

Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

The Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly,

Mindful of the basic principle established in the WHO Constitution, which affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security;

Recalling all its previous resolutions on health conditions in the occupied Arab territories;

Recalling the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (Madrid, 30 October 1991) on the basis of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as on the basis of the principle of "land for peace" and the subsequent agreements between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, the latest of which is the Sharm El-Sheikh Agreement;

Reaffirming the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to establish their sovereign and independent Palestinian State;

Expressing deep concern at the deterioration of health conditions as a result of the escalation of violence since September 2000, which continues to cause high numbers of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinians;

Expressing deep concern also at the closure of and within the Palestinian areas, seriously affecting health programmes and the provision of health services to the Palestinian population, especially child and mother programmes, immunization and control of epidemics, school health, control of water safety, insect control, mental health and health education;

Emphasizing the urgent need fully to implement the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel;

Expressing grave concern about the ongoing Israeli settlement policies in the Palestinian occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and of relevant United Nations resolutions;

Stressing the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all the occupied Palestinian territory and guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including

the removal of restrictions of movement into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world having in mind the adverse consequences of the closure of the Palestinian territory on its socioeconomic development, including the health sector, particularly in the current situation;

Expressing deep concern at the serious deterioration of the economic situation in the Palestinian territories and the resulting threat to the Palestinian health system, aggravated by the withholding by Israel of funds due to the Palestinian Authority;

Recognizing the need for increased international support and health assistance to the Palestinian population in areas under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and to the Arab populations in the occupied Arab territories, including the Palestinians as well as the Arab Syrian population;

Reaffirming the right of Palestinian patients and the medical staff to be able to benefit from health facilities available in the Palestinian Health Institutions in occupied East Jerusalem;

Recognizing the need for support and health assistance to the Arab populations in the areas under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and in the occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan,

1. LOOKS FORWARD to the resumption of peace talks in order to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East;
2. DEEPLY REGRETS the escalation of violence and the resulting high number of casualties, especially the excessive use of force against Palestinians;
3. AFFIRMS the need to support the efforts of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to secure emergency services, to continue delivering health programmes, and to face the present additional burden of casualties and resulting physical and mental disabilities;
4. CALLS ON Israel not to hamper the Palestinian Ministry of Health in carrying out their full responsibility for the Palestinian People, including in occupied East Jerusalem, to lift the closures of and within the Palestinian areas, and to release the funds due to the Palestinian Authority;
5. URGES Member States, intergovernmental, nongovernmental and regional organizations to provide speedy and generous assistance to bring about health development for the Palestinian people and meet its urgent humanitarian needs;
6. THANKS the Director-General for her effort, and requests her:
 - (a) to take urgent steps in cooperation with Member States to support the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its efforts to overcome the current difficulties, and in particular so as to guarantee free circulation of those responsible for health, of patients, of health workers and of emergency services, and the normal provision of medical goods to the Palestinian medical premises, including those in Jerusalem;
 - (b) to continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to support health programmes and projects for the Palestinian people, and to encourage the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to meet needs arising from the current crisis;

(c) to take the necessary steps and make the contacts needed to obtain funding from various sources including extrabudgetary sources, to meet the urgent health needs of the Palestinian people;

(d) to continue her efforts to implement the special health assistance programme and adapt it to the health needs of the Palestinian people, taking into account the health plan of the Palestinian people;

(e) to report on implementation of this resolution to the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly, and to include an evidence-based, comparative assessment of the health situation in the occupied territory in light of the current crisis;

7. EXPRESSES gratitude to all Member States, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations and calls upon them to provide the assistance needed to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people.

Ninth plenary meeting, 22 May 2001
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