

Belgian medical workers stage protests against response to pandemic



Brussels, May 19 (RHC)-- In Belgium, medical staff staged a dramatic silent protest, as Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès made a visit to the Saint-Pierre hospital in Brussels. Doctors and nurses outside the hospital turned their backs to the street as Wilmès arrived by car.

Medical workers are protesting against a move to recruit staff members they say are not qualified to help carry out nursing duties. They are also calling for increased recognition of their work.

Belgium has the highest per capita death rate in the world, with just over 9,000 deaths, representing 78 deaths per 100,000 people, though some say the high number could be due to its reporting system, which counts deaths of non-hospitalized people. In the town of Liège, doctors and nurses held a socially distanced flash mob to draw attention to their demands.

One nurse at the protest, Manu Delhaxhe, said: "This action is to make people here in Belgium aware of the work we do with working conditions which are not always great, with patients who are not in very good shape. Personally, we are proud to be nurses."

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