[Interview: Health care is a human right, senior UN official says; urges protection for medical workers](#)

24 October 2017 – Health is a human right and health care workers are human rights defenders, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights has said, reminding Governments to provide healthcare for their citizens and to protect professionals who deliver these services.

&#8220We see health not only as the absence of disease and not only a question of access to services, but in face the right to be human is a manner that you have your physical and mental integrity upheld,&#8221 Kate Gilmore said in an interview with *UN News*.

Similarly, health care workers are part of the &#8220machinery of human rights defence,&#8221 yet are increasingly being targeted for doing their jobs.

&#8220In conflict settings, there has been a marked spike in the targeting of hospitals, of doctors, of ambulances and of nurses. And this is not only quite unconscionable,&#8221 the Deputy High Commissioner said, noting these attacks are also against international humanitarian law and the basic rules of war to which each Government has signed up by virtue of being a member of the United Nations.

&#8220But in other settings, too,&#8221 she continued. &#8220In non-conflict settings, health workers who work with communities that are subjected to terrible bigotry, those working with those suffering leprosy, historically health workers providing services to those living with HIV and AIDS, workers whose priority is sexual and reproductive health.&#8221

Ms. Gilmore noted &#8220a pattern across the globe of health workers being targeted for providing compassionate, humane care rooted in medical science.&#8221

She denounced such attacks calling them &#8220wrong, unfair and unjust.&#8221

Ms. Gilmore, along with Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour, will participate at a dialogue today at the UN Headquarters in New York on how human rights, including the right to health, are reflected in the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Hear more from her in this interview with UN News.

AUDIO: UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kate Gilmore.