



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-FOURTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
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Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

At the request of Israel, the Director-General has the honour to transmit to the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly the attached report by the Ministry of Health of Israel.

ANNEX

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE PALESTINIAN HEALTH AUTHORITY 2000-2001

1. The Palestinian Health Authority has been managing the health and medical systems in the West Bank areas for the past six and a half years and in the Gaza area for the past seven years. The friendly and professional relations between the officials of the Israeli Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Health Authority established a relationship of understanding and fruitful cooperation between the parties.
2. Regrettably, the intensive professional relations as well as the regular and routine work of the joint Palestinian-Israeli committees have been arbitrarily stopped by the Palestinian side as of 29 September 2000, when the current violent events and terrorist activities began.
3. Until 29 September 2000, the intensive and fruitful Israeli-Palestinian cooperation included the following activities:
 - (a) the Joint Committee on Public Health including Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology;
 - (b) the Joint Committee on Environmental Health;
 - (c) the Joint Committee on Food Control;
 - (d) the Joint Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceuticals; and
 - (e) complementary medical services provided to Palestinian patients at Israeli hospitals.
4. Throughout the years until the end of September 2000, the number of Palestinian patients who were admitted to hospital in Israel averaged about 4500 per year, and the annual average of Palestinian patients who have been referred to Israel for ambulatory and laboratory tests was about 9000.
5. Regrettably, since the end of September 2000, the number of referrals to Israel has significantly decreased, owing to an arbitrary Palestinian policy.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN ISRAEL FOR PALESTINIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL

6. In comparison with the abundance of training programmes carried out in Israel for Palestinian physicians, nurses and paramedical personnel in the past, we are witnessing the halting of the momentum by the Palestinian side. Today, hardly 10 physicians are undertaking their training programme in Israeli hospitals.

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTERPARTS FOR EMERGENCY AND LIFE-SAVING SERVICES: MAGEN DAVID ADOM OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN RED CRESCENT

7. The good cooperation between these two humanitarian associations is continuing despite a series of attacks on Israeli ambulances and Palestinian violations of humanitarian rules.

COOPERATION BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELI NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

8. Owing to the new political atmosphere and the new Palestinian policy concerning the interaction between the two parties, cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli nongovernmental organizations is almost totally paralysed.

9. Israel condemns the initiation of violent events and terrorist activities by the Palestinian side. Innocent Israeli citizens, including women, children and babies, have been injured or shot to death by Palestinians.

10. The Palestinian leaders exposed their hypocritical and inhumane behaviour by sending children to the front line of confrontation while behind them adult rioters can act violently, throwing stones and shooting. Israeli soldiers, who felt threatened, had no other option but to respond by defending themselves. We feel deep sorrow for the young victims but it must be stressed that any kind of military response by Israeli soldiers was an act of self-defence.

11. On several occasions we witnessed the abuse of Palestinian ambulances for transportation of weapons and ammunition or for moving terrorists from one destination to another. While Israeli ambulances reached certain places to provide medical treatment to wounded Palestinians, 51 such vehicles were attacked and damaged by Palestinians; some were even set on fire on several occasions. Israeli paramedics and medical assistants who arrived at certain destinations to provide first aid and emergency treatment were violently attacked by rioters.

12. Irrespective of the Palestinian attitude towards Israel, our hospitals are always open for sick and wounded Palestinians, and Israeli medical teams are constantly ready to provide all the medical assistance Palestinians need, at any time and anywhere.

13. Notwithstanding the new political environment, Palestinian patients continue to be referred to Israeli hospitals. Those injured and sick who prefer to be hospitalized in Jordan or Egypt can do so. Offers from European states and various Arab countries to provide hospital care in their countries are routinely honoured by Israel; as a result, Palestinians are free to go abroad for medical treatment with no limitation.

14. Regrettably, the Palestinian Authority rejects any Israeli offer of health assistance, including supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, but Israel enables importation into the Palestinian territories of medicines and medical equipment donated by foreign countries.

15. The Israeli Ministry of Health calls on the Palestinian Health Authority to appeal to the Palestinian political leadership for an official approval to renew the work of the joint committees in the fields of health and medicine for the sake of both peoples.

16. Israel continues to strive for the cessation of the violent clashes and the return to the negotiating table, in hope of achieving a peaceful solution. The Israeli Ministry of Health continues to believe that cooperation in the fields of health and medicine builds a significant and stable bridge to peace.

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