

Gaza's Dire Need for Humanitarian Aid and Medical Mission Volunteers

Ponn P Mahayosnand, *MPH*.

Research Scholar, National Coalition of Independent Scholars

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8979-2806>

Correspondence: ponn@ncis.org

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Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Akhter's recent letter, *The Special Role of Medics in the Gaza Crisis* (1). As a Gaza war evacuee, I am often left speechless by such supportive words. As a public health research scholar, it is a duty to historicise these events, especially from my unique perspective. I have been specialising in Gaza Public Health Reform since 2020 (2), when my youngest joined her siblings as a medical student at the Islamic University of Gaza (which no longer stands). The destruction of the healthcare and medical education systems and the deaths of classmates, professors and healthcare professionals (which include family) make this research topic deeply personal (3), thereby causing delays in my ability to document necessary scholarly works.

As a Muslim public health professional, resources like the *Journal of the British Islamic Medical Association (JBIMA)* has enabled me to articulate my loss for words. I applaud Akhter's current call for humanitarian aid organisations to coordinate services to best serve Gaza's dire needs(1). I also praise El-Banna's call for the Muslim medical community in the UK to consider joining medical missions, written in *JBIMA's* April 2019 debut issue (4).

El-Banna opened with an ayah in the Qur'an, justifying his call to action as an Islamic duty of sorts. I commend *JBIMA's* board, editorial staff, and authors for adhering to the scope of this journal since its inception (5). Most strikingly, I am beholden to *JBIMA's* continuous and collective efforts to create a publication platform for our

community's unique needs while attracting and maintaining our unique voice. I wholeheartedly agree with the call for more medical missions to help tell Gaza's story (6). Notable examples include:

- An Australian Muslim doctor shared how Gazans are "not normal" with their faith, resilience, and ability to smile despite the devastation (7).
- An American non-Muslim nurse saying she would go back "in a heartbeat" and that the Gazan medical professionals who chose to stay are "heroes" (8).

Based on a recent mission, a British non-Muslim GP (general practitioner), with a speciality in public health, said Gaza will need 2-3 decades, not years, of recovery work (9). Therefore, medical aid missions to Gaza are crucial right now and for the unforeseeable future. Hence, I earnestly implore you to volunteer today.

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