

Government of Pakistan
Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation
Press Release

Pakistan: National Survey on Violence against Healthcare Workers launched



December 6, 2019- Islamabad: According to the study “Violence against Healthcare Workers: A Survey across 16 Cities of Pakistan” compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross in collaboration with local research institutes and partners, more than one third of the health-care providers surveyed had experienced some form of violence in the last six months.

The large-scale survey covered 8579 individuals in 16 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad to determine the extent and causes of violence against healthcare workers and identify the types of violence that are experienced by different levels of healthcare workers. The survey also examines the existing policies to protect healthcare workers working across all levels and in different institutions.

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation was a chief guest at the report launch. During her address, she emphasized, “There is a clear need to bridge the gap between resources and policies. Ehsaas extends hand of collaboration to international development partners to set up 20 centers for disabled.” Talking about the health workers study, Dr. Sania Nishtar underlined the grave consequences of violence in healthcare settings and its adverse effects on the delivery of health care. “It is important that we, as healthcare practitioners and as attendants work on changing behaviours towards violence against healthcare and adopt specific multi-disciplinary strategies to protect health care”, she added.

Head of Delegation ICRC Pakistan, Dragana Kojic highlighted the objectives of the health Care in Danger Initiative, a global initiative to improve access to health care and make its delivery safer in conflict and other emergencies. “When a hospital is attacked, or a healthcare worker is threatened, the result is that a mother and daughter in need of immediate care may not get it. It also means that a healthcare worker may be psychologically traumatized while in the line of duty,” she said.

The study highlights the need to train healthcare workers in skills of emergency communication to de-escalate violence, development of policies on protection of healthcare including zero tolerance for violence against healthcare workers, public awareness campaigns and better community engagement.

The ICRC has been working to address the issue of violence against medical personnel and facilities in Pakistan by promoting evidence-based initiatives in collaboration with government health departments, leading universities and public hospitals. This year, with the support of partners including the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the ICRC launched Bharosa Karein, a campaign on increasing respect for healthcare workers.