



March 9, 2021

### Palestinian Patients and Health Workers becoming a Legitimate target of Israeli military attacks

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 2021, at exactly 3:40 am, coinciding with International Women's Day; a group of heavily Israeli armed occupying forces (IOF) attacked the Health Work Committees (HWC) headquarters located in Ramallah governorate. This attack resulted in hefty damages. In addition, the IOF detained Mr. Tayseer Abu Shalbak (Age 46), an employee working in the accounting department at the Health Work Committees.

This attack comes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after the Palestinian Authority announced lockdown on four governorates across the West Bank including Ramallah, to help enable health and medical staff to cope with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This attack comes at a time were many ill patients including women, children, elderly and people with disabilities need now more than ever, health services due to movement restrictions and lack of health coverage in remote areas.

### **Attacks on health facilities aim to undermine health care services**

The Israeli occupying forces raided the whole premises, tampering with all the belongings of staff and office furniture. They stayed at the premises for over two hours, leaving behind doors and locks destroyed, confiscating 10 hard disks after dismantling electronic devices, in addition 3 laptops and numerous essential work files were also found missing.

For over 36 years, the HWC have been working in the occupied Palestinian territory, providing services and ensure equitable access across the West Bank. Its mobile clinics in "Area C" and "H2" in the city of Hebron provide essential services to vulnerable communities responding to Palestinians needs who are heavily targeted by IOF and the Israeli occupying authorities. In addition, Palestinians in these areas living under occupation with numerous restrictions that impede their safe and access to their basic rights including access to health.



These continues attacks against health care workers and organizations makes life impossible for both health providers and people in need. We at HWC are committed in providing health services to those in need and we will not leave our patients left behind. HWC will continue to push back against shrinking space and the systematic smear campaign targeting NGOs that include attempt to delegitimize, defund and criminalize the work of humanitarian aid providers.

Throughout the oPt, attacks on facilities, homes, clinics, schools, markets, workshops have become routine actions. Local health workers and Palestinians bear the burden of these violations. Unfortunately, continuous calls for accountability have not been made keeping the Israeli occupation immune from any accountability and criticism.

### **Hospitals should be safeguarded from ongoing Israeli occupying forces attacks**

The HWC denounces the international community's silence, the failure of international mechanisms to take the necessary steps to provide protection for Palestinians living under occupation and health workers. Lack of international pressure to hold the Israeli occupying government accountable, towards ensuring compliance with resolution 2286 adopted by the security council in 2016; which calls for the protection of civilians including the wounded, sick, humanitarian actors including health workers.

The Israeli occupying government continues to disavow its obligations under international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva conventions, and the obligations applicable to it under the 1977 and 2005 additional protocols attached to those conventions: relating to the protection of civilians, health workers and health facilities.

The HWC will continue to work side by side with civil society organizations, and continue to raise their voice in order to fulfil its ethical and medical obligations towards affected populations and toward safeguarding the right to health as well as calling for the following:

- 1- The Human Rights Council and the United Nations mechanisms need to ensure the protection of human rights, especially the Committee on Economic and Social Rights, also needs work to



## Health Work Committees

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## جمعية لجان العمل الصحي

البييرة - سطح مرجحيا ، ص.ب. ٣٩٦٦  
هاتف، ٠٢-٢٤٢٧٥١٨ ، فاكس، ٠٢-٢٤٢٧٥١٧  
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- 2- conduct investigations into cases of systematic Israeli violations committed against health facilities and health workers.
- 3- Exercising pressure on the Israeli occupying power to abide by the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights law to ensure the respect and protection of health services, the wounded and sick in way to enable health workers in fulfilling their obligations.
- 4- Call for immediate complete, impartial, effective and independent investigations into the attacks taking place on the health sector in accordance with Security Council Resolution No. 2286, and work to prevent impunity and accountability of perpetrators of crimes against humanity.
- 5- Calling on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the Hight Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to prosecute those accused of committing grave breaches of the convention. Also, initiate a formal investigation of violations of the right to health, in accordance with the recommendation of the independent international investigation committee affiliated with the UN.
- 6- Call upon international and humanitarian organizations, human rights defenders and activists for increased solidarity with Palestinians, to stop the discriminatory and raciest practices by Israeli occupation, targeting of health facilities, health workers and patients.