During the 2017 General Assembly in Taipei, Republic of China, IHF members adopted a resolution on handling and fighting violence in healthcare services.

IHF members have underscored the growing violence in healthcare settings, which occurs in various forms, such as attacks on facilities and personal threats to patients and healthcare workers.

Unfortunately, the incidence of this type of violence is growing all over the world, although some countries and settings are more affected than others.

There is no doubt that healthcare should be provided to all those who need it with no distinction and no violence of any kind. Sadly, there is an unacceptable situation in which healthcare facilities are being increasingly targeted by groups who want to create a climate of fear and distress, thereby compromising the delivery of healthcare. Any healthcare facility anywhere in the world should be considered a haven for both patients and healthcare professionals.

The International Hospital Federation is part of the Health Care in Danger initiative to voice concerns about attacks on healthcare facilities and advocate to ensure safe access to healthcare services in conflict-ridden areas. This is an important step but still not enough. There is not enough awareness of this problem, especially in countries free of conflict. Tolerating this silence and considering violence as a minor incident or, even worse, as part of the process is not acceptable. Violence cannot become the normality. People who need healthcare and the professional who provided should never be at risk.

For these reasons, the IHF community is raising its voice to help tackle this problem. Not taking action would quickly lead to the point of no return.

In particular, the IHF Secretariat will conduct a survey among its members to measure the scope of violence, identify the tools already in place and those that need to be developed, and outline the programs adopted to fight violence. This survey will also collect information about the public campaigns run by IHF members and their impact.

The IHF Secretariat will also prepare a report on violence in healthcare settings and will create a platform to share tools, research findings, and useful documents. It will also identify topic leaders in the various countries and open a discussion platform on the IHF hub.

Moreover, the IHF Secretariat will prepare proposals for international actions to submit to the Governing Council. These proposals will express the concerns of service providers more effectively and will outline recommendations for addressing violence in healthcare organizations.