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Afghanistan: Attacks on humanitarian workers must end

Attacks by armed groups on humanitarian organizations amount to war crimes and must end immediately, Amnesty International said following the brutal assault by unidentified armed men on an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) office in eastern Afghanistan.

“Organizations like the ICRC must be able to carry out their crucial lifesaving work without the fear of violence hanging over them. This attack is an affront to humanity,” said Isabelle Arradon, Amnesty International’s Deputy Asia-Pacific Director.

“Those responsible for the assault in Jalalabad must be brought to justice and tried in accordance with international law and standards.”

Unidentified gunmen and at least one suicide bomber attacked the ICRC office in Jalalabad, Nangarhar province, on 29 May, killing one Afghan security guard and wounding another ICRC staff member.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but it comes in the wake of a 24 May assault on a guest house of the International Organization for Migration in the Afghan capital Kabul. The Taliban acknowledged responsibility for that attack, but claimed that a CIA guest house was the target.

“Intentional attacks on humanitarian relief personnel are strictly prohibited under international law, and amount to war crimes. The Taliban and other armed groups must immediately cease attacks on humanitarian targets in Afghanistan. Countless Afghans depend on the work of these organizations,” Arradon said.

On 16 April this year, two employees of the Afghan Red Crescent Society were killed in Jawzjan province by unidentified gunmen.

“Afghanistan suffers from some of the worst health indicators in the world and chronically poor access to healthcare. Targeted attacks on humanitarian organizations have an adverse affect on the health and well-being of the Afghan people, particularly in remote regions and areas most affected by the conflict.”

Public document

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