



STATEMENT

Statement of the European Academy of Paediatrics on Protecting Children's Rights Endangered by the Ongoing Israel-Gaza War

01 August 2024 - The consequences of the ongoing war in Gaza and the hostilities in the West Bank and Israel pose an intolerable threat towards children's health. The brutal Hamas' terrorist attack on October 7, 2023 was followed by massive and lasting attacks of the Israeli army towards Gaza, and continued rocket attacks towards Israel. The severe consequences call all paediatricians to stand up for children.

According to the UN bodies, the war has killed many thousands of innocent children and left even more children with injuries and permanent disabilities. Food insecurity, shortages of safe drinking water and hunger are ongoing in Gaza, because the food supplies delivered to the population in Gaza are well below the minimum needs, and distribution inside Gaza is disrupted by war and violence.

The recent polio outbreak adds to the urgency of medical response and reinstatement of child health care. UN agencies and humanitarian organizations have considered cessation of operations due to attacks and casualties among staff members. Existing health structures have been attacked and damaged at a large scale, including the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières structures operating in Gaza. Such attacks on health care facilities are a clear violation of the Geneva convention and are unacceptable.

The European Academy of Paediatrics urges the parties in the conflict to:

1. Work towards an immediate and lasting ceasefire to protect children and ensure access to humanitarian aid,
2. Release of all hostages,



3. Ensure unhindered and accelerated humanitarian access throughout Gaza, including access to humanitarian aid and safe transport for medical personnel and the evacuation of children and their caretakers for advanced health care,
4. Ensure that international humanitarian law and the principle of medical neutrality are upheld to protect healthcare personnel, health infrastructure, and hospitalized children from further threats and attacks,
5. Restore access to healthcare and create safe working environments for healthcare personnel during the rebuilding of medical capacity and essential services,
6. Stop abusing hospitals, schools and children's day care centers as covers for military actions,
7. Facilitate independent investigations into reports of gross human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law, including attacks on healthcare personnel and infrastructure, as well as the misuse of healthcare infrastructure for military purposes,
8. Allow European and other countries to assist with support and necessary treatment for the civilian population in Gaza, also after the hostilities have ceased,
9. Protect all children living in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank from violence and adverse consequences of military actions,
10. Continue to work for peace in Israel and in the Palestinian territories, so that the process of reconciliation can begin.

ENDS