

THE WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

**WMA STATEMENT
ON
MEDICAL CARE FOR REFUGEES, INCLUDING ASYLUM
SEEKERS, REFUSED ASYLUM SEEKERS AND
UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS, AND INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS**

Adopted by the 50th World Medical Assembly, Ottawa, Canada, October 1998,
reaffirmed by the WMA General Assembly, Seoul, Korea, October 2008
and amended by the WMA General Assembly, Vancouver, Canada, October 2010

PREAMBLE

International and civil conflicts as well as poverty and hunger result in large numbers of refugees, including asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in all regions. These persons are among the most vulnerable in society.

International codes of human rights and medical ethics, including the WMA Declaration of Lisbon on the Rights of the Patient, declare that all people are entitled without discrimination to appropriate medical care. However, national legislation varies and is often not in accordance with this important principle.

STATEMENT

Physicians have a duty to provide appropriate medical care regardless of the civil or political status of the patient, and governments should not deny patients the right to receive such care, nor should they interfere with physicians' obligation to administer treatment on the basis of clinical need alone.

Physicians cannot be compelled to participate in any punitive or judicial action involving refugees, including asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, or IDPs or to administer any non-medically justified diagnostic measure or treatment, such as sedatives to facilitate easy deportation from the country or relocation.

Physicians must be allowed adequate time and sufficient resources to assess the physical and psychological condition of refugees who are seeking asylum.

National Medical Associations and physicians should actively support and promote the right of all people to receive medical care on the basis of clinical need alone and speak out against legislation and practices that are in opposition to this fundamental right.

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