

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK of Academies & Scholarly Societies



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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) is an alliance of more than 90 national honorary scientific societies that defends the fundamental rights of fellow academics and health professionals worldwide. The IHRN also advocates in support of the right to seek, obtain, and provide medical care in times of need. As members of the IHRN's Executive Committee, we are profoundly concerned by reports of targeted attacks against healthcare workers and efforts to obstruct their provision of medical services during protests calling for an end to police brutality and systemic racism in the United States.

Attacks by law enforcement officers against medics and medical facilities in several major cities across the country have been documented by media outlets and human rights organizations. These attacks include the firing of projectiles and chemical irritants into makeshift medical tents and directly at medics attempting to treat injured protesters. In certain instances, medics have also reportedly been arrested and temporarily detained because of their work. These alarming incidents have occurred against the backdrop of widespread disproportionate use of force by law enforcement officers, in violation of internationally recognized human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and association.

The indiscriminate use of force in many cities has led to the serious injury of protesters, journalists, legal observers, and others. The subsequent targeting of those seeking to provide needed medical assistance to the injured is a further disturbing violation of human rights. We call for a government response to protests that is consistent with international human rights standards. In addition, we call on authorities in the United States to carry out a prompt, independent and transparent investigation into all allegations of human rights abuses connected to the protests and to hold accountable those found responsible. Violence against healthcare workers must be condemned and the right to provide medical assistance protected.

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