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The Taliban, the Islamic State, and Afghan Military Forces are Attacking Hospitals and Denying Access to Health Care Across Afghanistan

Updated Report Shows Attacks on Health Care Continued Last Year; Children Disproportionately Affected

NEW YORK – The Taliban, the Islamic State (IS), and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) have attacked medical facilities and personnel as a tactic of war, Watchlist on Children and Armed conflict said today.

Watchlist found that in 2017, parties to Afghanistan's conflict carried out at least 63 attacks on medical facilities and personnel in at least 22 of the country's 34 provinces. Disruptions in health care access from these attacks and ongoing conflict have compounded challenges to children's health, which were already exacerbated by the conflict's escalation in 2017.

"Children continue to bear the brunt of attacks on hospitals and health workers," said Christine Monaghan, Watchlist's research officer and the report's author. "These attacks are making it harder, if not impossible, for children to get treatment for malnutrition and many preventable diseases."

Monaghan visited Afghanistan in 2016 and 2017 to conduct research on these attacks. Her 2017 report, [*"Every Clinic Is Now on the Frontline" The Impact on Children of Attacks on Health Care in Afghanistan*](#), highlights how the targeting of medical facilities and personnel throughout Afghanistan in 2015 and 2016 had devastating consequences on children's health. The document issued today updates that report with information from 2017.



Over the last three years, these factors have led to more children getting injured and suffering from acute malnutrition, diarrheal disease, and vaccine-preventable diseases, such as polio and measles.

Watchlist's recommendations include a call to retain Child Protection Advisors as part of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan because they play a key role in gathering information about attacks on health care and health workers. Watchlist is also calling on the government of Afghanistan to hold perpetrators accountable by investigating attacks and prosecuting those responsible for them.

Watchlist's updated report details the day, location, type of attack, and perpetrator, when such information is known. More than a third of the incidents occurred in Nangarhar province, where the ANDSF, IS, and the Taliban have engaged in intense ground fighting to gain territorial control.

Today's update is part of a series of Watchlist reports focusing on attacks on health care and their impact on children. In addition to the Afghanistan report, published in March 2017, Watchlist issued a report on [Yemen](#) in April 2017 and will issue a South Sudan report next month.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a New York-based global coalition that serves to end violations against children in armed conflict and guarantee their rights. For more information: <https://watchlist.org/>