UN Security Council Denounces Attacks on Hospitals in War Zones

United Nations, May 4 (RHC)-- The United Nations Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution condemning attacks on medical facilities and humanitarian personnel in Syria. The resolution was adopted by the 15-nation council on Tuesday after foreign-backed militants launched an assault in Aleppo and fired rockets on a hospital.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said militant rockets had killed 19 people in government-held territory, including an unspecified number at the al-Dabit hospital.

Addressing the Security Council meeting, UN chief Ban Ki-moon said: "Intentional and direct attacks on hospitals are war crimes. Denying people access to essential health care is a serious violation of international humanitarian law." And the UN head added: "Parties to conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief, including medical missions."

There have also been reports of airstrikes blamed on the Syrian government against hospitals in Aleppo but Damascus has denied those allegations and pointed the finger at the United States and its allies.

International President of Doctors without Borders (MSF) Joanne Liu told the UN Security Council that hospitals must not be attacked or forcibly entered by warring sides. "Medical ethics cannot be buried by war," Liu said, adding, "In Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, hospitals are routinely bombed, raided, looted or burned to the ground."

She said that precise attacks on hospitals are described by perpetrators as "mistakes, or denied outright, or are simply met with silence," calling on all countries to "stop these attacks." Joanne Liu said: "In reality, they amount to massive, indiscriminate and disproportionate civilian targeting in settings. In the worst cases, they are acts of terror."

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