

Dear Chairs and Members of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and of the Delegation for relations with Palestine at the European Parliament,

We address this letter to you in the occasion of your auditing on the situation in Gaza and in the hope that the support of us professionals in the field of health may forward the determination of your work for health and justice for the people of Gaza.

The signatories of this opinion are part of the group that wrote the Open letter for Gaza on Lancet, in July 2014 in the wake of the massive military assault on Gaza. Since its publication, each of the first 4 authors has been subjected to malicious attacks and libel by the NGO Monitor and other agents of the Israeli political establishment. We are here signing after consultation with a number other colleagues who, in view of the preoccupation that their work in support of the health in Gaza may be jeopardized if they sign, prefer us to express a shared opinion.

We are again appealed by the brutality of the military response to pacific demonstrations taking place in Gaza. But beside the documented shooting of peoples in their back, press and medical professionals, adolescents, children and women (84), all unarmed and often far away from the fence that closes Gaza, we can judge also the impact that this military performance and choice to use military grade ammunitions has and we understand this last as a next ad hoc crisis in a strategy of intentionally produced debacle of the health system in Gaza.

The first care of more than 4500 wounded is beyond the means when hospitals have closed and surgeries were suspended since January due to lack of supplies and gasoline to run the machinery. Israel government knows this fairly well. Antibiotics, anesthetics, painkillers, orthopedic tools, even bandages, suturing stickers and disposable of all kind were already lacking in Gaza for long time before the March of return. Israeli government knows it very well. The choice of the presently used live ammunitions has the consequence that at least 10-15 % of the wounds cause destruction of bone and soft tissues; the trauma surgeons among us estimated each patient will require months of care or years, multiple surgical interventions almost impossible to handle in Gaza at this time, or unavailable high qualified specialist expertise. Israeli government knows that very well. Refusal to transfer outside Gaza for many of the most serious emergency cases reduces the chances to save life or limb from amputation.. Israeli government is aware of the effects. And continual lack of diagnostic, medicines and supplies for all other patients continue to cause suffering and deaths meanwhile. Should Israeli government claim ignorance, is not credible, thus it is time to be made accountable, stop to kill unarmed protesting people and justify to world its the choice of ammunitions.

Today, in re-counting the costs of the prolonged military blockade of Gaza on the care and health of her people, we are even more convinced that our premonitions of disaster to follow, expressed in the letter published in Lancet, which were based on what we knew well before the attacks in 2014 about the health resources, already depleted by the prolonged military blockade of Gaza. Also many other professionals know and can evaluate the situation. Since then it has been a continuing worsening of the health and humanitarian situation.

Entry of doctors and scientists with the needed technical expertise at the request of Gaza institutions to treat patients and teach medical and health staff have been often obstructed. Essential medical stocks and equipment be they new or replacements are also blockaded. Gaza professionals find it almost impossible to travel abroad to further their training; patients die while waiting for permission to go for treatment abroad. All elective surgeries (about 600 of them) were cancelled in the last 4 months and three hospitals were closed due to medicine, equipment and fuel shortage

Along the last 10 years the health system, regardless of the endless emergency-line offered by many NGO, UN bodies, international health organizations, governments, and professionals has been downgraded in all its components to a point of breaking. We understand that what has happened to the health system in Gaza did not happen without a design, and we hate to think what is the aim that this design wants to achieve by inflicting to 2 million people lack of access to health.

One should ask what is a life for a civilized people without access to health provision in order to understand the design and its aims.

Since the responsibility as occupier and the role of the keeper of the key of Gaza gates, also in terms of regulating the access of donated goods, medicines, volunteer professional work, is of Israel, we can only understand that the choking of Gaza health and the ferocity with which now it is imposed an other unsustainable crisis is an intentional act within a strategy. We leave to the experts to name this strategy in the proper framework of international laws.

We fear to be now witnessing the last acts of this ploy. The military attacks of civilians, causing the maximum damage possible by the use of war ammunitions add a next acute crisis to the incremental historic decline, and suggest that patient "Gaza health resources" may be considered terminal or even technically dead. Yet, the patient is made of over 2 million people.

We ask that Europe and the world act immediately to interrupt this design, with urgency and far beyond the emergency response, act to redress the course before reaches the irreversible outcome to strangle the people of Gaza.

The medical establishment has kept silent on these issues. As professionals in that field, we add now our voices to what is the current consensus from many of the major NGOs that have constantly supported health needs and rights of the people in Gaza, and including all UN bodies involved there, and finally, the WHO.

If global health includes health for everybody, it must include unveiling and intervention when strategic "de-development" managed by the creation of crisis after crisis is imposed on a population. Involved professionals should be allowed to fearlessly describe, investigate this man-made situation, and finally, aim to help meet the needs of the people, and bring justice through health, rather than accepting choking of a people by mean of systematic deprivation of it.

In this place, we ask you to convey to the European Parliament the need to take in serious consideration Europe responsibilities as "second best" ally of Israel and

deliberate actions to stop the blockade and take away the full control of life and death for Gaza people from the hands of Israel, rather than paying the bill for the emergencies created ad hoc.

The following signatories are equally responsible for the content of the letter

Andrea Balduzzi, Former Researcher, University of Genova, Italy

David Halpin, Retired orthopaedic and trauma surgeon. Member - British Orthopaedic Association.

Derek Summerfield, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College, University of London

Franco Camandona, MD, Ospedali Galiera, Genova, Italy

Gianni Tognoni, Mario Negri Institute, Milano, Italy,

Ireo Bono-MD, Oncologist- Savon, Italy

Marina Rui, PhD Università di Genova, Italy

Swe Ang, MD, Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Barts Health, London

Vittorio Agnoletto, MD, University of Milan, Former MEP, Italy

## References

(1) aftermath of 2014 Protective edge operation

- UN Gaza Inquiry

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16119>

- Impact of the 2014 Conflict in the Gaza Strip - UNOSAT

[https://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/.../UNOSAT\\_GAZA\\_REPORT\\_OCT2014\\_WEB.pdf](https://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/.../UNOSAT_GAZA_REPORT_OCT2014_WEB.pdf)

[https://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/unitar/publications/UNOSAT\\_GAZA\\_REPORT\\_OCT2014\\_WEB.pdf](https://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/unitar/publications/UNOSAT_GAZA_REPORT_OCT2014_WEB.pdf)

(2) obstructed health

-Lives of Gaza's critically ill hanging in the balance

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/07/lives-of-gazas-critically-ill-hanging-in-the-balance/>

-Gaza situation. <https://www.UNRWA.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/Gaza-situation-report-217-218>, 05 March 2018

- <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/humanitarian-crisis-in-gaza-what-happened-in-the-past-two-years-1.5792166>

- <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/videos/gazaonthebrink-story-qusai-and-uday>

- <http://www.dci-->

[palestine.org/no\\_power\\_no\\_supplies\\_no\\_way\\_out?utm\\_campaign=buffer&utm\\_campaign=gazamedicalaccess22\\_3&utm\\_content=buffer32b26&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_source=dcipalestine](http://palestine.org/no_power_no_supplies_no_way_out?utm_campaign=buffer&utm_campaign=gazamedicalaccess22_3&utm_content=buffer32b26&utm_medium=social&utm_medium=email&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_source=dcipalestine)

-[http://mondoweiss.net/2018/02/premature-infants-medication/?utm\\_source=Mondoweiss+List&utm\\_campaign=a1c2fb0c4e-](http://mondoweiss.net/2018/02/premature-infants-medication/?utm_source=Mondoweiss+List&utm_campaign=a1c2fb0c4e-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b86bace129-a1c2fb0c4e-398535745&mc_cid=a1c2fb0c4e&mc_eid=ad4cd7aad0)

[RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b86bace129-a1c2fb0c4e-398535745&mc\\_cid=a1c2fb0c4e&mc\\_eid=ad4cd7aad0](http://mondoweiss.net/2018/02/premature-infants-medication/?utm_source=Mondoweiss+List&utm_campaign=a1c2fb0c4e-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b86bace129-a1c2fb0c4e-398535745&mc_cid=a1c2fb0c4e&mc_eid=ad4cd7aad0)

-<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/palestinians-die-israel-refuses-medical-permits-180213122412689.html>

-<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180213-work-at-main-gaza-hospital-stops>

for-first-time-since-1964/ February 13, 2018

-<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180218-hundreds-of-palestinians-have-been-stranded-in-egypt/>February 18, 2018

### (3)Health and blockade

-[http://www.dci-](http://www.dci-palestine.org/operation_protective_edge_a_war_waged_on_gaza_s_children)

[palestine.org/operation\\_protective\\_edge\\_a\\_war\\_waged\\_on\\_gaza\\_s\\_children](http://pchgaza.org/en/?p=10516)

<http://pchgaza.org/en/?p=10516> .

-<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180214-54-palestinians-from-gaza-died-in-2017-awaiting-israeli-travel-permits/> February 14, 2018

Disruptions at Gaza's crossings <http://gisha.org/updates/8734>

-Patient Dies After Israeli Authorities Deny Her Gaza Exit-Permit

<http://www.mezan.org/en/post/22708/Patient+Dies+After+Israeli+Authorities+Deny+Her+Gaza+Exit-Permit>

-Unwilling or Unable- Israeli restrictions on access to and from Gaza for human rights workers [https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/04/02/unwilling-or-unable/israeli-restrictions-access-and-gaza-human-rights-workers#\\_ftn60](https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/04/02/unwilling-or-unable/israeli-restrictions-access-and-gaza-human-rights-workers#_ftn60)

### (4)depleted health resources

-Statement by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the oPt, Robert Piper, on the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/statement-un-humanitarian-coordinator-opt-robert-piper-rapidly-deteriorating-humanitarian>)

-[http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO-Special-Situation-Report-on-\\_Gaza\\_Dec-Jan.pdf?ua=1](http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO-Special-Situation-Report-on-_Gaza_Dec-Jan.pdf?ua=1)

### (5) ten-year blockade

-Gaza Blockade Preventing Vital Reconstruction: International Agencies Sound the Alarm <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-blockade-preventing-vital-reconstruction-international-0>

-Behind the headlines: Gisha's analysis of the situation in Gaza

<http://gisha.org/updates/8764>

-Gaza: Looming humanitarian catastrophe highlights need to lift Israel's 10-year illegal blockade <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/gaza-looming-humanitarian-catastrophe-highlights-need-to-lift-israels-10-year-illegal-blockade/>

-[http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO-Special-SitRep-on-\\_Gaza-13th\\_April.final.pdf?ua=1](http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO-Special-SitRep-on-_Gaza-13th_April.final.pdf?ua=1)

-<http://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/>

-<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/monthly-humanitarian-bulletin-october-2017>

-Do the right thing: Let Gaza's people live

<http://gisha.org/en-blog/2018/04/15/do-the-right-thing-let-gazas-people-live/>

### (6) last emergency

-Unnecessary loss of life <http://gisha.org/updates/8742>

-Humanitarian Coordinator calls for protection of Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza alongside support for urgent humanitarian needs -

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-coordinator-calls-protection-palestinian-demonstrators-gaza-alongside-support>

-Four Palestinians killed and hundreds injured in Gaza during demonstrations along the fence <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/four-palestinians-killed-and-hundreds-injured-gaza-during-demonstrations-along-fence>

-<http://www.msf.org/en/article/palestine-msf-teams-gaza-observe-unusually-severe-and-devastating-gunshot-injuries>

-Israel/OPT: Authorities must refrain from using excessive force in response to Palestine Land Day protests <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/israelopt-authorities-must-refrain-from-using-excessive-force-in-response-to-palestine-land-day-protests/>

-Horroric injuries reported among Gaza protesters <https://www.map.org.uk/news/archive/post/828-horrific-injuries-reported-among-gaza-protesters>

-New MAP film from Gaza: health workers under attack <https://www.map.org.uk/news/archive/post/827-new-map-film-from-gaza-attacks-against-health-workers-treating-injured-protesters>

-Adalah & Al Mezan petition Israeli Supreme Court: Order Israeli army to stop using snipers, live ammunition to disperse Gaza protests <http://www.mezan.org/en/post/22754/Adalah+%26+Al+Mezan+petition+Israeli+Supreme+Court%3A+Order+Israeli+army+to+stop+using+snipers%2C+live+ammunition+to+disperse+Gaza+protests>