

JBIMA Editorial

Prof. Sharif Kaf Al-Ghazal, Editor in Chief

Assalamo Alaikom

We cannot ignore the elephant in the room; the pain of our brothers and sisters in Gaza who have been suffering for years on end cannot be ignored, and contrary to what some may have thought, this crisis stretches back far earlier than 7th October 2023. The people of Gaza have been under siege for the past 16 years, and the suffering of the Palestinian people goes back over 75 years. The recent onslaught is a reminder that not only as Muslims, but as human beings, we must do more.

As health care professionals, it is disappointing to see that the international community, as well as the World Health Organisation (WHO) have not taken a harder stance against the aggressor. An inoffensive statement calling for the protection of humanitarian space in Gaza aside, the WHO has done nothing whilst medical professionals have been deliberately targeted. Gaza's health care infrastructure has been decimated whilst the most vulnerable patients and premature babies are left to die. As of 20th of December, at least 20,000 have been killed over the past 2 months (at least 8,000 being children) and counting, whilst a population of over 2 million is under siege. These are conservative figures, and when we consider those who are still missing, the number of dead is surely much higher. And according to eyewitness accounts on the ground, white phosphorous has been used too which cannot in any way, be justified. Moreover, burn injuries and shrapnel wounds have been worse than they should be due to secondary infections and a lack of antibiotics. People are facing the life altering consequences of amputations when infections could have been dealt with at a much earlier stage.

It is also distressing to see the world's reaction as a whole to what is happening in Gaza. There seems to be a double standard at play when considering the world's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year. And whilst we rightly condemn Russia's aggression, this doesn't mean we can't consider what is happening around the world too. As Muslims, we stand for human dignity and the sanctity of life. The human dignity of Palestinians has been challenged in recent weeks

however; doctors in Gaza have been placed in impossible situations when triaging patients. Some patients who ordinarily in normal circumstances may have survived and have been treated have been left to die due to a severe lack of resource. Doctors have been facing ethical dilemmas over who to save; an impossible choice. And for those who have a higher chance of survival, the pain they face is excruciating. They are subject to complex operations without anaesthetic due to the lack of resource as a result of the siege.

I am proud that in this edition of JBIMA, we have a number of submissions focusing on the health care situation in Gaza, from both an advocacy and humanitarian standpoint. Some of the articles discussed the Israeli onslaught on Gaza which is happening in real time. We are watching the reactions of its people on social media, and we cannot in any way feign ignorance. At what point does the world say that enough Palestinian blood has been spilled? How many thousands more need to die before openly ask for ceasefire?

At BIMA, we have been involved in vigils and with other organisations to highlight the plight of health workers in Gaza and advocate on their behalf. We have been vociferous in asking our members to lobby at a local level too and email their MPs and ask for an immediate ceasefire.

It is up to us to continue to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people and advocate for their heroes, the healthcare workers who spend hours on end in makeshift theatres only to realise that their own loved ones are those who may need to be operated on.

We ask Allah to ease the affairs of the people of Gaza and grant them justice.

Very best wishes,
Wassalamo Alaikom

Prof. Sharif Kaf Al-Ghazal
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