



European Union

Statement

WHO

77th World Health Assembly

(27 May – 1 June 2024)

**Item 14.1 - WHO's work in health emergencies (Document A77/12 and
resolution EB154.R7)**

AND

14.2 Implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022)

AND

14.3 Global Health for Peace Initiative

Geneva, 30 May 2024

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EU Statement

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova* align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States remain alarmed by the rise of more frequent, more complex and prolonged health emergencies across the world and the resulting steep global increase in humanitarian health needs – from Afghanistan to Haiti, Somalia, Ukraine and others. The increasing number and frequency of reported attacks on health care facilities and personnel is highly worrying and unacceptable.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022)

The EU reiterates its resolute condemnation of **Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine**, which constitutes a manifest violation of international law, including the UN Charter.

The health and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine resulting from the Russian aggression is significant and unwarranted. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its hostilities, including attacks on health care facilities and health workers, and to uphold international human rights and international humanitarian law.

The consequences of Russia's war of aggression are not limited to Ukraine. The aggravation of the global food security crisis is one major example. The increasing risks of radiological, biological, and chemical events and hazards may also have a severe impact in the region and beyond.

We encourage the WHO to take further action to mitigate the negative health and humanitarian impacts of this war and to continue to support Ukraine's health system and health care workers, ensure access to essential health and care services, mental health and psychosocial support services, rehabilitation services, sexual and reproductive health-care services, routine vaccination and treatments, as well as access to services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Russia has presented a draft resolution in an attempt to absolve the Russian Federation of all responsibility for its aggression towards Ukraine and the health emergency it has triggered. We call on all Member States not to support it and to stand in solidarity with Ukraine.

I will now turn to the report on **"Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem"**.

We are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and its disproportionate effect on civilians, particularly children, as well as the imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid, noting the collapse of the health system in Gaza. We are appalled by the unprecedented loss of civilian lives. Full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access into and throughout the Gaza Strip via all routes is essential to provide the civilian population with life-saving assistance and basic services at scale.

The EU reiterates its commitment to work with partners to end the crisis in Gaza without delay and implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2728, including through reaching an immediate ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages. Their safety and well-being is of grave concern. Hamas and other armed groups must immediately grant humanitarian access to all remaining hostages.

We condemn Hamas in the strongest possible terms for its brutal and indiscriminate attacks against Israel on 7 October 2023 recognising Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law.

We call on all parties to respect international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also stress the importance of respecting and implementing the orders of the International Court of Justice, which are legally binding.

The EU recalls that the European Council urged the Israeli government not to undertake a ground operation in Rafah, which would worsen the already catastrophic humanitarian situation and prevent the urgently needed provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance.

The European Union remains firmly committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the two-state solution.

Regarding the **Global Health for Peace Initiative**, we support that the WHO acts as an enabler for health and peace in partnership with key actors, to address the health needs of people in conflict affected areas. As often underlined by the Director-General, there cannot be health without peace and there cannot be peace without health. We also urge to pay particular attention to women and girls as they are the ones, who often bear the heaviest burden in crises, conflicts and wars and in their aftermath, including as they comprise the majority of health workers and those in charge of different care responsibilities. They are also targets of sexual and gender-based violence that surges in times of conflict.

Thank you.