



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

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**Dr Margaret Beavis MBBS, FRACGP, MPH**  
National President  
Medical Association for Prevention of War  
PO Box 1379  
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Dear Dr Beavis

Thank you for your letter of 4 December 2016 to the Minister for Defence, Senator The Hon Marise Payne, regarding Australia's response to attacks on health facilities and health workers in conflict zones. As this matter falls under my area of responsibility, the Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

The United Nations Secretary General has not yet advised which of the recommendations the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will adopt with respect to Resolution 2286. I share your concerns regarding recent tragic attacks on medical facilities and personnel and can advise that as co-sponsor of UNSC Resolution 2286, Australia fully supports all its recommendations.

Australia remains committed to the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has a specific process in place to avoid the inadvertent targeting of medical personnel and facilities. The ADF regularly reviews its operational policy, doctrine and processes to ensure each reflect Australia's IHL obligations. The ADF also delivers training to foreign forces in the application of IHL. For example, our Task Group Taji in Iraq is training the Iraqi security forces in IHL and the Laws of Armed Conflict.

Australia continues to emphasise that all States must give effect to Resolution 2286 and will continue to speak at the UN and other international forums in support of the protection of those providing impartial medical and humanitarian assistance. In that regard, Australia remains a key diplomatic partner of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the Health Care in Danger Project that seeks to provide better protection for health care workers in times of armed conflict and other emergency situations.

Australia remains a strong advocate for accountability for serious violations of IHL and will continue to encourage all States to give effect to Resolution 2286.

Yours sincerely

**JJ Frewen, AM**  
Major General  
Head Military Strategic Commitments

13 December 2016