



## Protection of first responders and healthcare staff in conflict and complex emergencies

Friday, 23 May 2025 14-16 CEST

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Side Event

Friday, 23 May 2025 14-16 CEST

## Protection of first responders and healthcare staff in conflict and complex emergencies

Learning from experience,  
overcoming challenges  
and scoping for future  
opportunities

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UNIVERSITY OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SAN MARINO  
Center for Security Studies



UNIVERSITY OF ROME  
"Tor Vergata"  
Department of Electronic Engineering



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## Description of this webinar

Healthcare workers and first responders in disasters and crises are exposed to life-threatening risks due to multiple hazards. Conflict and violence have increased in the past decades across multiple domains. The complex geopolitical factors involved in these events often trigger humanitarian crises that become protracted. Violence against health workers is particularly rife during armed conflicts, with documentation of hundreds having been killed in conflict-affected areas as well as in other protracted complex emergencies. In 2024 alone, WHO reports 170 verified attacks on healthcare, causing 89 deaths and 269 injuries, but the numbers are underestimated. Beyond WHO, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Médecins Sans Frontières, among others, have dedicated initiatives (Healthcare in Danger and #NotATarget respectively) specifically addressing the issue of violence against patients, health workers, facilities, and vehicles, and strongly advocating to ensure safe access to and delivery of health care in armed conflict and other emergencies. In situations of armed conflict, it is vital for all parties to fulfill the obligations applicable to them under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Risk mitigation is a responsibility of any entity involved in the delivery of assistance along the frontlines. WHO reinforces the need “to protect and safeguard the health, safety, and human rights of health and care workers everywhere, and ensure they have safe, supportive enabling work environments.” This can be achieved by improving occupational health and safety management systems, programmes, and equipment for health and safety at work, and the way facilities in which health and care personnel work are designed, constructed, maintained, and rehabilitated to minimize the risk of occupational disease or injury, remove risks wherever possible, putting safety measures in place in situations of unrest, and fortifying against natural hazards. Understanding challenges and learning from experiences and best practices from the field can support translating policies into practical solutions to improve the protection of health workers and first responders in conflict and complex emergencies. Objectives:

- Understand the main challenges hindering the protection of health workers and first responders.
- Identify lessons learned and best practices from the field.
- Capitalize on the event to transform challenges into opportunities to improve protection of health workers and first responders, joining expertise and capacities.

## Speakers

**Welcome remarks: Prof. Roberto Mugavero**, Director CEMEC (European Center for Disaster Medicine) Specialized Centre of the Council of Europe's Major Hazards Agreement

**Session 1: Moderator Dr. Emanuele Bruni**, Program Area Manager, Emergency Operations, WHO Regional office for Europe

**Dr. Olivier Hagon** Co-Head Center for Humanitarian Medicine and Disaster Management WHO Collaborative center

- **Christopher Stokes** Senior Humanitarian Advisor and Emergency Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- **Loris De Filippi** Senior Health Specialist & Humanitarian expert
- **Yves Giebens**, Head of Hospital Services Program at International Committee of the Red Cross

**Session 2: Moderator Dr. Lamia Bezer**, Senior Advisor CEMEC (European Center for Disaster Medicine San Marino)

- **Maksym Kustov** Head of the CBRN Research Laboratory, Civil Protection and CBRNe expert, National University of Civil Protection, Cherkasy, Ukraine
- **Hamdija Hadziavic** Senior Security Expert
- **Dr. Rafael Castro Delgado**, Prof. Emergency Medicine Univ. of Oviedo. Prehospital physician at SAMU-Asturias; coordinator Erasmus Mundus Master PH in disasters
- **Paolo Vaccari** Emergency management expert at Italian Civil Protection Department
- **Zubair Al Azad** Emergency Preparedness and Response Expert

Participants will be able to submit questions during the webinar by using Zoom's "Q&A" feature. You may also submit questions in advance by sending them to: [euromed.protectnet@gmail.com](mailto:euromed.protectnet@gmail.com)

Do register for the side event of the [EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FORUM for Disaster Risk Governance, Health Preparedness and networking Advancement](#) - SIDE EVENT **Protection of first responders and healthcare staff in conflict and complex emergencies**, Friday 23 May 2025, 1400- 1600 CEST.  
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