19 July 2016 – WHO condemns the attacks on hospitals in Aleppo and Idleb governorates in the Syrian Arab Republic, and offers its condolences to the families and colleagues of the health staff and patients killed in these attacks.

On 16 July, Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz hospital, located in Al-Maadi neighbourhood in the eastern part of Aleppo City, was hit and a number of medical staff reportedly injured. The hospital had also been reportedly hit Â a few days earlier on 14 July, sustaining significant damage to infrastructure. In total, Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz hospital has been hit 3 times in a 45-day period in June and July 2016. The hospital was providing an average of 5500 outpatient consultations, 125 obstetric deliveries, 74 caesarean sections and 143 major surgeries per month.

On 14 July, Kafr Hamra Field Hospital in northern rural Aleppo was significantly damaged due to violence. One person was killed and several others wounded in the attack. Health care services are now suspended and the hospital is non-functional. Additionally, a nearby ambulance belonging to a local ambulatory system was destroyed during the attack and the driver injured.

On 11 July, a hospital supported by a local nongovernmental organization in Idleb was reportedly hit, resulting in the deaths of 3 civilians. The hospital, which was providing an average of 2065 outpatient consultations and 86 major surgeries, is now out of service.

These latest events represent a serious setback for the affected community and an additional challenge to humanitarian work in Syria. It is unacceptable that such attacks on health care, which violate international humanitarian law, are increasing in both frequency and scale. There have been reports of up to 40 confirmed attacks on health care facilities across Syria in 2016 and it is estimated that nearly 60% of public hospitals in the country have closed or are only partially functional.

WHO once again urges all parties in the conflict to respect the safety and neutrality of health workers and health facilities. Tragedies like this can and should be avoided, by warring parties consistently observing international humanitarian law and taking all necessary precautionary measures.