

To the Leadership of the Israeli Medical Association and Esteemed Colleagues,

Since October 2023, the attacks carried out by the Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza have constituted clear violations of international humanitarian law.

According to United Nations data, more than 60,000 civilians have lost their lives during this period. UNICEF reports that since the beginning of the war, approximately 18,000 children — an average of 28 children per day — have been killed.

According to the United Nations and independent organizations, healthcare institutions, hospitals, physicians, and healthcare workers have been deliberately targeted. To date, at least 1,500 physicians and healthcare personnel have been killed while providing care to patients and the wounded. Ninety-four percent of Gaza's 36 hospitals have been rendered non-functional due to heavy attacks. More than 350 healthcare workers remain imprisoned, including physicians held under inhumane conditions. All these actions constitute grave violations of the Geneva Conventions and are addressed as war crimes under international law. These attacks also represent heinous crimes against humanity and against the shared values of humankind.

Tragically, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza does not end here. Reports from the UN and independent organizations confirm that the Israeli government has, for months, deliberately obstructed the entry of food and medical aid into Gaza, imposing a severe blockade. The agency tasked with distributing aid has proven incapable of meeting needs, while civilians gathering to receive aid have themselves become targets of Israeli military attacks. Over half a million people are currently affected by this blockade, and the number is expected to rise to 640,000 within weeks. Widespread malnutrition has emerged: 71,000 children and 17,000 mothers are in urgent need of nutritional treatment. The Gaza Ministry of Health reports 420 deaths due to starvation, including 145 children. Healthcare workers themselves are severely affected by hunger, often unable to obtain even one meal a day. Most recently, on 22 August 2025, the United Nations, based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), formally declared famine in Gaza City and central regions — underlining that this situation is entirely man-made. The ground operation launched today by the Israeli military will undoubtedly further exacerbate this humanitarian disaster.

As you are aware, the medical profession obliges us to aid all people without discrimination and to safeguard their rights. As physicians, we take positions completely independent of governments' policies under all circumstances. Therefore, as the conscience of the medical profession, it is we — physicians — who must raise the strongest call to end this tragedy.

In this regard, the Turkish Medical Association has already appealed to the World Medical Association and to the relevant organs of the United Nations.

The Turkish Medical Association also addresses the Israeli Medical Association with the following urgent calls:

1. In the face of these grave violations, take a clear and unequivocal stand for humanity and for the values of our profession, and call upon your government and all relevant authorities to:

- Immediately halt all forms of attacks directed against healthcare personnel and facilities.
- Respect for the principle of medical neutrality and proceed with the immediate and unconditional release of all health personnel arrested in the course of their professional duties.
- Ensure that health professionals can perform their vital duties safely, without obstruction or interference.
- Grant necessary permissions for the unhindered entry and distribution of medical aid and ensure the safe delivery of essential equipment and medicines to healthcare services.
- End the blockade immediately, which the United Nations has recognized as having created one of the largest famines in modern history — entirely man-made — and authorize UN agencies to distribute aid.
- Comply fully with the principles set forth in the Geneva Conventions and other instruments of international humanitarian law.
- Facilitate access for independent prosecutors and ensure that all individuals responsible for criminal acts are held adequately accountable under international law.

2. Uphold the principle of medical neutrality — one of the cornerstones of medical ethics and human rights. Strongly condemn the attacks on healthcare personnel and facilities, which constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and threaten this principle.

3. Investigate all allegations of physician involvement in acts of torture.

As physicians, we stand always for humanity and for human rights. By the very nature of our profession, we are against war and in favor of peace. Safeguarding the universal values of the health profession and protecting human life under all circumstances is our shared responsibility. We invite you to fulfill this responsibility.

After a prolonged silence in the face of the ongoing assaults by the Israeli Defense Forces — assaults that for months have trampled international law, human rights, and our professional ethical values — the letter that your Ethics Bureau eventually addressed to the Israeli Chief of Staff on 26 August 2025, though a positive step, clearly did not fulfill the responsibilities of the medical profession.

Unless the urgent points outlined above are addressed and the requirements of our profession are met, the Turkish Medical Association hereby declares to our Israeli

colleagues and to the global health community that we will not maintain communication or cooperation of any kind with the Israeli Medical Association, and that we will encourage medical associations worldwide to take a similar stance.

Respectfully,

Turkish Medical Association