



## SOUTH SUDAN DOCTORS' UNION

*Excellence in Health Service Delivery*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, 31 May, 2020

### **STATEMENT ON HARASSMENT OF FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS RESPONDING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN JUBA**

The South Sudan Doctors' Union (SSDU) has learnt that on the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 three frontline medical workers (including protection officer) on duty were harassed and briefly detained at a gunpoint by members of the organized forces at a hotel in Atlabara, Juba. Despite being released following intervention from higher authorities, such acts of violence against healthcare personnel is a gross violation of human rights, infliction of fear and obstruction of duty of care.

The SSDU strongly condemns the ill-treatment of the contact-tracing frontline workers who have risked their lives to fight the deadly Coronavirus outbreak in our nation, South Sudan. Such acts can slow progress on the response and frustrate efforts to contain spread of the virus within the community. The SSDU calls on authorities to investigate this incident, take disciplinary actions against the perpetrators and ensure that similar violations do not happen again in the future.

The SSDU further urges the National Taskforce on COVID-19 Response, especially leadership of the organized forces to guarantee security and prevent any violence against healthcare personnel across the country. We equally request the Ministry of Health and health facilities administrators to take necessary measures that guarantee better protection for medical staff and patients.

The SSDU advises its members and other healthcare workers to stay alert to risks and attempt where possible to reduce chances of conflict when communicating with patients or guardians.

We appeal to our Society to respect and treat healthcare personnel with all decency they deserve and ensure that they are not harmed or discriminated against as they exercise their duty of care. We ask for cooperation and support of healthcare workers when exercising their duties and report to the SSDU any threat, abuse, violation or any other form of violence against healthcare personnel.

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