

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

The Fifty-fifth 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 the health conditions in the occupied Arab territories;

Convinced that the basis of negotiations and of achieving a just and lasting peace should be United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), other relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of others' territory by force, the need for every State in the area to be able to live in security, and the principle of "land for peace";

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, and looking forward to the early fulfilment of this right;

Expressing deep concern at the deterioration of health conditions as a result of the Israeli military acts against the Palestinian people since 28 September 2000, acts such as firing on civilians, deliberate extrajudicial killing, which caused hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries among Palestinians, including a large number of children; imposition of siege on Palestinian areas, thus preventing medicines and food from reaching towns, villages and refugee camps; obstruction of ambulances, injuring a number of ambulance crew members; and denial of access of injured people to hospitals, thus condemning them to death;

Gravely concerned at the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and at the gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular, acts of extrajudicial killing, closures, collective punishments, persistence in establishing settlements, arbitrary detentions, besieging of Palestinian towns and villages, shelling of Palestinian residential districts using warplanes, tanks and the Israeli war machine, continued incursions into towns and camps and the mass killing of men, women and children living there as happened recently in the camps of Jenin, Balata, Khan Younes, Rafah, Ramallah, Gaza, Nablus, Al-Bireh, Al-Amari, Jabaliya, Bethlehem and Dheisheh;

Gravely concerned at the continued violence which has caused large-scale death and injury among Palestinians, the toll of casualties having reached thousands killed and over 40 000 wounded since 28 September 2000;

Emphasizing the urgent need for full implementation of the Declaration of Principles and subsequent Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel;

Expressing grave concern at the ongoing Israeli settlement policies in the Palestinian occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, and other violations of international law, of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and of relevant United Nations resolutions;

Stressing the integrity of the entire occupied Palestinian territory and the importance of guaranteeing 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, bearing in mind the adverse consequences of the continued closure of the Palestinian territory on the health sector, hindering the vaccination programmes in particular for more than eight months, leading to high risk of infectious diseases and epidemics, whereas vaccination and immunization against infectious diseases constitute a basic right of every child in the world;

Noting with deep anxiety and concern the deterioration resulting from the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians, including medical teams, and its negative impact on health programmes, especially on mother-and-child-related programmes, vaccination, reproductive health, family planning, epidemic control, school health, control of drinking-water safety, insect control, mental health and health education;

Deeply concerned at the serious deterioration of the economic situation in the Palestinian territory, which has become a serious threat to the Palestinian health system, aggravated by the withholding by Israel of funds due to the Palestinian Authority, including health insurance income;

Affirming the need to increase health support and assistance for Palestinian populations in the regions under the control of the Palestinian Authority and for the Arab populations in the occupied territories, including Palestinians and the population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

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

Affirming the need to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and health assistance to the Arab populations in the occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan;

Having considered the reports on health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine,¹

1. RECOGNIZES that the Israeli occupation is a serious health problem because of the serious threat it poses to the health and lives of Palestinian citizens;
2. STRONGLY CONDEMNS the Israeli military invasion of Palestinian towns and camps, which has resulted so far in the death of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including women and children;

¹ Documents A55/33 and A55/33 Add.1.

3. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS the aggression of the Israeli army of occupation against hospitals and sick persons and the use of Palestinian citizens as human shields during Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas;
4. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS firing on ambulances and paramedical personnel by the Israeli army of occupation, preventing ambulances and cars of the International Committee of the Red Cross from reaching the wounded and the dead in order to transport them to hospitals, thus leaving the wounded bleeding to death in the streets;
5. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS the refusal by the Israeli occupation army to allow the burial of Palestinians, thus obliging their families to bury the bodies of their loved ones in available space around their homes and in hospital grounds;
6. AFFIRMS the need to support the efforts of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to continue to provide emergency services, deliver health and disease prevention programmes, receive further casualties in the future, and deal with thousands of cases suffering from physical and mental disabilities;
7. CALLS ON Israel to release all funds due to the Palestinian Authority, including health insurance dues;
8. URGES Member States and intergovernmental, nongovernmental and regional organizations to extend urgent and generous assistance to bring about health development for the Palestinian people and meet its urgent humanitarian needs;
9. THANKS the Director-General for her efforts, and requests her:
 - (1) to visit the occupied Palestinian territories as soon as possible in order to examine the facts related to their health situation;
 - (2) to reinstate a fact-finding committee on the deterioration of the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, which shall submit annual reports to the Director-General, and to the Health Assembly until the end of the Israeli occupation of said territory;
 - (3) to take urgent steps in cooperation with Member States to support the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its efforts to overcome the current difficulties, in particular so as to guarantee the free movement of those responsible for health, of patients, of health workers, and of emergency services, and the normal provision of medical goods to Palestinian medical premises, including those in Jerusalem;
 - (4) to continue to provide both the necessary technical assistance to support health programmes and projects for the Palestinian people, and emergency humanitarian assistance to meet needs arising from the current crisis;
 - (5) 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;

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

(7) to report on the implementation of this resolution to the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly.

Eighth plenary meeting, 17 May 2002
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