

《最高人民法院立法防止暴力伤医》

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Severe punishments to be dealt for violent medical disputes to curb 'abnormal trend'

As China targets a growing trend of medical disputes, some of which involve serious violence against physicians, a new initiative was launched on Thursday to emphasize that such attacks on doctors will bring severe punishment.

Five agencies, including the Supreme People's Court, the Ministry of Public Security and the National Health and Family Planning Commission, jointly issued the notice that aims to bring stronger punishment for violent crimes involving medical disputes and maintain the order of medical practice.

The latest initiative comes after a series of serious medical disputes, some of which have involved fatal attacks against physicians.

"The Supreme People's Court will uphold the law while handling cases involving medical disputes and severely punish those who seriously harm or even kill doctors over groundless assumptions," pledged Sun Jungong, the spokesman of the Supreme Court at a regular news briefing.

He also highlighted four major cases related to medical disputes that the court had handled, including two that involved doctors killed by angry patients.

The two victims were proved to be totally innocent and their treatments in the disputed cases were deemed appropriate, Sun said.

"The two criminals were thereafter given capital punishment," he said.

According to the Chinese Association of Medical Doctors, China reported at least 10 cases of serious medical disputes in February alone.

Zhang Yanling, who heads the association, said the rising medical disputes were a reflection of increasing social tension amid social and economic changes.

"The latest notice would help curb this abnormal trend with the full force of the law," he said.

According to the notice, those making open insults and threats to medical workers will also be punished.

Likewise, those who carry weapons such as guns, explosives or toxic or radioactive materials with the intention of

harming medical staff will be punished.

Additionally, said Sun, "We will handle timely cases involving medical disputes according to laws and regulations and provide guidance for such lawsuits."

Regular communication and information exchanges will be further beefed up, with mediation organizations available to avert potential violence, he said.

According to Guo Yanhong, deputy director of the medical administration bureau, by the end of last year, China had set up more than 3,000 such organizations to help handle medical disputes.

More than 50,000 cases were dealt with last year, she said.

As a preemptive approach, more than 6,000 large public hospitals have also introduced liability insurance programs, she said.

