

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Dr. Assad,

We write to you as health professionals—as healers who are ethically and morally bound by our duty to provide treatment and care to those in need—asking you to protect the right to health in Syria. The world has heard credible accounts that government forces have:

1. Denied wounded civilians impartial medical treatment;
2. Invaded, attacked, and misused hospitals;
3. Attacked and impeded medical transport; and
4. Detained and tortured doctors for treating wounded civilians.

In response, brave medical personnel have risked their lives to care for those caught up in the violence—for families whose homes have been indiscriminately shelled by modern artillery, for innocent civilians who have been injured while running for cover from unprovoked sniper fire.

These health professionals have not forgotten their promise to heal—not harm—the people they treat. For more than 2,300 years, this ethical and moral obligation to care for the sick and wounded, without discrimination, has bound the medical community around the world. And it is this commitment that prompts us to speak for the wounded and those who would help them.

Dr. Assad, any and all assaults on Syria’s hospitals, doctors, and patients are a clear violation of the universally recognized principle of medical neutrality, which requires noninterference with medical services in times of armed conflict and nondiscriminatory treatment of the sick and wounded. As a member of the medical community, we hope you will respect this obligation by ordering your military to cease all attacks on hospitals, medical facilities and vehicles, doctors, nurses, and patients. At the same time, we call on all parties to the current conflict to respect the principle of medical neutrality and commit to providing emergency medical treatment to all citizens without discrimination.

Dr. Jose Gomes do Amaral, President, World Medical Association

Dr. Robert Lawrence, Chair, Physicians for Human Rights

Dr. James L. Madara, CEO and Executive Vice President, American Medical Association