

World Humanitarian Day ICN launches #NursesforPeace bulletin & calls for urgent end to attacks on health professionals

To mark World Humanitarian Day, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) renews call for the protection of healthworkers in grave humanitarian crises

GENÈVE, GE, SWITZERLAND, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- World Humanitarian Day: ICN launches new #NursesforPeace bulletin and calls for urgent end to attacks on health professionals



"On World Humanitarian Day, ICN recognizes the courage and impact of nurses and humanitarian workers everywhere and renews our urgent call for their protection"

ICN President Dr José Luis Cobos Serrano

To mark World Humanitarian Day, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) has published [a new #NursesforPeace Impact and Stories Bulletin](#). The bulletin sets out ICN's work to support and protect nurses in grave humanitarian crises and shows how nurses are leading the response to conflicts, disasters and disease outbreaks around the world, from Ebola infection prevention training in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, safe insulin administration for children in South Sudan, nurse leadership development in Ukraine, and emergency

support for nurses protecting communities' health in Madagascar, Venezuela, Sudan, Somaliland, Gaza.

This World Humanitarian Day, ICN also reiterates, in the strongest possible terms, our continual calls for an immediate end to all attacks on health workers, patients and health facilities; for full enforcement of International Humanitarian Law; and for accountability for violations. These calls are reflected in a strong statement from the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), of which ICN is a founding member. The statement warns that escalating attacks on health, alarming and increasing trends in state-actor and armed drone violence, and severe cuts to health and humanitarian funding are putting health professionals and the communities they serve at ever greater risk.

ICN President Dr José Luis Cobos Serrano said:

"We are publishing our #NursesforPeace bulletin on World Humanitarian Day to recognize the

courage and impact of nurses and humanitarian workers everywhere and to renew our urgent calls to protect them. ICN is a founding member of the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC), which recently documented 2,546 horrific attacks on health care in 2025, with 455 health workers tragically killed and many others kidnapped and detained. No nurse, no health worker, no humanitarian responder should ever be a target. It is now beyond time to #ActforHumanity with the political will and accountability needed to stop these abhorrent attacks and ensure the safety of all health personnel.

#NursesforPeace exists to enable nurses to continue bringing care, health, hope and dignity to communities and populations in the world's most challenging circumstances. We must make sure that nurses' enormous power as peacemakers as well as healthmakers is recognized, invested in, and protected."

Since #NursesforPeace began in 2022, in response to an outpouring of nurse-led support following the war in Ukraine, it has grown into a sustained humanitarian and advocacy programme now working in 13 countries and territories.

The update published today shows the scale, scope and impact of the initiative, which is delivered with partners including Direct Relief and Laerdal and provides practical support where it is needed most through emergency assistance, training, equipment, medical supplies, mental health and psychosocial support, leadership development, and high-level advocacy. This support enables nurses and National Nurses Associations to respond to urgent needs on the ground, strengthen community and primary health care, protect nurses' own wellbeing, and build nursing leadership in crisis settings.

ICN also consistently advocated for the protection of nurses and health workers in crises and conflicts through engagement with the United Nations, the World Health Assembly, the G7 and other global forums.

As part of this wider advocacy, today's WHPA statement makes urgent calls for governments, parties to conflict and the international community to protect health professionals, safeguard health services and ensure accountability for attacks on health care.

ICN CEO and WHPA Chair Howard Catton said:

"Health professionals do not choose sides in war, they choose patients. Every day, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and dentists put themselves at risk to provide care based on need alone, in accordance with the humanitarian principles that underpin health care. Yet too often they are attacked for doing exactly that, while cuts to humanitarian and health funding are quietly dismantling the services civilians rely on to survive. States and parties to conflict must act now uphold international humanitarian law, protect health professionals, patients and facilities, and hold those responsible for attacks to account. Protecting health professionals is both a legal obligation and essential to protecting patients, safeguarding health systems and preserving our

shared humanity."

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