

Afghanistan: Coalition Forces attack Hospital

By [Swedish Committee for Afghanistan \(SCA\)](#)

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On Wednesday evening September 2 at 10 pm coalition vehicles drove up at SCA's Hospital in Shaniz, Wardak province along the main highway from Kabul to Ghazni. They entered the hospital compound, reportedly without giving any reason or justification for entering the hospital compound. They searched all rooms, even bathrooms, male and female wards. Rooms that were locked were forcefully entered and the doors of the malnutrition ward and the ultrasound ward were broken by force to gain entry. Upon entering the hospital they tied up four employees and two family members of patients at the hospital. SCA staffs as well as patients (even those in beds) were forced out of rooms/wards throughout the search.

On leaving the hospital at around 12 pm, military issued verbal "orders"/instructions; that on receiving any patient that could be an insurgent the hospital staff has to report to the Coalition Forces who would then determine if the hospital would be permitted or not of treating such patient.

"This is simply not acceptable. It is not only a clear violation of globally recognized humanitarian principles about the sanctity of health facilities and staff in areas of conflict but also a clear breach of the civil-military agreement between NGOs and ISAF. We demand guarantees from the IMF command that such violations will not be repeated and that this is made clear to commanders in the field. SCA can not and will not tolerate this kind of treatment by the IMF. Nor is the SCA bound by any orders from IMF regarding to whom treatment can be given" says Anders Fange, Country Director, SCA.

The hospital is located in an area where community acceptance is essential to the continued functioning and safety of the hospital and its staff. The hospital has faced a further intrusion on 13 July, when private security guards escorting a convoy came under attack from insurgents and sought shelter/treatment in a very aggressive manner in the hospital and proceeded to assault staff and damage property.

This latest incident comes at a time when a clinic in Paktika was attacked on 26 August by ANSF/IMF following reports of an alleged AOG commander inside. At issue, in addition to the safety of staff and patients, are perceptions amongst all parties as to the status of clearly marked hospital/medical facilities. When such facilities are no longer regarded with the sanctity which has previously been accorded, then hospitals merely become buildings and a legitimate arena to continue the conflict. Such intrusions have previously been recorded by both sides in the conflict.

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