



CANADIAN
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October 24, 2016

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
By e-mail: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

I write to you today to express our grave concern about the recent attacks on hospitals and health care workers in Syria and other conflict zones. The persistent and targeted attacks on doctors, nurses and other health care workers must cease. These attacks are in direct contravention of humanitarian law.

In the last year there have been attacks on medical facilities in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and South Sudan. The targeted attack on health services and health services providers is unacceptable and is a violation of international law, thus amounting to a war crime. The Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly names hospitals in conflict zones as protected spaces.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions represents almost 200,000 nurses across Canada, and we stand in solidarity with our colleagues in the health care profession seeking to provide humanitarian care and uphold the rights and health of the wounded and vulnerable in these conflict zones. We add our voices to those of innumerable international organizations and coalitions of health care providers, including the International Council of Nurses, the World Medical Association, Global Nurses United, Doctors Without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross, in denouncing these atrocious bombings and calling for a respect for humanitarian health services.

October 24 is United Nations Day. On this important occasion, we call on the Canadian government to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to international humanitarian law and furthermore to uphold the emergency UN resolution 2286 condemning attacks on medical personnel in conflict situations and demanding an end to impunity for those responsible and respect for international law on the part of all warring parties. Our government must denounce all of these attacks, not just the ones in Syria, and must use all of the resources and strategies at its disposal to call for the respect of international humanitarian law.

Health care workers all over the world deserve to be safe as they seek to provide humanitarian assistance in conflict zones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LS', written over a horizontal line.

Linda Silas, President

Cc.: The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International
Development and La Francophonie