Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
(Peoples Health Movement – India)

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JSA statement on violence against doctors in West Bengal

Jan Swasthya Abhiyan expresses shock at the grievous assault on junior doctor, Dr Paribha Mukherjee in NRS Medical Hospital at Kolkata on 11th June 2019 and condemns, in the strongest terms, the escalation of violence, communalization of the issue, and attempts at intimidation of junior doctors by the government that have ensued in West Bengal in the past 48 hours, in the aftermath of the protests by junior doctors.

We appeal to the West Bengal government to act speedily to acknowledge the concerns of junior doctors, to take action against the perpetrators of this crime, and to take measures to provide a safe working environment for all doctors and health care workers, to enable them to carry out their duties without apprehension or fear. There must be no attempt whatsoever to promote communal disharmony based on this incident. Political parties must desist from fueling this conflict for narrow political gains.

Further, we recognise that it is often under-funded, poorly staffed and excessively burdened health facilities, with over-worked doctors and health workers, which become the scene for conflicts. Hence we urge the West Bengal government to take proactive and comprehensive steps towards adequate financial investment in public health care infrastructure, appointment of sufficient human resources, and implementation of health system reforms to ensure availability of entire range of essential health services. This should be combined with setting up of effective grievance redressal mechanisms. Such measures will help in the short and medium term, to bridge the trust deficit between frontline health care providers and patients.

Jan Swasthya Abhiyan strongly upholds the need to prevent violence in any form in health care settings. JSA stands for ensuring people’s right to health care, as well as protection of the rights of health care providers. These should be ensured through strengthened health systems, which promote healthy provider-patient relationships and preclude all forms of violence.