

THE LANCET– AUB COMMISSION ON SYRIA

e-Newsletter

Issue #6, February 2018—May 2018

THE LANCET



Commission on Syria

— Health in Conflict —

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SPOTLIGHT

Protection of civilians & health care in armed conflict, again

Civilians and civilian structures are protected under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Healthcare personnel and facilities have special protection under IHL. However, civilians and healthcare continue to be targeted in war/armed conflict, particularly in Syria. Since its inception, *The Lancet*-AUB Commission on Syria has prioritized the protection of healthcare, both in research and advocacy. Building on the seminal paper of March 2017 on the '[Weaponisation of Healthcare in Syria](#),' the Commission, in partnership with the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, organized the [UN General Assembly side event on protecting health care in armed conflict in September 2017](#). The dignitaries and organizers/panelists of the side event, led by Canada's Minister of Health, published a follow-up [Correspondence](#) in *The Lancet* in April 2018 highlighting key steps to ensure

protection of healthcare.

Failure of protection of civilians and healthcare came to the light again during the February 2018 campaign by the Government of Syria and allied forces to re-take Eastern Ghouta (near Damascus). This led several Commissioners to publish a [Comment](#) in *The Lancet* calling for measures to ensure protection of civilians and healthcare.

COMMISSION UPDATES

Meeting with *The Lancet* Editors, March 2018

20-21 March: Commission Co-Chairs welcomed *The Lancet* editors, Richard Horton and Pam Das, to AUB in a 2-day meeting which included several Commissioners and members of the research team. Participants reviewed progress on revision of Commission report and planned for the publication of the report in Fall 2018.



The Commission at APHA 2018

November, 2018: The Commission will be organising a panel through the Peace Caucus of the American Public Health Association (APHA) during APHA's Annual Meeting 2018, scheduled for 10-14 November 2018 in San Diego (USA). The Commission will present some of its research and findings during the panel.



COMMISSION IN DIALOGUE

Brussels II Conference: Supporting the Future of Syria & The Region

Brussels, Belgium: The [Second Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region](#), co-organized by the EU and the UN, took place on 24-25 April. Commission Co-Chair Jabbour participated in side events on 23 April and in the 'Dialogue with NGOs' on 24 April. Conference documents can be accessed on conference website.



Advancing Health Research in

Humanitarian Crises

Maryland, USA: Between 9-11 Apr Commission Co-Chair **Iman Nuwayhid** co-chaired an NIH workshop on '[Advancing Health Research in Humanitarian Crises](#)' organized by the NIH Fogarty International Center - Center for Global Health Studies to "share learning and strategies on how to conduct global health research in the context of humanitarian crises in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)." Commissioners Fouad M. Fouad and Paul Spiegel participated in the workshop.

The screenshot shows the NIH Fogarty International Center website. The main heading is "Conducting Health Research in Humanitarian Crises". Below the heading, there is a paragraph of introductory text followed by a list of bullet points:

- encourage more high-priority health research in humanitarian crises
- increase collaboration between researchers and humanitarian organizations
- identify strategies to ensure optimal uptake of evidence into policy and practice in humanitarian crisis environments

 Further down, there is a "Context" section with a paragraph of text. Below that is a "Planning Committee" section with a list of names and affiliations:

- Iman Nuwayhid, American University of Beirut, Co-Chair
- Brandon Kohn, George Washington University, Co-Chair
- Rama Akil, University of Iowa
- Grace Akello, Gulu University, Uganda
- Andrea Beckel-Mitchner, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)/NIH
- Ananda Gangarath, The Good Practice Group, Sri Lanka
- Rita Giacaman, Birzeit University, Birzeit, West Bank
- Arnie Hammar, Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (RHHC)
- Rebecca Henry, National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)/NIH
- Naoko Kasaki, International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Vienna Kulkarni, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)/NIH
- Adam Levine, Brown University
- Azhry Miles, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)/NIH
- Bayard Roberts, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Barbara Sina, Fogarty International Center (FIC)/NIH

 On the right side of the page, there are sections for "Related Funding" and "Related News". The "Related Funding" section lists:

- Ethical Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises Programme (EHC)
- Due date: July 17, 2018
- Expired: Time-Sensitive Research on Health Risk and Resilience after Humanitarian Crisis
- Humanitarian Crisis and Health in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (P21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) (P21-14-18-000)

 The "Related News" section lists:

- How can we conduct research in humanitarian crises?
- Opinion by Fogarty Director Dr. Roger Glass: Sept/Oct 2017 Global Health Matters

 There are two small photographs on the right side of the page. The first shows a person in a field, and the second shows a person in a flooded area. Captions below the photos read "Photo courtesy of CDC, CC BY 2.0" and "Photo courtesy of Dr. Karen Levy".

Building Peace into Refugee Responses

Beirut, Lebanon: On 17 April, Saferworld and the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), convened a closed roundtable policy discussion on '[Building Peace into Refugee Responses: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon](#).' The discussions, in which Commission co-Chair Jabbour participated, focused on the findings of new research on the issue, ahead of the release of a report which can be accessed [here](#).

The image shows the cover of a report. At the top left, it says "REPORT". To the right of that are the logos for "SAFERWORLD" and "LCPS". The main title of the report is "Building peace into refugee responses" in a large, white font. Below the title is the subtitle "Syrian refugees in Lebanon" in a smaller, white font. The background of the cover is a photograph showing a view of a refugee camp or settlement from a window, with two people's silhouettes in the foreground looking out. At the bottom of the cover, it says "April 2018".

PUBLICATIONS

Comment: 'Death and suffering in Eastern Ghouta, Syria: a call for action to protect civilians and health care,' *The Lancet*

Commission Co-Chair Jabbour and several Commissioners published a Comment in *The Lancet* on the need for protection of civilians and healthcare in Eastern Ghouta (near Damascus). The authors put forward recommendations to policymakers and global actors...[\[Read More\]](#)



Photoessay: 'Rehumanising the Syrian conflict: photographs of war, health, and life in Syria', *The Lancet*

On the seventh anniversary of the Syrian conflict, a team from the Commission in collaboration with the Humans of Syria network published a photoessay in *the Lancet*. The publication depicts aspects of the conflict's impact on life and health in Syria...[\[Read More\]](#)



Correspondence: 'Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflicts: Action Towards Accountability' , *The Lancet*

April 14th, *The Lancet* published a letter reflecting on the discussions of the high-level side event at the UN General Assembly organised by the Commission in September 2017.

The publication, entitled: 'Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflicts: Action Towards Accountability', was authored



by the Honorable G. Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health of Canada (lead author); Commission Cochairs Iman Nuwayahid and Samer Jabbour; and other panelists and dignitaries...[\[Read More\]](#)

COMMISSION IN THE MEDIA

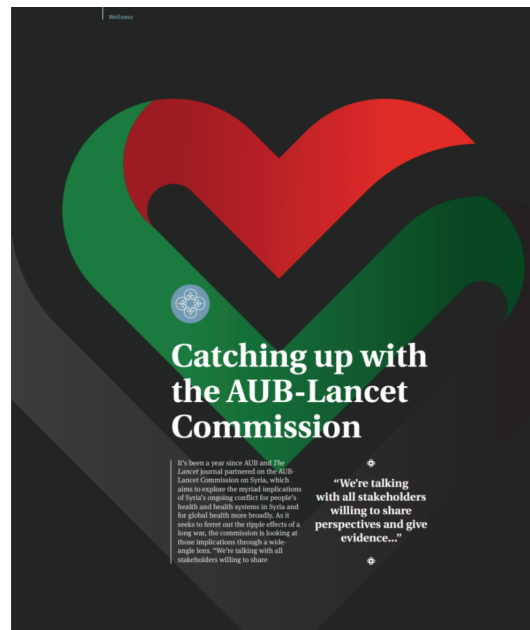
Al-Arabiya covers the photoessay on Syria

18 Mar: Al-Arabiya TV interviewed **Commissioner Nasser Yassin** about the Commission's photoessay '[Rehumanising the Syrian conflict](#): Photographs of war, health and life in Syria'. See [interview here](#) (Arabic).



Commission story in AUB's The MainGate magazine

29 Mar: The Spring 2018 issue of AUB's *The MainGate* magazine features a news story about the Commission titled '[Catching up with the AUB-Lancet Commission](#).' *The MainGate* had featured the Commission in its Spring 2017 issue with a story titled '[A Hard Look at Syria's Health Crisis](#)'. *MainGate* reaches over 50,000 people.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Expert Meeting on Health & War/Armed Conflict

12-13 June: Building on the work of the Commission and [other initiatives](#) on health and war/armed conflict, the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University convenes an international 'Expert Strategic Planning Meeting: Research & Action on Health & War/Armed Conflict' on the AUB campus in Beirut, Lebanon. The aim of the meeting is to facilitate a critical review and transformative thinking about the future of research and action on health and war/armed conflict. Experts will review status of the field in light of the increasing complexity of the health dimensions of wars/armed conflicts, discuss the need and pathways for stronger engagements of institutions and researchers from the Global South, and explore opportunities for new global collaborations in terms of scholarship, networking, and dialogue.



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Please follow us:

- Bookmark our website's [News & Media](#) section (updated regularly)
- Follow us on twitter: [@lcs_aub](#) (still nascent)

- Check out prior e-Newsletter issues [here](#)

We welcome your feedback. To get in touch:

- Write us on lcs-info@aub.edu.lb
- Visit the Commission team when you are in Beirut and close to AUB

