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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Every Casualty Worldwide, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 January 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Casualty Recording in Situations of Armed Conflict, Including Identifying the Impact on Accessing the Right to Health

Every Casualty Worldwide works with casualty recording organisations around the world, including many operating in situations addressed under Item 4 of this Council's agenda. One of these organisations is Insecurity Insight, which has been recording fatalities among healthcare workers globally. Their research and documentation is essential for understanding both the immediate and long-term impacts of armed violence on affected communities.

Insecurity Insight has documented the killing of at least 104 health workers in Myanmar since 2021. Thirty-seven health workers were killed in 2023 alone by both Myanmar national armed forces and other parties to the conflict.

In its casualty records, Insecurity Insight documents the circumstances of death of each victim. This evidence reveals that health workers have been killed or injured in airstrikes by the Myanmar armed forces on hospitals. They have also been actively and directly targeted for pursuing their vital humanitarian role. In one such case, on 27 May 2023, Insecurity Insight documented two medics and two health workers belonging to the Karenni Revolution Union were killed by the Myanmar armed forces whilst they were providing treatment to injured persons during armed clashes.

Insecurity Insight has recorded at least 904 health workers detained by Myanmar military and security forces since 2021, with 107 health workers of these detained in 2023. At least four of these are reported to have been killed in detention.

In Sudan (the), Insecurity Insight has documented the killing of 54 health workers and 25 humanitarian workers since violence escalated on 15 April 2023. Once again, the casualty records show that these killings were targeted and not coincidental. On 30 June 2023, four doctors, a pharmacist and a laboratory specialist were killed inside a hospital by Rapid Support Forces because their medical care had been unsuccessful in saving the life of the Forces' commander. The same Forces beat patients and burnt down the hospital laboratory, forcing the hospital to be evacuated and closed.

In a separate incident in June 2023, health care workers and patients were killed after Rapid Support Forces armed drones, which were reportedly targeting the Khartoum headquarters of the Armoured Corps of the Sudanese military, hit a hospital in the complex.

In South Sudan, Insecurity Insight has documented the killing of 37 aid workers in 2023 by various conflict parties. The vast majority of aid workers were killed after their vehicle was ambushed. In one such incident in May 2023, seven national staff aid workers were killed after armed perpetrators attacked their convoy, which was clearly marked as a humanitarian vehicle.

These examples show the importance of consistent casualty recording in countries affected by armed violence and conflict. The information gathered in such records provides evidence of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law.

Every Casualty Worldwide and Insecurity Insight urge the Council to make use of information provided by casualty recording organisations to inform their understanding of, and response to, the country situations on its agenda. This information should also be used to identify the actions needed to protect the right to access healthcare and other fundamental rights in situations of armed violence.

We call on the Council and its mechanisms to support efforts to identify and document casualties of armed violence in all relevant country situations under agenda Item 4. In doing so, it should recognise the status of casualty recorders as human rights defenders and facilitate their protection. We also call on the Council to include a casualty recording mandate within all relevant special procedures and commissions of inquiry created under Item 4. We encourage all actors engaged in casualty recording to adhere to the Standards for Casualty Recording, to ensure this work is conducted effectively and consistently, and to facilitate sharing of information.

Finally, we call on the Council to hold states to account for upholding their existing casualty recording obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

Insecurity Insight and the Sudanese American Physicians Association, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.