

ILAE: Even Wars Have Rules

The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) once again emphasizes its call for all parties to uphold their obligations under the Geneva Conventions, protect health infrastructure, and facilitate safe and unimpeded passage for medical and humanitarian personnel.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva (ICRC) has recently added the words “Even Wars Have Rules” to the outside of its building.

The reminder could not have come at a more appropriate time, given the increasing number of violations of these rules.

Attacks on healthcare in armed conflict are increasing globally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO)¹. The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) estimates that damage to health facilities from explosive weapons use has nearly doubled over the past four years and that in 2024 alone more than 900 health care workers were killed as a result of aircraft and drone strikes, shelling, hospital raids, and shootings².

The devastating impact of these attacks on vulnerable populations seeking emergency health services, including care and treatment for epilepsy, is even greater, as is lack of provision of the adequate food and shelter, infrastructure and equipment that are essential to health and healthcare.

WHO, ICRC, and partners within the SHC coalition are recommending the integration of humanitarian and human rights education into medical education as part of a suite of measures needed to prevent attacks on health care from becoming a “new norm of practice of parties to conflict”³. The ILAE is following this initiative by developing an online training module for its members on medical ethics drawing on the excellent materials already available regarding International Humanitarian Law and building on frameworks of protection including those related to duty of care and psychological support⁴.

As the world’s preeminent association of health care professionals and scientists working towards a world where no person’s life is limited by epilepsy, the ILAE is committed to assisting people in need wherever and whenever possible, including by the actions of the ILAE Global Advocacy Council and ILAE Emergency and Crisis Response Task Forces.

¹ In the Line of Fire, World Health Organization, November 2024 [in-the-line-of-fire-\(1\).pdf](#)

² [2024-SHCC-Annual-Report.pdf](#)

³ In the Line of Fire, page 3

⁴ Abdul Rahim HF et al. Our Duty of Care: A global call to action to protect the mental health of health and care workers. Qatar: World Innovation Summit for Health. 2022