



The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

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26th February 2019

To Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP,

Re: Request for UK support for medical workers and facilities being targeted as acts of war

We are writing to ask for the support of the UK Government on behalf of medical workers, who are being targeted as acts of war. Many of our members travel abroad supporting their colleagues in developing and delivering health care services and in delivering humanitarian aid. In recent years hospitals, patients and medical workers have increasingly become targeted for purposeful attacks as part of conflict, in contravention of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

At the 2016 DevelopingEM Conference this issue was of sufficient concern that The Sri Lankan Society of Critical Care and Emergency Medicine (SSCCCEM) and conference delegates drafted a declaration in response to the escalation of aggression, stating that they:

1. Condemn the attacks on health care facilities, health care workers and vehicles in conflict zones.
2. Reaffirm our belief that all people regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, or religious beliefs should have the right to access health care, and all medical professionals should be able to deliver this care in facilities without threat of attack.
3. Call upon the UN Security Council to take immediate action to fully implement and enforce Resolution 2286 (2016).
4. Call upon all Member States to uphold and comply with the Geneva Conventions; to commit to making attacks against healthcare in conflict zones an absolute redline; to support the enforcement of UNSC Resolution 2286; and to call for an immediate cessation to any further attacks on health care facilities.
5. Call upon national medical societies, specialist colleges and clinicians to individually and collectively condemn attacks on healthcare facilities in conflict zones, and to promote respect and awareness of the Geneva Conventions and enforcement of UNSC Resolution 2286.

Since 2014 the World Health organisation has been recording these attacks (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/attacks-on-health-care/en/>) and the trend is concerning, with 299 attacks in the first three quarters of 2018 alone across 16 countries, 35% of which are direct bombing of hospitals.

We know that many members and fellows from all Colleges work in conflict zones and carry out humanitarian relief work. The UK Colleges have now signed their support for the Declaration and would like to ask the UK government to signal it's support for this important Declaration by raising the issue again in the UN and lobbying them to enforce UNSC Resolution 2286. Without enforcement of these war crimes, we fear that this global phenomenon will spread and will inhibit the good work that so many clinicians do around the world.

We hope you will be able to support us with this vital issue that impacts so many around the world.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tajek B Hassan', with a circular flourish on the left and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Tajek B Hassan
President, Royal College of Emergency Medicine

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carrie MacEwen', written in a cursive style.

Professor Carrie MacEwen
Chair, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chaand Nagpaul', with the first name written in a circle and the last name written below it.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul
Chair, BMA Council



Professor John Middleton
President, Faculty of Public Health



Mr Michael Burdon, FRCOphth, FRCP(Ed)
President, Royal College of Ophthalmologists



Professor Ravi Mahajan
President, Royal College of Anaesthetists



Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard
Chair, Royal College of General Practitioners



Dame Professor Donna Kinnair
Chief Executive and General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing



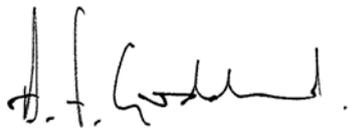
Professor Lesley Regan
President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists



Professor Russell Viner
President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health



Professor Jo Martin
President, Royal College of Pathologists



Professor Andrew (Bod) Goddard MD, PRCP
President, Royal College of Physicians



Professor Dereck Bell, OBE
President, Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh



Professor Wendy Burn
President, Royal College of Psychiatrists



Dr Nicola H Strickland BM BCh MA Hons (Oxon) FRCP FRCR
President of The Royal College of Radiologists



Professor Mike Griffin OBE
President, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

Cc. Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock MP