

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 *Preamble: The following resolution addresses ongoing events in Israel and Palestine. These*  
2 *events warrant our imminent collective attention due to the scale of danger to our international*  
3 *medical colleagues and civilians alike. There has been an extraordinary and harmful global*  
4 *increase in anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, and anti-Middle Eastern discrimination surrounding these*  
5 *events. As we bring this resolution to the House of Medicine, which we feel is urgently needed,*  
6 *we hope simultaneously to safeguard our members from harm resulting from the conversation*  
7 *we are about to have. We request that all members who speak make their comments with*  
8 *compassion to all sides and all individuals who may be impacted by these events. Throughout*  
9 *this conversation, please remember there are people in the room who have had friends and*  
10 *family killed both on the Israeli and Palestinian sides of this violence. Though the conflict is far*  
11 *from here, its impacts land very close to home for some among us. We wish to frame this*  
12 *resolution in shared recognition of the harms of all forms of hatred and discrimination and*  
13 *request that the conversations around it center the humanity of the individuals involved.*  
14

15 Whereas, the attack on October 7th resulted in the death of over 1,100 Israelis, including  
16 around 700 civilians, and the displacement of over 200,000 individuals<sup>1,2</sup>; and  
17

18 Whereas, the resultant escalating crisis in the Gaza Strip, home to over 2.3 million individuals  
19 with half being children, has led to the loss of civilian life surpassing that of any conflict in this  
20 region in the past 17 years and the displacement of 1.7 million civilians to already severely  
21 overcrowded refugee camps<sup>1,3,4</sup>; and  
22

23 Whereas, attacks have resulted in the death of over 33,000 civilians across Gaza, the West  
24 Bank, and Jerusalem, including over 13,000 children, with a further 75,000 wounded and at  
25 least 10,000 people missing and believed to be buried under rubble, with an estimated 17,000  
26 children unaccompanied or separated; further, the conflict has spilled over into neighboring  
27 nations resulting in deaths of over 300 people in Lebanon and over 200 people in Syria<sup>1,4-12</sup>; and  
28

29 Whereas, the Geneva Conventions protect journalists, refugees, children, pregnant women and  
30 mothers with infants, civilians, patients, physicians, and other medical personnel during times of  
31 conflict<sup>13</sup>; and  
32

33 Whereas, United Nations (UN) officials proclaim there is “no safe place in Gaza,” as shelters,  
34 refugee camps, hospitals, ambulances, homes, bakeries, places of worship, toy stores, and UN-  
35 funded schools, clinics and shelters have faced airstrikes, shootings, and have been flooded  
36 with poisonous white phosphorous gasses<sup>14-16</sup>; and  
37

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

1 Whereas, physicians and other medical personnel have been forced to perform surgeries in  
2 corridors and waiting rooms, conserve supplies due to a lack of basic medical supplies,  
3 anesthetics, or painkillers, and utilize vinegar in place of antibiotics on open wounds<sup>18-21</sup>; and  
4

5 Whereas, restrictions on the passage of fuel supplies and clean water have led to shutdowns of  
6 medical equipment across hospitals, leaving critically ill patients at especially high risk and  
7 increasing infectious disease outbreaks<sup>13,22</sup>; and  
8

9 Whereas, the destruction of homes and vital infrastructure, targeting of hospitals and refugee  
10 camps, and depletion of medical resources in the setting of a complete blockade have led to a  
11 critical humanitarian crisis and collapse of the Gazan healthcare system, leading the World  
12 Health Organization (WHO) to proclaim on April 5 that “the systematic dismantling of healthcare  
13 must end” as access to healthcare “has now become totally inadequate” in Gaza<sup>17,23</sup>; and  
14

15 Whereas, in April 2024, famine was confirmed in parts of Gaza, and the WHO Integrated Food  
16 Security Phase Classification partnership has raised the alarm that “over a million people are  
17 expected to face catastrophic hunger” unless the situation is addressed<sup>24,25</sup>; and  
18

19 Whereas, between 12.4–16.5% of children aged 5 years or younger in Gaza are already  
20 suffering from severe malnutrition<sup>24,26</sup>; and  
21

22 Whereas, if a ceasefire is not achieved, the war in Gaza is projected to cause a further 58,260  
23 to 66,720 excess deaths by August 2024<sup>27</sup>; and  
24

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

29 Whereas, a ceasefire is defined as a long-term suspension of fighting in the entire geographic  
30 area that is agreed upon by all involved parties and would allow for the continuous flow of  
31 humanitarian aid<sup>30,31</sup>; and  
32

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

39 Whereas, many organizations are diligently recruiting volunteers to aid the civilian population in  
40 Gaza but they are often unable to enter due to the increasingly unsafe conditions<sup>38-43</sup>; and  
41

42 Whereas, healthcare professionals and organizations are responsible for upholding medical  
43 neutrality and condemning violence against healthcare infrastructure, hospitals, first responders,  
44 patients, children, refugees, and the blockade of essential health supplies, water, and fuel,  
45 including in times of war and siege<sup>2,14,30,44-47</sup>; and  
46

47 Whereas, our AMA President issued a statement condemning the October 7th attack on Israel,  
48 and the AMA has previously released statements vocalizing solidarity with Ukraine, passed a  
49 policy calling for continuous support of organizations providing humanitarian missions to  
50 Ukrainian refugees, and contributed \$100,000 in humanitarian aid through the AMA Foundation  
51 to Ukraine<sup>48,49</sup>; and  
52

53 Whereas, on November 9, 2023, our AMA Board of Trustees released a statement on the

- 1 humanitarian crisis in Israel and Palestine but did not address the pivotal and life-saving issue of  
 2 ceasefire<sup>50</sup>; therefore be it  
 3  
 4 RESOLVED, that our American Medical Association supports a ceasefire in Israel and Palestine  
 5 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