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International Council of Nurses condemns abhorrent attack on maternity ward in Kabul

Geneva, Switzerland, 14 May 2020 - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) strongly condemns Tuesday's abhorrent attack on an MSF maternity ward in Dasht-e-Barchi hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, which killed pregnant women and babies, as well as an unspecified number of nurses.

ICN condemns unreservedly all attacks on patients, as well as on nurses, midwives and other healthcare workers, whose sole aim is to provide care, treatment and comfort to the population. ICN calls on all governments and other combatants to uphold the international laws that protect health workers and to take action to prevent such attacks in the future and ensure Health for All.

Annette Kennedy, ICN President said: "ICN, which represents nurses worldwide, joins our colleagues from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in condemning these barbaric crimes against humanity. We stand in solidarity with the civilians and frontline healthcare staff who are being targeted and killed. Access to health is a human right, as is the right of workers not to be subject to violence at work – these attacks are abhorrent and unacceptable."

The MSF maternity ward located in an area of western Kabul provided a fundamental healthcare service in an area where essential care is already limited. As well as causing immediate suffering and death, this attack has also deprived the population of access to critical healthcare.

ICN is a founding member of the [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#), whose purpose is to promote respect for international humanitarian and human rights laws that relate to the safety and security of health facilities, health workers, ambulances and patients ensuring they are safe and secure during periods of armed conflict or civil violence.

ICN is also closely involved in the [Health Care in Danger \(HCiD\)](#) project, which ultimately aims to make access to healthcare in situations of armed violence more secure. The project, which is led by International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), aims to improve security and delivery of impartial and efficient healthcare in armed conflict and other emergencies.

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Note to Editors

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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