



World Health Profession Alliance WHPA

65th World Health Assembly Intervention

Agenda item 13.15 WHO's response, and role as the health cluster lead, in meeting the growing demands of health in humanitarian emergencies

Thank you, Chair, for this opportunity to address the World Health Assembly, on behalf of the World Health Professional Alliance, which includes the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the World Confederation for Physical Therapy, and the World Dental Federation. These organizations speak on behalf of millions of health workers worldwide. This statement is also supported by the following organizations:

American Public Health Association
CARE
Center for Public Health and Human Rights of the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Doctors for Human Rights
Human Rights Watch
International Health Protection Initiative
International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations
International Medical Corps
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
International Rescue Committee
IntraHealth International
Management Sciences for Health
Medact
Merlin
Physicians for Human Rights
Women's Refugee Commission
World Federation of Public Health Associations

Health care workers are on the frontline during complex humanitarian emergencies. Health providers and those they serve deserve protection. Indeed, the strength and performance of the health system require it. Yet, in crises where health needs are most urgent, health care workers are at greatest risk of assault, arrest, obstruction of their duties, kidnapping and death. Health facilities and ambulances are also at risk of attack. The health community must mobilize to assure adherence to the principle of impartiality of health care in humanitarian emergencies.

At the 64th Assembly, and again at the Executive Board, WHO's Director General, Dr. Margaret Chan, spoke eloquently of the need for WHO to respond.

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The foundation of protection and prevention is information. WHO has a unique role to play in collecting and disseminating data on attacks. For that reason, we support resolution EB130.R14, in particular, paragraph 8, calling on the Director General:

“...to provide leadership at the global level in developing methods for systematic collection and dissemination of data on attacks on health facilities, health workers, health transports, and patients in complex humanitarian emergencies...”

We call on the WHO Member States to adopt the resolution. This will be a strong affirmation of the Member States commitment to protect health workers, services and patients.

Thank you.