

Delegate Meeting Sep 1, 2018

NAAMA 40th National Convention-Detroit

Declaration of Rights of Physicians and other Health Care Providers in the Arab World

One of the basic tenets of our profession is that we must strive to treat patients of different ethnicities, religions, genders, creeds and sects with the same level of care and compassion. As such, we serve as examples to nations plagued by sectarian and religious conflict, whose governments would do well to approach their citizens as we approach our patients.

This basic tenet presupposes, however, that we are able to treat our patients in an environment where we do not fear for our physical safety. It is therefore with great horror and sadness that we have witnessed in recent years the assassination, bombing and torturing—sometimes to death—of hundreds of physicians and medical workers across the Middle East, with both state and non-state actors responsible for the attacks against medical personnel. Governments and non-state actors have concluded that targeting medical personnel can produce a military advantage.

NAAMA The National Arab American Medical Association hereby affirms the basic right of our medical colleagues in the Arab World to practice our profession in safety and we call upon governments and non-state actors to refrain from infringing upon the following 10 enumerated rights:

1. Provide an environment where the physician is free from fear of bodily harm or death.
2. Protect the freedom of movement so medical personnel can access patients quickly.
3. Do not impose requirements to uphold political oaths or allegiance to any political or religious parties.
4. Protect hospitals, medical installations, clinics, ambulances and medical equipment from destruction or misuse.
5. Facilitate the provision of professional training, including ensuring that medical schools and nursing schools and other training programs are permitted to operate in the ordinary course.
6. Permit free and fair elections with respect to medical societies in the region, including, without limitation, student-led organizations.
7. Allow medical personnel to engage in volunteerism and philanthropy with respect to medical missions.
8. Allow communication between medical personnel in war-plagued regions and physicians and Academic Centers in the United States and elsewhere.
9. Protect patient records from destruction or confiscation or misuse.
10. Ensure that medical personnel have access to adequate healthcare, including to mental health.

Presented by Dr Hareth Raddawi.