

# A **WHO** PLAN FOR



## BURN PREVENTION AND CARE



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Rajeev Ahuja (Lok Nayak Hospital, India), Hendrina Jacomina Albertyn (Red Cross Children's Hospital, South Africa), Kidist Kebede Bartolomeos (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), Welsly Bodha (Euro Skin Bank, the Netherlands), Gudula Brandmayr (Safekids Worldwide, Austria), Pascal Cassan (French Red Cross, France), Meena Nathan Cherian (WHO/EHT, Switzerland), Wilma de Benavides (Institute of Plastic Surgery and Burns, Bolivia), Mohamoud El-Oteify (Assiut Burn Centre, Egypt), Wijaya Godakumbura (Safe Bottle Lamp Foundation, Sri Lanka), S. William A. Gunn (International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, Switzerland), Chapal Khasnabis (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), Etienne Krug (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), Jacques Latarjet (Centre Hospitalier St Joseph et St Luc, France), Grace Lo (IFRC, Switzerland), David Mackie (Red Cross Hospital, the Netherlands), Colin Mathers (WHO/MHI, Switzerland), Andrew McGuire (San Francisco General Hospital, USA), David Richard Meddings (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), Charles Mock (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), Nhu Lam Nguyen (National Institute of Burns, Viet Nam), Alana Officer (WHO/VIP, Switzerland), James Partridge (Changing Faces, England), Michael Peck (Arizona Burn Center, USA), Tom Potokar (Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery, Wales), Eva Rehfuss (WHO/PHE, Switzerland), Ronald Siarnicki (Phoenix Society, USA), Colin Song (Singapore General Hospital, Singapore).

The document was finalized by:

Charles Mock	Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland
Michael Peck	Director of International Outreach, Arizona Burn Center, Maricopa Medical Center, Phoenix, AZ, USA
Margie Peden	Coordinator, Unintentional Injuries Prevention, Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland
Etienne Krug	Director, Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland
Rajeev Ahuja	Head, Department of Burns & Plastic Surgery, Lok Nayak Hospital, New Delhi, India
Hendrina Albertyn	Red Cross Children's Hospital, Cape Town, South Africa
Welsly Bodha	Director, Euro Skin Bank, Beverwijk, the Netherlands
Pascal Cassan	National Medical Advisor, French Red Cross, Paris, France
Wijaya Godakumbura	President, Safe Bottle Lamp Foundation, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka
Grace Lo	Senior Health Officer, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, Switzerland
James Partridge	Chief Executive, Changing Faces, London, England
Tom Potokar	Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery, Swansea, Wales

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# BURNS

## FOREWORD

Burns constitute a major public health problem, especially in low- and middle-income countries where over 95% of all burn deaths occur. Fire-related burns alone account for over 300 000 deaths per year, with more deaths from scalds, electricity, chemical burns and other forms of burns. However, deaths are only part of the problem; for every person who dies as a result of their burns, many more are left with lifelong disabilities and disfigurements. For some this means living with the stigma and rejection that all too often comes with disability and disfigurement.

In high-income countries, much has been achieved in terms of reducing the burden of injury from burns. Implementation of proven interventions, such as smoke detectors, regulation of hot water heater temperature and flame retardant children's sleepwear, has meant that mortality rates from burns have steadily declined over the past 30–40 years. However, such strategies have yet to be widely applied in low- and middle-income countries, and consequently mortality rates remain relatively high, especially among the poorer members of society. Likewise, the benefits of advances in burn treatment and care (which have led to higher survival rates and improved functional recovery of burn victims in most high-income countries) have yet to make much of an impact in most low- and middle-income countries.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been working collaboratively with the International Society for Burn Injuries (ISBI) and other partners to develop strategies to improve the prevention of burn injuries worldwide, but especially in low- and middle-income countries. The goal is to promote the development of the spectrum of burn control measures, to include improvements in burn prevention and strengthened burn care, as well as better information and surveillance systems, and more investment in research and training. We hope that the broad-based strategic plan presented in this document will catalyse burn prevention and care efforts globally and will assist the many people and agencies worldwide who are currently working to prevent burns and improve the care of burn victims in their communities.

Dr Etienne Krug  
Director  
Department of Violence and Injury  
Prevention and Disability, WHO



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