

The Irish Paediatric Emergency Medicine (IPEM) Association asks for a ceasefire in Gaza, unhindered access to humanitarian aid and a safe return of all Israeli and Palestinian hostages.

As of January 30, 2024, the WHO emergency status report on Gaza documented 342 health attacks. 627 people were killed including more than 300 health care workers (HCWs), with 783 injured and 61 HCWs detained. Attacks on health facilities and healthcare workers are a breach of international humanitarian law and are condemned by the IPEM Association.

These attacks have incapacitated the health care system with only 36% of hospitals partially functioning at 388% occupancy, with rampant infectious disease outbreaks (WHO 1/30/2024) and 40% of the population at risk of malnutrition. Children are disproportionately affected by this crisis, facing heightened risks of injury from the attacks, psychological trauma due to the loss of their families, homes and constant fear of death, and illness stemming from widespread communicable diseases in the unsanitary conditions to which they have been forcibly displaced (MSF 3/1/2024).

Moreover, the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid and denial of access to medical care exacerbate the suffering of Gaza's children and constitute a grave violation of their fundamental rights to health and safety.

As paediatric emergency health care providers, we stand with our colleagues and patients who should not be targets in a conflict but protected. In the wake of the ICJ provisional ruling asking Israel to take "immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip" we, the Irish Paediatric Emergency Medicine Association, ask for urgent international intervention to implement a ceasefire, ensure unhindered access to medical assistance, a safe return of all Israeli and Palestinian hostages and to protect the lives and well-being of Gaza's most vulnerable population.

The Irish Paediatric Emergency Medicine Association

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