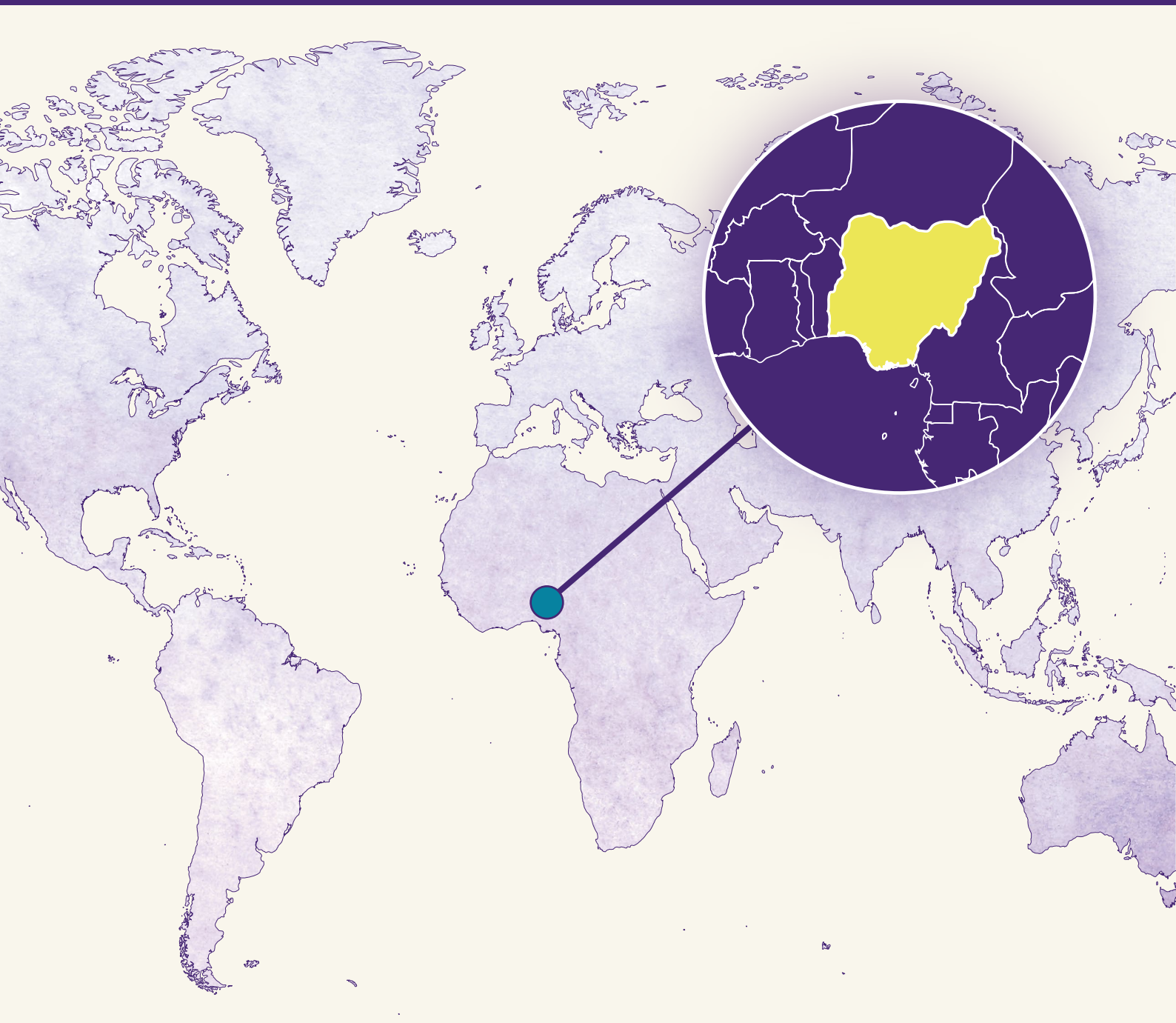
NIGERIA

Violence Against Health Care in Conflict

2025



SAFEGUARDING HEALTH IN CONFLICT

Insecurity Insight
Data on People in Danger

Nigeria



REPORTED INCIDENTS AND MOST COMMONLY REPORTED CONCERNS

REPORTED INCIDENTS	HEALTH WORKERS KIDNAPPED	HEALTH WORKERS KILLED
2025		
43	**32**	**6**
2024		
34	**35**	**3**
2023		
24	**24**	**6**

Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.

OVERVIEW

Using data collected by Insecurity Insight, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) identified 43 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Nigeria in 2025, compared to 34 in 2024 and 24 in 2023.[1] Among the incidents reported in 2025, 32 health workers were kidnapped and two were killed.

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 Nigeria is compiled from open sources, aid agency data-sharing mechanisms, 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.

Nigeria



THE CONTEXT

In 2025, non-international armed conflict persisted in Nigeria, with the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) and support forces being involved in protracted hostilities with the armed groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Nigeria received support from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF),[2] and on December 26, the United States reportedly carried out air strikes in northwest Nigeria targeting two camps of the jihadist group Lakurawa in Sokoto state. Violent anti-government and separatist actors continued to operate in southeastern Nigeria, while in the northwest, criminal bandit groups were responsible for widespread kidnappings, killings, sexual violence, and theft of livestock.

Nigeria experienced worsening security in 2025, with a 5.6% rise in explosives-related incidents and over 20 attempted ISWAP and Boko Haram attacks on military sites in Borno state. In response, President Tinubu declared a national security emergency in November amid widespread violence across multiple states.

School abductions recurred and remained an ongoing threat in 2025, including the kidnapping of 400 students in Niger state in November, leading to the closure of over 20,000 schools across seven states and threatening children's access to education.

In 2025, food insecurity in Nigeria worsened due to attacks on markets, farming communities, and rural livelihoods, with armed violence and intercommunal clashes displacing farmers, disrupting agricultural production, and limiting access to food, deepening the humanitarian crisis.

Rising displacement and humanitarian needs characterized much of the year. By December 2025, over 1.2 million people were affected by worsening insecurity and waves of violence, including an estimated 260,000 who had been newly displaced between September and November.

Funding cuts resulting from the USAID aid-funding freeze limited Nigeria's humanitarian health care responses. Between 2022 and 2024, Nigeria received about USD 8 billion from USAID for health programs, including combating HIV and malaria, and supporting other public health initiatives. The cuts threatened the health care system's capacity, leading to approximately 28,000 health workers losing their jobs. To mitigate the impact, Nigerian lawmakers allocated an additional USD 200 million to the health sector in the 2025 federal budget.

VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF HEALTH CARE IN 2025

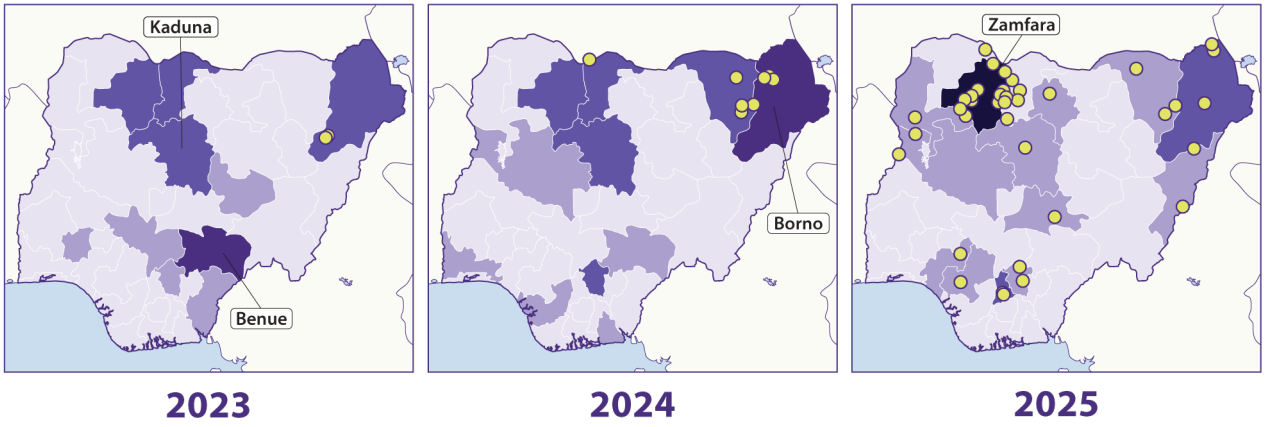
In 2025, violence against or obstruction of health care increased in Nigeria. Cases were spread across 16 states – four more than in 2024 – with new incidents being reported in Anambra, Adamawa, Kano, Ondo, Edo, and Nasarawa states. Attacks on health care in Zamfara state – where communal militia violence is at high levels – nearly tripled in 2025, while reported incidents declined in the BAY states (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe), possibly due to a reduced humanitarian presence. The majority of incidents affected health care providers operating in national health structures, with two affecting NGOs.[3]

Nigeria



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

Attacks on health care in Zamfara state – where communal militia violence is at high levels – nearly tripled in 2025, while reported incidents declined in the BAY states, possibly due to a reduced humanitarian presence.



Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.

Most incidents were attributed to unidentified men armed with guns. Katsina militia were implicated in two attacks on health centers during which health workers were killed and injured.[4] Zamfara militia carried out a road ambush, kidnapping a health worker and other civilians.[5] Fulani militants armed with AK-47s and machetes raided a hospital, abducting and raping an unspecified number of women.[6]

ISWAP was linked to five incidents across the BAY states, mostly involving health facilities being raided, set on fire, and looted of medicine and food supplies.[7] Boko Haram ambushed an ambulance in Borno state, injuring the driver, stealing medical supplies and seizing the vehicle.[8]

The NAF and police reportedly arrested health workers on accusations of links to opposition groups in Katsina, Niger, and Sokoto states.[9] An NAF air strike reportedly targeting a camp belonging to an armed group killed a health worker treating a wounded fighter.[10]

At least four incidents in the BAY states involved health centers being deliberately set on fire, often during wider attacks in the area where other civilian infrastructure was also damaged. On one occasion, an improvised explosive device (IED) planted by an unidentified armed group damaged staff residences at a hospital in Kebbi state.[11]

Kidnapping incidents increased by over 70% in 2025 compared to 2024, while the number of health workers who were kidnapped remained similar to those reported in 2024. Most kidnapped health workers were abducted outside Nigeria's northeast in areas where kidnappings for profit are common.

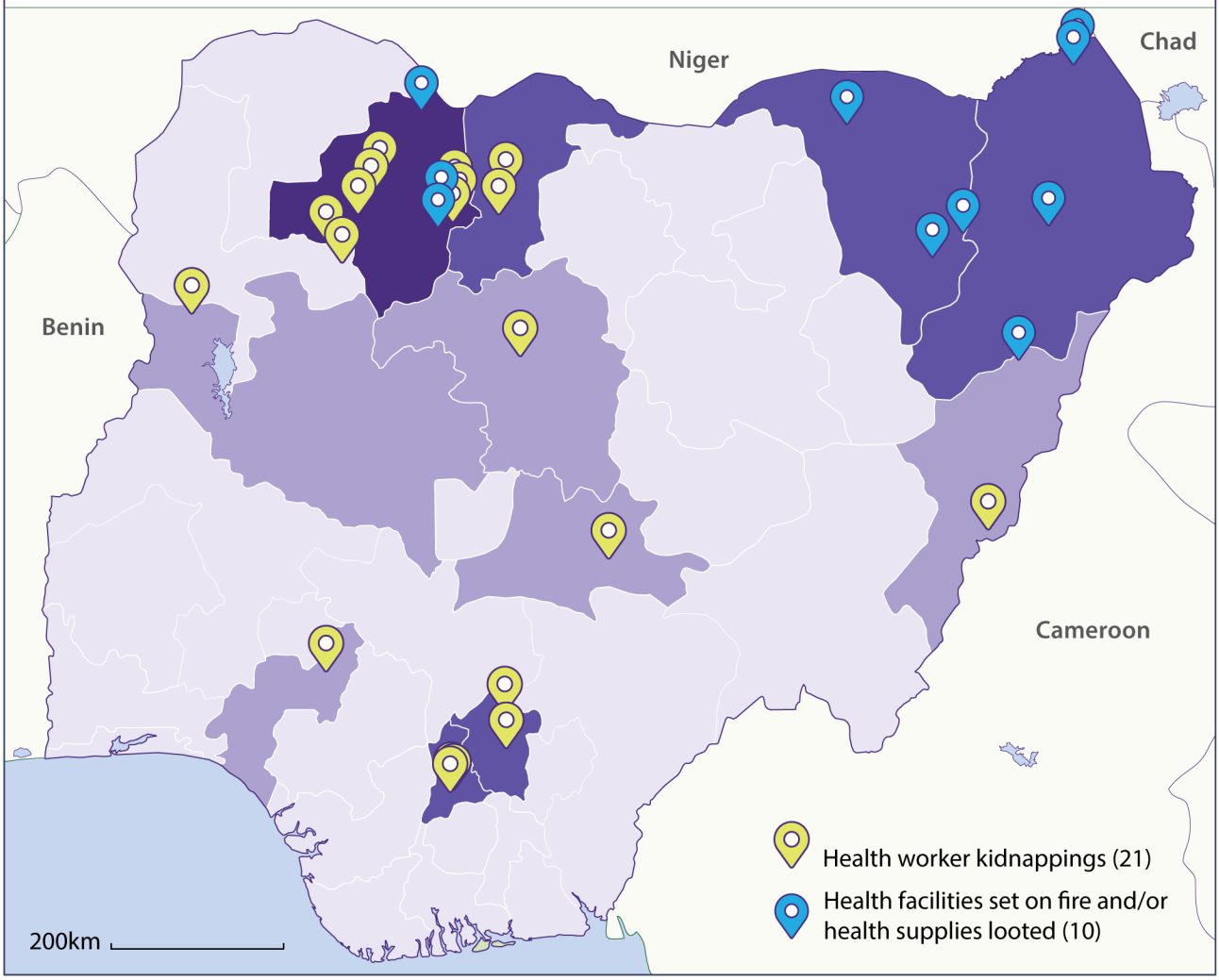
Maternal care services in Nigeria were affected by conflict-related violence in 2025 when unidentified attackers raided a nursing and maternity center in Kaduna state and abducted a health worker, a security guard, and five patients, including a nine-month pregnant woman and a nursing mother with her baby.[12]

Nigeria



Reported incidents affecting health care in Nigeria, 2025

The setting on fire of health facilities and looting of vital medicines were often reported in northeast Nigeria, while 95% of reported health worker kidnapping incidents took place outside of Nigeria's northeast region.



Source: Insecurity Insight for the SHCC.

Health worker kidnappings

In 2025, 32 health workers were kidnapped in 21 incidents, compared to 35 in 14 incidents in 2024 and 24 in 17 incidents in 2023. Most kidnapped health workers were abducted by unidentified attackers outside Nigeria's northeast region. In one case, a health worker in Adamawa was kidnapped by an armed group and taken with other captives to an area along the Nigeria-Cameroon border.[13]

Abducted health workers included doctors, drivers, pharmacy owners, and surgeons who were forcibly taken from hospitals, clinics, in road ambushes, and at illegal checkpoints. Ransoms were demanded as a condition for release in several kidnapping cases, while armed groups also abducted health staff to provide care to fighters.

Ten of the 35 kidnapped health workers were released. A doctor who was shot and abducted by an unidentified group in front of his house in late December 2025[14] was released in January 2026, only to be shot again and killed. The fates of the remaining 25 remain unclear.

Nigeria



Health worker killings

In 2025, six health workers were killed in five incidents, compared to three in three incidents in 2024 and six in five incidents in 2023. Three health workers were killed in shootings inside hospitals in Edo and Katsina, including a physiotherapist who was killed during an attack by gunmen at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.[15] Following the attack, the facility's health workers staged a protest on the hospital premises.



This chapter is based on 2023-2025 NGA 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

In 2025, Nigeria's health care system faced significant strain, with Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors president Muhammad Suleiman calling it a "difficult year" for doctors. Together with the challenges caused by USAID funding cuts, a Lassa fever resurgence resulted in 955 confirmed cases and 176 deaths by November, with the case fatality rate rising to 18.4% despite fewer overall cases than in 2024.

High rates of internal displacement in Nigeria further strained the overburdened health system, with overcrowded IDP camps facing heightened risks of disease, gender-based violence (GBV), and limited access to health care, clean water, and sanitation. This disruption intensified demand for medical care, hindered treatment continuity, and increased the risk of disease outbreaks, including malaria, typhoid, and stomach ulcers. Residents reported the dire consequences of medication shortages, with one stating, "if we don't get drugs, we just sit and watch the sick person helplessly," while also facing heightened risks of GBV.

Between October and December 2025, acute malnutrition remained a critical issue in northern Nigeria, where nearly one-third of local government areas were classified as IPC Phase 4 (Critical), showing a worsening trend compared to previous years. The IPC identified poor food consumption, disease burden (including fever, malaria, and diarrhea), inadequate WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) practices, and acute food insecurity as key drivers. Ongoing violence and displacement further limited access to food and health care. An estimated 12.5 million children under the age of five and over two million pregnant and lactating women would need treatment for acute malnutrition between October 2025 and September 2026, further straining the health care system.

Maternal mortality remains extremely high in northeast Nigeria, with 1,848 deaths per 100,000 live births, second only to the northwest region.

Nigeria



1 The SHCC's 2024 Annual Report cited 32 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Nigeria in 2024 and 26 in 2023. Data is continuously updated and numbers can change if new information is made publicly available.

2 The MNJTF is a regional coalition originally comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Benin mandated by the African Union and Lake Chad Basin Commission to fight Boko Haram and ISWAP. Niger suspended its participation in 2024 and Chad has threatened to withdraw.

3 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 122360; 122363.

4 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 88295; 99702.

5 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 116892.

6 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 119920.

7 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 110145; 122338; 122340; 122357; 123153.

8 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 123061.

9 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 95276; 122353; 122355.

10 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 122366.

11 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 123155.

12 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 120835.

13 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 91172.

14 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident number 123841.

15 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2025 Report Dataset: 2023-2025 NGA SHCC Health Care Data. Incident numbers 99702; 97261.

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 Coalititon (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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