

WPHA Resolution Calling for a Ceasefire and an Examination of the Public Health Implications of the Israel-Hamas War

Whereas, a world in which we value each other, honor our connectedness, and work together to change the structures of marginalization will bring peace, safety, and conditions for all of us to thrive.

Whereas, Since October 7, 2023, over 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israeli attacks, in response to Hamas's brutal attack that killed over 1,200 people in Israel and have held over 200 people in hostage.¹

Whereas, because of their Palestinian, Arab, or Jewish identities and family histories, thousands of Wisconsinites are directly impacted by the continued trauma of October 7th, the ongoing violence against the civilian population of Palestine, and continued captivity of all hostages.

Whereas, Palestinians in Gaza are facing a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale due to the ongoing indiscriminate bombing, ground invasion, limited clean water, food, and medical supplies, and displacement, carried out by the Israeli government.

Whereas, this conflict is perpetuating a dangerous lack of access to housing, medical, and basic needs, compounding this health and humanitarian crisis that existed prior to October 7th.²

Whereas, this violence is an extension of a decades-long conflict stemming from failed policies inflicted on both Israelis and Palestinians.^{3,4,5}

Whereas, Palestinians and Israelis have long history of generational trauma that has jeopardized their sense of safety and security which all people deserve.^{6,7}

Whereas, the conflict has increased Antisemitic and Islamophobic sentiments and hate crimes across US communities and abroad.⁸

Whereas, the conflict has highlighted the mass confiscations of Palestinian land and property, demolitions and prejudicial restrictions on home construction, illegal proliferation of Israeli settlements, forced detentions, torture, unjust arrests and a lack of due process for Palestinian prisoners that predate the Hamas attacks on October 7th and have negatively impacted the health of Palestinians.⁹

¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-occupied Palestinian territory. Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | <https://www.ochaopt.org/>

² Mills D et al. Unique barriers to care and outcomes of pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia treatment in Gaza city, occupied Palestinian territory. 2017. Journal of Global Oncology. Volume 3, Number 2

³ "Israeli Attacks Wipe out Entire Families in Gaza." Amnesty International, 20 Oct. 2023, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/.

⁴ "The Crisis Shows the Failure of Israeli Policy towards Palestinians, Says Shlomo Brom." The Economist, www.economist.com/by-invitation/2023/10/10/the-crisis-shows-the-failure-of-israeli-policy-towards-palestinians-says-shlomo-brom.

⁵ "Stephen Walt: US, Israeli Strategy on Palestine Has Failed." Www.aljazeera.com, www.aljazeera.com/program/the-bottom-line/2023/10/12/stephen-walt-us-israeli-strategy-on-palestine-has-failed.

⁶ Dashorst P, Mooren TM, Kleber RJ, de Jong PJ, Huntjens RJC. Intergenerational consequences of the Holocaust on offspring mental health: a systematic review of associated factors and mechanisms. Eur J Psychotraumatol. 2019 Aug 30;10(1)

⁷ Dayyeh et al., Traumatic experiences of the Nakba: A case study of the first generation. Eur J of Social Sciences. 2018;57(7)

⁸ Singh, Kanishka, and Kanishka Singh. "US Antisemitic, Islamophobic Incidents Surge with War, Advocates Say." Reuters, 26 Oct. 2023, www.reuters.com/world/us/us-antisemitic-islamophobic-incidents-surge-with-war-advocates-say-2023-10-25/.

⁹ Amnesty International. "ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION: 50 YEARS OF DISPOSSESSION." Amnesty.org, 7 June 2017, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/06/israel-occupation-50-years-of-dispossession/.

Whereas, the International Court of Justice have ruled that some acts committed by the Israeli government appear to be capable of falling within the Genocide Convention.¹⁰

Whereas, the Wisconsin Public Health Association asserts that racism is a public health crisis affecting our society and Wisconsin public health organizations have determined that racism is an important root cause of poor health and of health disparities, and have dedicated their work toward dismantling racism and advancing systemic changes aimed at improving the health and lives of marginalized people. The work in advancing systemic changes goes beyond race, but also assesses the intersectionality of other forms of social hierarchy.

Whereas, there has been a growing number of non-binding ceasefire resolutions brought forth and voted in favor for by communities in Wisconsin and the American Public Health Association.^{11,12,13}

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION:

Calls for a permanent ceasefire to end the ongoing violence in Gaza; calls for humanitarian assistance including medicine, food and water, to be sent into the impacted region; and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Encourages public health professionals to ensure they reduce discrimination and harassment against marginalized religious and ethnic groups within their own institutions and their communities.

Encourages public health professionals to condemn acts of genocide and dehumanization of people while also reflecting on how this applies in our everyday work in Wisconsin by developing educational sessions at the WPHA annual conference to address:

- Effective ways to increase civic engagement, including methods such as deliberative dialogues as a strategy for building common ground and solidarity.
- Advancing public health narratives for health equity, social justice, and environmental justice
- Health in All Policies approaches that address discrimination and inequities which lead to large disparities in education, employment, infrastructure development, land ownership, housing policies, and other forms of social determinants of health.

Encourages Wisconsin Public Health schools, programs and organizations to integrate frameworks and principles of Peace through Health.¹⁴

FISCAL IMPACT

- A. Time and training investment of up to 10 hours by WPHA to invite and engage members in statewide training in frameworks and principles of peace through health.
- B. Invest time during an annual meeting or conference through a breakout session with invited experts (not to exceed \$1500 in honorariums and travel expenses).

¹⁰ ICJ Ruling: Key Takeaways from the Court Decision in Israel Genocide Case. 26 Jan. 2024, www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/key-takeaways-world-court-decision-israeli-genocide-case-2024-01-26/.

¹¹ Madison City Council calls for ceasefire in Gaza in unanimous vote. 6 Dec 23, <https://madison365.com/madison-city-council-calls-for-ceasefire-in-gaza-in-unanimous-vote/>

¹² Milwaukee County Board calls for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza. 21 Mar 2024 <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2024/03/21/milwaukee-county-board-calls-for-a-permanent-cease-fire-in-gaza/73020783007/>

¹³ APHA Urges Biden to Call for Immediate Ceasefire in Israel-Hamas Conflict. 17 Nov 23 <https://www.medpagetoday.com/publichealthpolicy/publichealth/107429>

¹⁴ Namer Y, Wandschneider L, Middleton J, Davidovitch N and Razum O (2021) How can Schools of Public Health Actively Promote Peace?. Public Health Rev 42:1604459. doi: 10.3389/phrs.2021.1604459