

UN Security Council Resolution 2286 is 10 years old; it is/was intended to protect patients, healthcare workers, hospitals and ambulances in conflict zones.¹

Unfortunately, the news reports every day that this resolution has largely gone unheeded, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Ukraine and Sudan (though not exclusively there). Almost daily, we see reports of ambulances being targeted, hospitals being bombed, and doctors and nurses being threatened or even killed. It is absolutely not normal for healthcare workers to risk their lives on a daily basis simply to provide the service expected of them.

Time and again, it is civilians who are deprived of care when medical facilities are forced to close, often resulting in deaths or lifelong disabilities (especially among children).

These attacks have become increasingly frequent – even a daily occurrence – in breach of Resolution 2286. Clearly, the signatory countries are failing to ensure compliance with humanitarian law and may even be complicit in these violations.

It is, of course, primarily the absence of sanctions that allows this impunity to persist, but also the passivity of many states in the face of these violations, for reasons that are not always very commendable.

Médecins sans frontières has condemned this situation by making three demands: compliance with and enforcement of Resolution 2286; independent and impartial investigations into these violations; and a guarantee of effective protection for healthcare in conflict zones.

Unfortunately, some states have no qualms about citing the fight against terrorism or the use of hospitals for military purposes (which, incidentally, is rarely proven) as ‘excuses’ for their attacks, which ultimately deprive people – whether civilians or military personnel – of access to healthcare, regardless of which ‘side’ they are on.

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¹ Source MSF #181