



Stop the Violence, Starvation and Genocide in Gaza and the West Bank/Palestine

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No profession bears witness to the impact of armed conflict and violence on children more so than pediatricians, and thus, no profession has a greater responsibility to respond—without fear of reprisal.

To bear witness to the violence and starvation that has unfolded in Gaza and the West Bank is to fulfill our ethical obligation to respond to the impact of armed conflict on children — as pediatricians, child and public health professionals, and defenders of children’s rights. It is not meant, though, to ignore the war crimes committed by Hamas against the Israeli people on October 7th, 2023 that must be acknowledged and condemned.

As pediatricians and child health professionals, we understand the physical and psychological trauma children have endured in Gaza will affect their health and wellbeing across their life course. The Israeli forced starvation has already and will increasingly result in their deaths, and has reached a magnitude that violates every human rights principle, standard, and norm. It is a crime against humanity to which we as duty bearers of children’s rights must respond, and for which Israel and entities that have contributed directly and indirectly to the violence and starvation must be condemned and held accountable.

While focusing on the children of Gaza, we also acknowledge the global violation of children’s rights to optimal survival and development occurring in Sudan, Ukraine, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Yemen, Myanmar, and other regions of the world that also demand our attention and response. The enormity and breadth of these violations reflects humanity’s disrespect and devaluation of the lives of children.

Toward these ends, we, as an international community of pediatricians and child health professionals, recognize that the Israeli actions in Gaza meet the United Nations definition of “genocide,” and demand the implementation of the following actions.

1. *Condemn and immediately stop* the ongoing genocide in Gaza, including an immediate cessation of violence, forced starvation, and withholding of humanitarian aid, which has disproportionately affected children.
2. *Demand* all child health professional organizations, associations and institutions apply pressure and take action to end the violence and genocide in Gaza, stop the targeting of

medical personnel, hospitals and health care facilities, immediately respond to the medical needs of children in Gaza, and contribute to the rebuilding of the medical infrastructure and social systems necessary to fulfill the rights of children to health care and optimal survival and development.

3. *Call on the international community* to demand and immediately implement unfettered access of humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians, especially children—through all regional access points in Egypt and Jordan. Recognize and condemn Israel’s accountability for deliberately blocking such aid.
4. *Demand* an end to the international political, economic, corporate and military support of Israel that is perpetuating the cycle of violence and current genocide in Gaza. Silence on the part of all public and private sector stakeholders in the wellbeing of children is also a form of complicity—and must end.
5. *Enable* professional colleagues, organizations, associations and institutions to freely and effectively advocate for the rights of Palestinian children—without reprisals.
6. *Acknowledge and respond* to the apartheid and ethnic cleansing occurring on the West Bank/Palestine that threatens to expand to the scale of genocide happening in Gaza.

The physical violence, forced starvation, and withholding of humanitarian aid occurring in Gaza and the West Bank/Palestine demands an immediate response by pediatricians, child and public health professionals, professional organizations, associations and institutions, and all other stakeholders in the health and wellbeing of children. If not now, then when? If not us, then who?