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American Academy of Emergency Medicine Statement on Access to Emergency Care

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The American Academy of Emergency Medicine, recognizing recent international reports of governmental interference with emergency care and at the request of our emergency physician colleagues in some of the affected countries, condemns any activities by governmental or non-governmental agencies that interfere with the normal operation of emergency services. Accordingly, the American Academy of Emergency Medicine declares:

- 1) Access to emergency medical care must be provided without regard to political affiliations and/or activities;
- 2) Except in times of disaster, emergency medical care systems must not be altered without careful planning and the involvement of medical leadership;
- 3) In times of disaster, reorganization of medical care must occur in a manner to provide the greatest good to the greatest number of people without regard to political considerations;
- 4) Interference with the efforts of medical personnel (including but not limited to EMS and paramedical personnel, physicians, nurses, and aides) to provide care for those in need is not acceptable;
- 5) Threats or the use of violence against such medical personnel, even by agents of government, is a crime against the people of the region involved as well as those medical personnel, and must be condemned in the strongest possible manner;
- 6) It is the responsibility of government to ensure, as much as possible, the continued provision of emergency care throughout a region, even in time of unrest. Police and military agencies must make every effort to preserve the safety of those under their protection by ensuring the enforcement of the above principles.

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American Academy of Emergency Medicine

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