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**SPOTLIGHT**

**Protection of civilians & health care in armed conflict, again**

 Civilians and civilian structures are protected under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Healthcare personnel and facilities have special protection under IHL. However, civilians and healthcare continue to be targeted in war/armed conflict, particularly in Syria. Since its inception, The Lancet-AUB Commission on Syria has prioritized the protection of healthcare, both in research and advocacy. Building on the seminal paper of March 2017 on the 'Weaponisation of Healthcare in Syria,' the Commission, in partnership with the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, organized the UN General Assembly side event on protecting healthcare in armed conflict in September 2017. The dignitaries and organizers/panelists of the side event, led by Canada’s Minister of Health, published a follow-up Correspondence in The Lancet in April 2018 highlighting key steps to ensure
Failure of protection of civilians and healthcare came to the light again during the February 2018 campaign by the Government of Syria and allied forces to re-take Eastern Ghouta (near Damascus). This led several Commissioners to publish a Comment in The Lancet calling for measures to ensure protection of civilians and healthcare.

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**COMMISSION UPDATES**

**Meeting with The Lancet Editors, March 2018**

20-21 March: Commission Co-Chairs welcomed The Lancet editors, Richard Horton and Pam Das, to AUB in a 2-day meeting which included several Commissioners and members of the research team. Participants reviewed progress on revision of Commission report and planned for the publication of the report in Fall 2018.
The Commission at APHA 2018

November, 2018: The Commission will be organising a panel through the Peace Caucus of the American Public Health Association (APHA) during APHA’s Annual Meeting 2018, scheduled for 10-14 November 2018 in San Diego (USA). The Commission will present some of its research and findings during the panel.

COMMISSION IN DIALOGUE

Brussels II Conference: Supporting the Future of Syria & The Region

Brussels, Belgium: The Second Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, co-organized by the EU and the UN, took place on 24-25 April. Commission Co-Chair Jabbour participated in side events on 23 April and in the 'Dialogue with NGOs' on 24 April. Conference documents can be accessed on conference website.

Advancing Health Research in
Humanitarian Crises

**Maryland, USA:** Between 9-11 Apr Commission Co-Chair **Iman Nuwayhid** co-chaired an NIH workshop on 'Advancing Health Research in Humanitarian Crises' organized by the NIH Fogarty International Center - Center for Global Health Studies to "share learning and strategies on how to conduct global health research in the context of humanitarian crises in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)." Commissioners Fouad M. Fouad and Paul Spiegel participated in the workshop.

Building Peace into Refugee Responses

**Beirut, Lebanon:** On 17 April, Saferworld and the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), convened a closed roundtable policy discussion on 'Building Peace into Refugee Responses: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.' The discussions, in which Commission co-Chair Jabbour participated, focused on the findings of new research on the issue, ahead of the release of a report which can be accessed here.
Comment: 'Death and suffering in Eastern Ghouta, Syria: a call for action to protect civilians and health care,' The Lancet

Commission Co-Chair Jabbour and several Commissioners published a Comment in *The Lancet* on the need for protection of civilians and healthcare in Eastern Ghouta (near Damascus). The authors put forward recommendations to policymakers and global actors...[Read More]

Photoessay: 'Rehumanising the Syrian conflict: photographs of war, health, and life in Syria', The Lancet

On the seventh anniversary of the Syrian conflict, a team from the Commission in collaboration with the Humans of Syria network published a photoessay in *The Lancet*. The publication depicts aspects of the conflict's impact on life and health in Syria...[Read More]

Correspondence: 'Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflicts: Action Towards Accountability' , The Lancet

April 14th, *The Lancet* published a letter reflecting on the discussions of the high-level side event at the UN General Assembly organised by the Commission in September 2017. The publication, entitled: 'Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflicts: Action Towards Accountability', was authored
Al-Arabiya covers the photoessay on Syria
18 Mar: Al-Arabiya TV interviewed Commissioner Nasser Yassin about the Commission's photoessay 'Rehumanising the Syrian conflict: Photographs of war, health and life in Syria'. See interview here (Arabic).

Commission story in AUB's The MainGate magazine
29 Mar: The Spring 2018 issue of AUB's The MainGate magazine features a news story about the Commission titled 'Catching up with the AUB-Lancet Commission.' The MainGate had featured the Commission in its Spring 2017 issue with a story titled 'A Hard Look at Syria's Health Crisis'. MainGate reaches over 50,000 people.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Expert Meeting on Health & War/Armed Conflict
12-13 June: Building on the work of the Commission and other initiatives on health and war/armed conflict, the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University convenes an international ‘Expert Strategic Planning Meeting: Research & Action on Health & War/ Armed Conflict’ on the AUB campus in Beirut, Lebanon. The aim of the meeting is to facilitate a critical review and transformative thinking about the future of research and action on health and war/armed conflict. Experts will review status of the field in light of the increasing complexity of the health dimensions of wars/armed conflicts, discuss the need and pathways for stronger engagements of institutions and researchers from the Global South, and explore opportunities for new global collaborations in terms of scholarship, networking, and dialogue.

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We welcome your feedback. To get in touch:

- Write us on [lcs-info@aub.edu.lb](mailto:lcs-info@aub.edu.lb)
- Visit the Commission team when you are in Beirut and close to AUB