

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 603  
(A-24)

Introduced by: Resident and Fellow Section, Medical Student Section  
Subject: End Attacks on Health and Human Rights in Israel and Palestine  
Referred to: Reference Committee F

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1 Whereas, the attack on October 7th resulted in the death of over 1,100 Israelis, including  
2 around 700 civilians, and the displacement of over 200,000 individuals<sup>1,2</sup>; and  
3

4 Whereas, the resultant escalating crisis in the Gaza Strip, home to over 2.3 million individuals  
5 with half being children, has led to the loss of civilian life surpassing that of any conflict in this  
6 region in the past 17 years and the displacement of 1.7 million civilians to already severely  
7 overcrowded refugee camps<sup>1,3,4</sup>; and  
8

9 Whereas, attacks have resulted in the death of over 33,000 civilians across Gaza, the West  
10 Bank, and Jerusalem, including over 13,000 children, with a further 75,000 wounded and at  
11 least 10,000 people missing and believed to be buried under rubble, with an estimated 17,000  
12 children unaccompanied or separated; further, the conflict has spilled over into neighboring  
13 nations resulting in deaths of over 300 people in Lebanon and over 200 people in Syria<sup>1,4-12</sup>; and  
14

15 Whereas, the Geneva Conventions protect journalists, refugees, children, pregnant women and  
16 mothers with infants, civilians, patients, physicians, and other medical personnel during times of  
17 conflict<sup>13</sup>; and  
18

19 Whereas, United Nations (UN) officials proclaim there is “no safe place in Gaza,” as shelters,  
20 refugee camps, hospitals, ambulances, homes, bakeries, places of worship, toy stores, and UN-  
21 funded schools, clinics and shelters have faced airstrikes, shootings, and have been flooded  
22 with poisonous white phosphorous gasses<sup>14-16</sup>; and  
23

24 Whereas, Attacks on over 99 health facilities, including 30 of the 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip,  
25 have resulted in the deaths of over 685 healthcare personnel, injured another 900, and  
26 damaged 54 ambulances, 99 health facilities, including 30 hospitals<sup>1,5,17</sup>; and  
27

28 Whereas, physicians and other medical personnel have been forced to perform surgeries in  
29 corridors and waiting rooms, conserve supplies due to a lack of basic medical supplies,  
30 anesthetics, or painkillers, and utilize vinegar in place of antibiotics on open wounds<sup>18-21</sup>; and  
31

32 Whereas, restrictions on the passage of fuel supplies and clean water have led to shutdowns of  
33 medical equipment across hospitals, leaving critically ill patients at especially high risk and  
34 increasing infectious disease outbreaks<sup>13,22</sup>; and  
35

36 Whereas, the destruction of homes and vital infrastructure, targeting of hospitals and refugee  
37 camps, and depletion of medical resources in the setting of a complete blockade have led to a  
38 critical humanitarian crisis and collapse of the Gazan healthcare system, leading the World  
39 Health Organization (WHO) to proclaim on April 5 that “the systematic dismantling of healthcare  
40 must end” as access to healthcare “has now become totally inadequate” in Gaza<sup>17,23</sup>; and

1 Whereas, in April 2024, famine was confirmed in parts of Gaza, and the WHO Integrated Food  
2 Security Phase Classification partnership has raised the alarm that “over a million people are  
3 expected to face catastrophic hunger” unless the situation is addressed<sup>24,25</sup>; and  
4

5 Whereas, between 12.4–16.5% of children aged 5 years or younger in Gaza are already  
6 suffering from severe malnutrition<sup>24,26</sup>; and  
7

8 Whereas, if a ceasefire is not achieved, the war in Gaza is projected to cause a further 58,260  
9 to 66,720 excess deaths by August 2024<sup>27</sup>; and  
10

11 Whereas, the UN General Assembly, in a 153-10 vote, called for an immediate ceasefire in  
12 December 2023, while the UN Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire for the month  
13 of Ramadan, leading to a lasting ceasefire in March 2024<sup>28,29</sup>; and  
14

15 Whereas, a ceasefire is defined as a long-term suspension of fighting in the entire geographic  
16 area that is agreed upon by all involved parties and would allow for the continuous flow of  
17 humanitarian aid<sup>30,31</sup>; and  
18

19 Whereas, numerous leading healthcare advocacy and humanitarian organizations, including  
20 Doctors Without Borders, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the World Health  
21 Organization, the UN Security Council, and the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, have  
22 called for an immediate ceasefire, safe transit of aid and Gaza's civilian population, and  
23 protection of civilian infrastructure<sup>2,8,28,32-38</sup>; and  
24

25 Whereas, many organizations are diligently recruiting volunteers to aid the civilian population in  
26 Gaza but they are often unable to enter due to the increasingly unsafe conditions<sup>38-43</sup>; and  
27

28 Whereas, healthcare professionals and organizations are responsible for upholding medical  
29 neutrality and condemning violence against healthcare infrastructure, hospitals, first responders,  
30 patients, children, refugees, and the blockade of essential health supplies, water, and fuel,  
31 including in times of war and siege<sup>2,14,30,44-47</sup>; and  
32

33 Whereas, our AMA President issued a statement condemning the October 7th attack on Israel,  
34 and the AMA has previously released statements vocalizing solidarity with Ukraine, passed a  
35 policy calling for continuous support of organizations providing humanitarian missions to  
36 Ukrainian refugees, and contributed \$100,000 in humanitarian aid through the AMA Foundation  
37 to Ukraine<sup>48,49</sup>; and  
38

39 Whereas, on November 9, 2023, our AMA Board of Trustees released a statement on the  
40 humanitarian crisis in Israel and Palestine but did not address the pivotal and life-saving issue of  
41 ceasefire<sup>50</sup>; therefore be it  
42

43 **RESOLVED**, that our American Medical Association supports a ceasefire in Israel and Palestine  
44 in order to protect civilian lives and healthcare personnel. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Minimal - less than \$1,000

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## RELEVANT AMA POLICY

### War Crimes as a Threat to Physicians' Humanitarian Responsibilities D-65.993

Our AMA will (1) implore all parties at all times to understand and minimize the health costs of war on civilian populations generally and the adverse effects of physician persecution in particular, (2) support the efforts of physicians around the world to practice medicine ethically in any and all circumstances, including during wartime, episodes of civil strife, or sanctions and condemn the military targeting of health care facilities and personnel and using denial of medical services as a weapon of war, by any party, wherever and whenever it occurs, and (3) advocate for the protection of physicians' rights to provide ethical care without fear of persecution. [BOT Action in response to referred for decision Res. 620, A-09 Modified: BOT Rep. 09, A-19 Modified: Res. 002, I-22]

### Medical Neutrality H-520.998

Our AMA supports medical neutrality, under the principles of the Geneva Convention, for all health care workers and the sick and wounded in all countries. [Sub. Res. 72, I-81 Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep. F, I-91 Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-01 Reaffirmed: CEJA Rep. 8, A-11 Reaffirmed in lieu of Res. 601, I-13 Reaffirmed: CEJA Rep. 05, A-23]

#### **Humanitarian and Medical Aid Support to Ukraine D-65.984**

Our AMA will advocate for: (1) continuous support of organizations providing humanitarian missions and medical care to Ukrainian refugees in Ukraine, at the Polish-Ukrainian border, in nearby countries, and/or in the US; (2) an early implementation of mental health measures, including suicide prevention efforts, and address war-related trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder when dealing with Ukrainian refugees with special attention to vulnerable populations including but not limited to young children, mothers, pregnant women, and the elderly; and (3) educational measures to enhance the understanding of war-related trauma in war survivors and promote broad protective factors (e.g., financial, employment, housing, and food stability) that can improve adjustment and outcomes for war-affected people, particularly when applied to vulnerable categories of people. [Res. 017, A-22]

#### **Protecting Physicians and Other Healthcare Workers in Society H-515.950**

Our AMA: (1) acknowledges and will act to reduce the incidence of antagonistic actions against physicians as well as other health care workers including first responders and public health officials, outside as well as within the workplace, including physical violence, intimidating actions of word or deed, and cyber-attacks, particularly those which appear motivated simply by their identification as health care workers; (2) will educate the general public on the prevalence of violence and personal harassment against physicians as well as other health care workers including first responders, and public health officials, outside as well as within the workplace; and (3) will work with all interested stakeholders to improve safety of health care workers including first responders and public health officials and prevent violence to health care professionals. [Res. 413, I-20]

#### **A Declaration of Professional Responsibility H-140.900**

Our AMA adopts the Declaration of Professional Responsibility

#### **DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY: MEDICINE'S SOCIAL CONTRACT WITH HUMANITY**

##### **Preamble**

Never in the history of human civilization has the well being of each individual been so inextricably linked to that of every other. Plagues and pandemics respect no national borders in a world of global commerce and travel. Wars and acts of terrorism enlist innocents as combatants and mark civilians as targets. Advances in medical science and genetics, while promising to do great good, may also be harnessed as agents of evil. The unprecedented scope and immediacy of these universal challenges demand concerted action and response by all. As physicians, we are bound in our response by a common heritage of caring for the sick and the suffering. Through the centuries, individual physicians have fulfilled this obligation by applying their skills and knowledge competently, selflessly and at times heroically. Today, our profession must reaffirm its historical commitment to combat natural and man-made assaults on the health and well being of humankind. Only by acting together across geographic and ideological divides can we overcome such powerful threats. Humanity is our patient.

##### **Declaration**

We, the members of the world community of physicians, solemnly commit ourselves to: (1) Respect human life and the dignity of every individual.

(2) Refrain from supporting or committing crimes against humanity and condemn any such acts.

(3) Treat the sick and injured with competence and compassion and without prejudice.

(4) Apply our knowledge and skills when needed, though doing so may put us at risk.

(5) Protect the privacy and confidentiality of those for whom we care and breach that confidence only when keeping it would seriously threaten their health and safety or that of others.

(6) Work freely with colleagues to discover, develop, and promote advances in medicine and public health that ameliorate suffering and contribute to human well-being.

(7) Educate the public and polity about present and future threats to the health of humanity.

(8) Advocate for social, economic, educational, and political changes that ameliorate suffering and contribute to human well-being.

(9) Teach and mentor those who follow us for they are the future of our caring profession.

We make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon our personal and professional honor.

[CEJA Rep. 5, I-01 Reaffirmation A-07 Reaffirmed: CEJA Rep. 04, A-17 Reaffirmed: Res. 215, A-23]

**Condemning the Use of Children as Instruments of War H-520.987**

Our AMA: (1) condemns the use of children as instruments of war; and (2) encourages evaluation, treatment, and follow-up for children who have been used as instruments of war. [Res. 411, I-01 Reaffirmed: CEJA Rep. 8, A-11 Reaffirmed: CEJA Rep. 1, A-21]

DRAFT