27 April 2015, Cairo, Egypt -- As the humanitarian and health situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate, WHO calls for increased access for a scaled-up health response and an end to ongoing attacks on health care workers and health facilities.

“The demand for support inside the country is huge,” said WHO Representative for Yemen Dr Ahmed Shadoul. “But health care workers and health facilities are under regular and constant threat, and this insecurity is preventing an effective health response.”

According to WHO focal points in Yemen, health staff and ambulances carrying patients are constantly at risk of attack. In Sa’ada governorate, a number of health staff have left their duty stations due to fear of attacks on health facilities.

On 19 April, Al-Safa’a private hospital in Hajja governorate was hit, and health facilities have also been destroyed in Aden governorate. The WHO warehouse in Aden is being targeted by snipers who are preventing staff from entering the building and the WHO office was attacked several times. The Ministry of Health’s emergency operations room in Aden remains closed as a result of an earlier attack.

“Health is neutral and should not be violated or invaded,” says Dr Shadoul. “Health care workers and health facilities must continue to function, and medical supplies must be delivered to where they are needed most. We need to be able to respond to the urgent health needs of affected men women and children without risk.”

WHO urges all parties involved in the conflict in Yemen to respect and protect the integrity of health systems and to ensure that health personnel, patients and facilities are protected and that patients are guaranteed their basic right to health without further endangerment to their lives.