Attacks on Health Care Workers

A WHO Perspective

• What is the extent of the problem?
• What can we do about it?
Problem

Hospitals, health care workers, patients are under attack

Right to health care is under attack

Health care seems to be targeted
Challenges today

• Hospitals are under attack: Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, ....

• Health care workers are under attack: Nigeria, Pakistan, Myanmar ....
Challenges today

• Patients are under attack: South Sudan, Central African Republic
• The right to health is under attack: Myanmar
• Health is impacted: Syria
• International health risks: polio
Challenges today

Polio workers attacked in Pakistan

Ebola burial team attacked in Sierra Leone

8 EBOLA "AID WORKERS" MURDERED IN GUINEA
ACCUSED OF SPREADING THE DISEASE
Paragraph 2(8) calls 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 ......
What do we know?

Attacks during humanitarian emergencies in 2014-15

From open source data

• Reports from 594 attacks in 19 countries
• 959 health care workers died
• 1,561 were injured

(source: WHO review of 2014 2015 open source secondary data)
What do we know?

Attacks during humanitarian emergencies in 2014-15

From open source data

- 63% of attacks were against health care centres
- 26% against health care workers
- 62% of attacks were intentional

(source: WHO review of 2014 2015 open source secondary data)
Why do we care?

Attacks against health care:

• deprive populations of urgently needed life-saving health care
• endanger health workers
• undermine duty of care
• decrease health security
• violate International Humanitarian Law
• impede health development goals
What’s our aim?

Stop attacks on health care
Protect health care facilities and workers
Minimize disruptions to essential health services
What do we need?

Global and country-specific data and trends

Best ways to use this information for change

Good practices to stop/avoid attacks and mitigate the resulting disruptions to health care delivery
What does WHO do?

- Documents attacks
- Identifies and promotes good practices
- Advocates / diplomacy
- Safe hospitals program
The 5 A’s

• Awareness
• Advocacy
• Attitude
• Action
• Accountability
Technical Briefing at the World Health Assembly
“Health Care under Attack: a call for action”
Advocacy

- Technical briefings
- High level events
- General Assembly Resolutions
- Monthly input in SG report to Security Council
- Press statements
- Articles
High level advocacy

Valerie Amos
OCHA

Bruce Aylward
WHO

Peter Maurer
ICRC
Future directions
Future directions

• WHO to advocate for the right to health in all circumstances

• Collect data on the extent and the nature of the problem

• Work with all parties to ensure preventive measures are put in place
So that the attacks will stop