

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
WHO Headquarters
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

31 March 2021

Dear Director-General,

I am writing to highlight the catastrophic impact of the ongoing civil unrest in Myanmar, and the brutal military response, upon the country's ~ 2000 dialysis patients¹, and to call for the WHO's support in convincing the Myanmar military to minimize disruption to this vital healthcare treatment.

You will be aware that end stage kidney (ESKD) patients can require up to 3 dialysis sessions of around 4 hours each per week in order to replicate kidney function and remain healthy. Without such treatment, patients will enter a terminal state and die within several weeks, depending on the amount of kidney function they have left and their overall medical condition.

We have learned through intermittent (due to internet restrictions imposed by the military) communications with our members in Myanmar that the current civil disorder is causing massive disruption to the provision of dialysis.

Many dialysis units, particularly those in government facilities, are not functioning – at all or at anywhere close to full capacity - as neither staff nor patients can travel safely. Indeed, in the rare instances where travel is possible, dialysis services are severely reduced due to a lack of the necessary imported consumables.

Whilst charitable providers are doing what they can to reduce this burden, this is insufficient to service both those existing dialysis patients and those whose ESKD now requires them to be initiated onto dialysis.

Our colleagues can only estimate the number of additional hospitalisations or deaths that have occurred due to these disruptions but, tragically, they believe that they will be consequential and could rise to the hundreds if remedial action is not taken swiftly.

Accordingly, I would request that the WHO raise this critical issue with its Member States so that they, and your own organisation, can engage with the Myanmar regime to secure the urgent full reestablishment of dialysis services.

I very much look forward to hearing from you and can advise that we remain available to assist you with this critical issue in whatever manner we can.

Yours sincerely,



Vivekanand Jha
ISN President

¹ <https://www.karger.com/Article/Pdf/479576>

ISN

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