

Press Release

SCA is forced to stop health services in Laghman

Upon repeated threats from Armed Opposition Groups, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) has been forced to close 20 clinics and its Health Management Office in Laghman province until further notice.

“I am deeply concerned about the impact this may have on about half a million of children, women and men in Laghman as it could deny their right to life-saving health care”, says Madeleine Jufors, SCA Country Director in Afghanistan.

On June 7, 2017, Armed Opposition Groups closed 40 clinics run by SCA in Laghman province, in an attempt to force SCA to do changes to location and scope of clinics. SCA can however not do such changes, as it is guided by national health policies based on objective criteria such as number of population.

After several weeks of efforts to reopen the clinics with the mediation of local communities, 20 clinics reopened, while 20 remain closed in the districts of Alishang, Alingar and Mehtarlam. Threats have increasingly been directed towards some SCA staff, leading to the unfortunate decision of closing the Health Management Office.

“Should the threats escalate or be materialized, not only will all Health services have to be frozen but also our Education, Disability and Rural Development activities in the province”, Madeleine Jufors says. “The threats can thus have a devastating effect on the residents of Laghman who will be the ultimate victims, and this is of greatest concern to us”.

SCA urges all parties to the conflict to follow Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Convention by respecting the sanctity of clinics and medical staff and safeguarding access for all to health services.

Through the provincial office, SCA manages the Provincial Hospital in Metharlam and 54 health clinics located throughout all districts of Laghman province, serving about 460 000 people.

SCA is a neutral and impartial development organisation, working along humanitarian principles for and with the people of Afghanistan for 35 years. 70 000 Afghan children go to schools run by SCA and over two million Afghan patients receive medical care each year in SCA run clinics and hospitals.

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