



# INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (HQs.)



(Registered under the Societies Act XXI of 1860)  
Mutually Affiliated with the British & Nepal Medical Associations  
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## PRESS RELEASE

### ENSURE SAFETY ENVIRONMENT IN HOSPITALS AND PROTECT THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE PANDEMIC AGAINST VIOLENCE – IMA DEMANDS TO HOME MINISTER

The second wave of Corona pandemic is playing havoc in our country with overcrowding of hospital beds, apparent scarcity of Oxygen, drugs and burial grounds. The stress level on people are souring up. The Health Care workers and modern Medical fraternity are working with altruism and dedication in this stressful environment amidst the fear of their life with Corona infection and more so by the increasing violence by the disenfranchised vested interested people in various places of our country.

The Government of India enacted the Hospital Protection Ordinance under the epidemic Disease Act 1897 to prevent violence against doctors, Hospitals and Healthcare workers in the last year with the efforts of the Hon'ble Home Minister. Similarly, the Hospitals and Healthcare Prevention Act were enacted and in practice in 19 states. However, the enforcement of this act is poor because it is not tagged to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). This makes it difficult for victims to file a complaint as well as the police to register their complaint because of the difficulty in recognizing which section to file the case under and hence very often the culprits go scot free.

COVID-19 has brought fear, uncertainty and anxiety among people in an unprecedented fashion, serves as an explosive fuel to a raging fire. Due to the mounting pandemic crisis and acute shortage of either drug, oxygen or bed, when a patient is dying, the relatives are showing their anger and frustration by attacking hospitals and Doctors. This will bring down morale of health care professionals. Many lady doctors, junior doctors and staff are humiliated and abused.

It is, truly disheartening when one learns about incidents of abuse and ostracism against HCPs, as the problem of violence against doctors in India is increasing steadily and we the Indian doctors are teetering on the brink of a major silent crisis, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which is detrimental for the growth of the society in the coming times. The violence against doctors in India is an emerging epidemic in itself. There needs to be urgent corrective actions at various levels to bring a halt to this heinous crime. A stringent law and strict enforcement are the need of the hour.

It has been estimated that healthcare workers are four times likely to be injured and require time away from work due to workplace violence than all other workers combined. Statistics show that, over 75% of doctors across the country have faced at least some form of violence

**Purity of Profession – Parity in Healthcare**

All communications intended for headquarters office should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary General



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and that 68.33% of the violence was committed by the patient's attenders /escorts. But these numbers are an underestimate as all cases of violence are not reported. Doctors often acknowledge the situation of the relatives of the patient who are in distress and do not report such cases. Mostly, those cases are reported where the doctor feels a serious threat of life. The violence includes verbal abuse, telephonic threats, physical assault, murder, and arson.

The effects of such violent episodes extend longer than the experience itself, where most doctors report to have faced insomnia, depression, anxiety, and an inability to see their patients without any fear of violence.

IMA constantly requesting Government to enact a Central law with IPC section, fixing the responsible officers to investigate, time frame for investigation and punishments to the culprits, as early as possible, without the option for bail. A bill named Prohibition of Violence and Damage to Property Bill, 2019 was drafted by the health ministry in 2019. But the home ministry dismissed the need for a separate law to check violence against a specific profession.

At this pandemic, we also demand Hospitals shall be declared as protected Zone and mandatory official observance by police are implemented in all Hospital premises.

IMA is looking forward with hope to our Hon'ble Home Minister to restore peace amidst Health Care professionals, by enacting and enforcing a stringent Central act to protect, safeguard and promote optimum environment for Health Care Professionals in our country.

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