ Among incidents reported in 2025, 68 health workers were arrested and 17 killed, while health care facilities were reportedly violently raided or searched on 12 occasions. A total of 25 incidents were related to political protests during a nationwide strike that began in [May 2025](#). The remaining 44 incidents occurred in the context of armed conflict.

The actual number of incidents and the severity of the problem are likely greater, because attacks on health care may not have been reported in some locations and conflict-related service closures may not have been reflected in the data, while cuts to United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding further reduced the presence of health care providers and the operation of health facilities.

Methodology and sources

Information on incidents of violence against health care in Ethiopia is compiled from open sources, information projects and private sources. Data is continuously updated and numbers may change if new information is made publicly available. For the latest available figures, see Insecurity Insight's [global map](#) on attacks on health care. See [Methodology](#) for further information.



THE CONTEXT

Non-international armed conflict continued in Ethiopia in 2025 between the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and non-state armed actors in Amhara and Oromia, while tensions in Tigray intensified amid divisions within the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) over unresolved elements of the 2022 Pretoria peace deal. In Tigray, armed confrontation between the TPLF and the Tigray Interim Administration was accompanied by the presence of Eritrean forces in parts of the region, heightening concerns of renewed cross-border confrontations. In Oromia and in border areas between Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, escalating clashes between armed groups displaced thousands of people, while insecurity persisted throughout Amhara region.

Violence affecting civilians and humanitarian personnel was reported in several regions, including kidnappings and the killing of an aid worker in Amhara and arrests of health professionals during a nationwide health workers' strike in May.

Humanitarian needs remained at high levels, and Ethiopia faced multiple overlapping humanitarian pressures in 2025 linked to conflict, climate-related shocks, disease outbreaks, and economic strain, leaving millions in need of assistance across several regions, including Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray. By mid-2025, an estimated 3.3 million people were internally displaced nationwide. Violence in Oromia displaced over 280,000 people and in Tigray displaced 740,000, while high levels of acute malnutrition were recorded among children in areas affected by displacement and limited access to food. Outbreaks of cholera, measles, and malaria were reported in several regions, including in southwest Ethiopia, amid gaps in access to basic health and water services.

Humanitarian access varied across the country, with humanitarian organizations assessing dozens of districts in Amhara and Oromia as difficult to access because of localized insecurity and the hostile presence of armed actors. In many other territories, humanitarian teams experienced intermittent operational constraints. In Tigray, reduced aid presence, funding shortfalls and breaks in supply pipelines were associated with worsening living conditions in displacement sites.

Funding cuts impacted multiple services. In 2025, substantial reductions in United States humanitarian assistance, including the reported loss of USD 387 million in USAID funding, affected service provision and were followed by reported layoffs of thousands of health workers.

VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF HEALTH CARE IN 2025

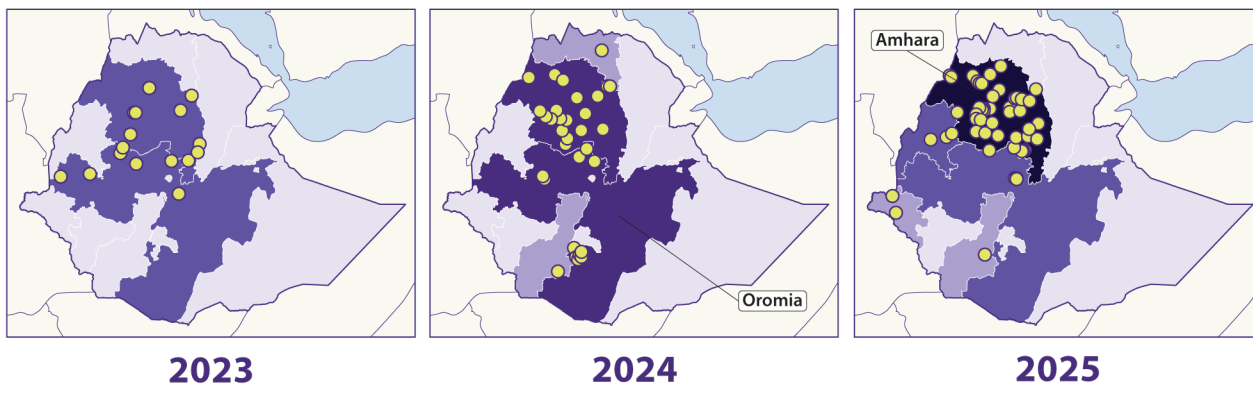
In 2025, violence against or obstruction of health care continued to be reported in Ethiopia, with attacks recorded across seven regions, two more than in the previous year. Incidents in the Amhara region increased by 64% between 2024 and 2025, where many health workers were arrested during May strikes. Recorded incidents in the Oromia region continued. New incidents were documented in the Gambela region in 2025, where ambulances were shot at by unidentified armed groups.²

Violent raids and searches of health facilities and health worker arrests reportedly increased in 2025, particularly in Amhara. Recorded health worker killings and kidnappings persisted. Damage to health facilities was reported, but to a lesser extent than in previous years. All 17 reported health worker killings in Ethiopia in 2025 were recorded in the Amhara region.



Known locations of reported incidents affecting health care in Ethiopia, 2023-2025

Incidents in the Amhara region increased by 64% between 2024 and 2025, where many health workers were arrested during May strikes. Incidents continued to be reported in the Oromia region.

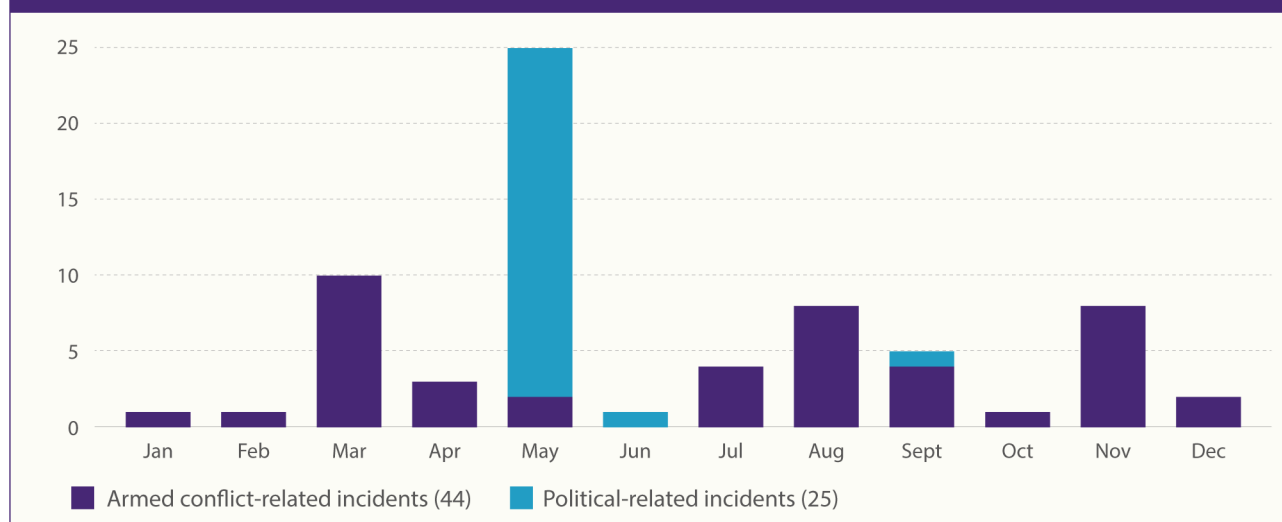


Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.

Most incidents affected local health care providers operating in national health structures, with two affecting private health organizations and one the Ethiopian Red Cross Society.³

The ENDF continued to be implicated in the majority of recorded incidents, along with police. The ENDF's use of drones armed with explosives and artillery strikes continued to impact health care in the Amhara region.⁴ Fano militia armed violence also persisted in Amhara in 2025. Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) fighters armed with guns looted health centers and hospitals in Benishangul-Gumuz region,⁵ while state militia deliberately set an ambulance on fire in Amhara.⁶ Two incidents were attributed to the TPLF in November when Tigrayan fighters arrested and assaulted a health worker at Alamata City Hospital. In the days that followed this attack, the pressure on health care intensified, with health workers reportedly being threatened and forced to consider evacuating the hospital and surrounding areas under intimidation by armed actors.⁷ In some incidents, the responsible conflict party remained unidentified.

Reported incidents affecting health care in Ethiopia, 2025



Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.



Conflict-related incidents in Amhara region

At least 37 of the documented incidents can be associated with conflict dynamics affecting health care in the Amhara region in 2025, compared to 31 in 2024 and nine in 2023, with a high number of incidents linked to the ENDF. In total, 16 health workers were reported killed in 14 incidents, with ten ENDF-linked killings largely involving accusations of ties to or providing care for conflict parties. Two health workers were killed while held in detention.⁸ The ENDF also reportedly deliberately set fire to, looted, seized for non-medical purposes, shelled, and conducted armed drone strikes on health facilities and private clinics in Amhara.

Fano militia destroyed an ambulance being used by ENDF forces to transport personnel, seized a medical facility during an offensive operation and carried out attacks near health sites.⁹ Fano militia also shot and killed two health workers traveling to work in two separate incidents.¹⁰

Conflict-related violence repeatedly affected maternal and child health services in Ethiopia's Amhara region in 2025.¹¹ Ambulances transporting pregnant women were blocked, including a case where a mother lost her baby after being sexually assaulted by ENDF members. Health care providers critical to maternal and newborn services were arrested or abducted for ransom, while a nursing mother was forcibly taken from a health center by ENDF members shortly after giving birth, on accusations of links to Fano members. This attack formed part of a broader campaign against civilians, including children.

Political-related incidents

In early May, at least 70 health workers—including doctors, gynecologists, medical students, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, and surgical specialists—were reportedly arrested in 21 incidents during a coordinated wave of politically driven crackdowns amid nationwide protests over pay, working conditions, and governance in the health sector. Police and the ENDF carried out widespread arrests, detentions, intimidation, and harassment of individuals perceived to have participated in or supported the demonstrations, including on social media, with some accusations framed around alleged political affiliation or extremist links. This pattern was reinforced by a Ministry of Health [statement](#) issued on May 15, 2025 that endorsed the crackdown and called on security forces to “put aside their patience” and take necessary “measures” against health workers participating in the strike.

Arrests occurred in many regions, but were concentrated in Amhara and Addis Ababa, with additional cases in southern Ethiopia affecting major cities such as Bahir Dar, Dessie, and Gondar, as well as smaller towns. Health workers were arrested during searches or raids at hospitals and health centers, as well as at university medical campuses and in their homes. Four health workers in Addis Ababa were released on bail a few days after their arrest.¹² The fates of the remaining arrested health workers are unclear.

At least one health worker was arrested after the initial May crackdown: in late June 2025, a gynecologist and obstetrics resident at Bahir Dar University Teaching Hospital in Amhara was detained by police, who also confiscated his phone and laptop. He had been a key figure in the May demonstrations.¹³

A Ministry of Health statement issued on May 15, 2025 [that] endorsed the crackdown and called on security forces to “put aside their patience” and take necessary “measures” against health workers participating in the strike.



This chapter is based on 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Download this data on the [Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#).

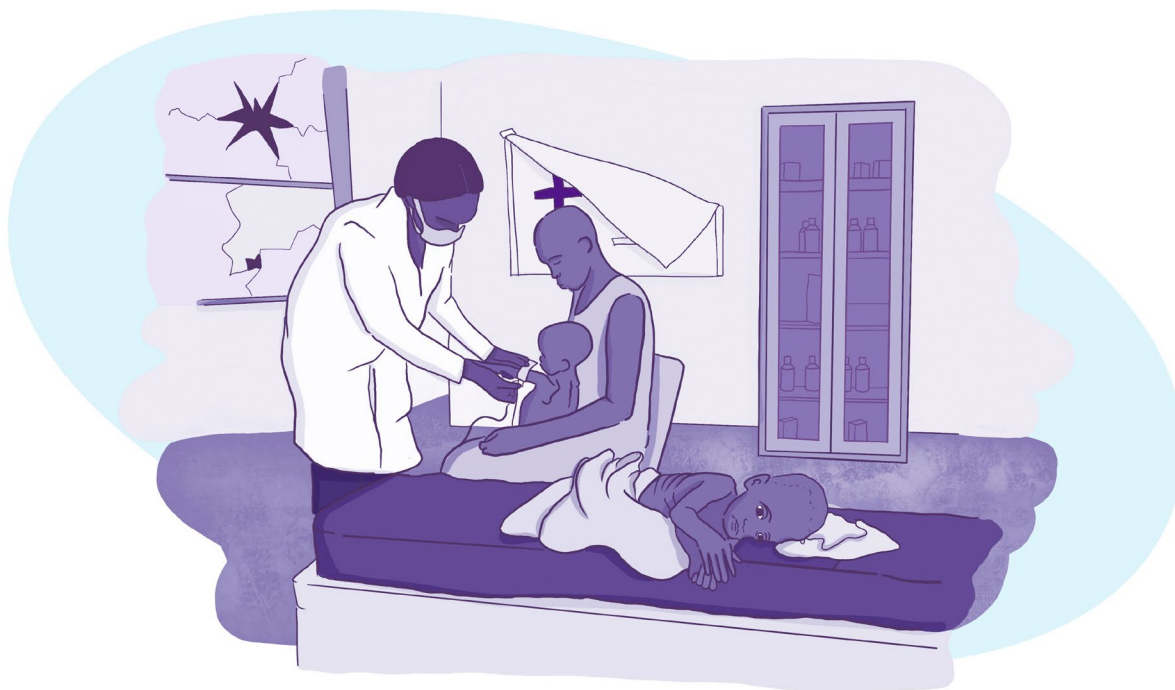
Insecurity Insight updates data continuously and numbers may change if new information is made publicly available. For the latest available figures, see Insecurity Insight's [global map on attacks on health care](#).

THE IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE

Ongoing violence in Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray affected the delivery of health services in 2025, particularly in hard-to-reach areas because of insecurity and the activity of armed groups. Aid personnel in Amhara faced serious security incidents, including kidnappings, adversely affecting the context in which medical and relief services operated.

In Tigray, displaced people remained in camps or informal sites with limited access to food, health care, and other essential services, amid reduced humanitarian presence and funding gaps. Displacement linked to violence in Oromia and border areas with Benishangul-Gumuz increased pressure on health facilities in refugee-receiving communities that were already facing shortages of staff and supplies.

Disease outbreaks, including cholera, measles, and malaria, were recorded in multiple regions, increasing demand for treatment in areas where access to safe water and medical services remained limited. As mentioned previously, funding reductions in 2025 were associated with interruptions in food assistance and risks for hundreds of thousands of women and children of losing access to malnutrition treatment, adding to pressures on households already affected by conflict and displacement.





- 1 The SHCC's [2024 Annual Report](#) cited 59 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Ethiopia in 2024 and 13 in 2023. Data is continuously updated and numbers can change if new information is made publicly available.
- 2 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 123058; 123060.
- 3 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 116867; 116868; 117413.
- 4 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 116866; 116867; 116868.
- 5 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 112988; 112989; 112990.
- 6 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 117372.
- 7 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 120831; 120833.
- 8 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 97254; 95217.
- 9 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 96803; 94292; 119363.
- 10 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 118810; 120829.
- 11 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 95216; 97255; 110144; 122691.
- 12 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 99599.
- 13 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 ETH SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 110144.

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. Suggested citation: Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) 2026. Care in the Crosshairs: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict, May 2026. <https://shcc.pub/SHCCAnnualReport2025>
<https://safeguarding-health.com>

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