

PEACE, SECURITY, AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

October 5, 2025

Guided by the values and expertise of healthcare and public health, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival by striving to protect our climate, end the nuclear threat, promote peace, and advance justice. In accordance with our mission, OPSR calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Middle East and an immediate end to the blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza. The ongoing conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives, sparked a global rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic attacks,ⁱ rendered the Gaza strip uninhabitable, and contributed immeasurably to the climate crisis.ⁱⁱ Since October 2023, the conflict has spread to the West Bank, Yemen, Iran, Syria, and Lebanon.

- As of July 2025 the Israeli Defense Forces have killed an estimated 60,000 Palestinians.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 60 to 70% of those killed have been women and children.^{iv}
- Indirect deaths due to disease, malnutrition, starvation, poisoning, and lack of medical care may be as high as 240,000.^{v vi}
- As of August 2025, nearly 300 persons have died of starvation; UN food security experts warned in July 2025 that “The worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in Gaza.”^{vii}

The Israeli assault on Gaza, triggered by the brutal Hamas attack of October 7, is one of the greatest international humanitarian and moral crises of this century:

- In July of 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Israeli occupation and annexation of Palestinian territories and the extraction of its natural resources violates international law, further stating that it was “plausible” that Israeli acts were genocidal.^{viii}
- Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories has stated that there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.^{ix}
- In July of 2025 Amnesty International presented evidence of the ongoing Israeli “use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians.”^x
- Also in July of 2025 Doctors Without Borders stated that, “There have been multiple and well-documented dehumanizing statements by Israeli officials calling for the annihilation of the population, or their transfer out of the Strip. The only reasonable inference is that the intention is to erase the Palestinian people from Gaza. This is why we believe that a genocide is taking place.”^{xi}
- Guy Shalev, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel stated in July 2025 that, “Based on a careful legal analysis of the facts, we state with a heavy heart this is a genocide. The systematic destruction of the health care system, the denial of access to food, the blocking of medical evacuations and using humanitarian aid to advance military objectives — all indicate a clear pattern of conduct, a pattern that reveals intent.”^{xii}

We recognize that the roots of the conflict reach back to the era following the Holocaust, when the US severely restricted the entry of Jewish refugees through the 1948 Displaced Persons Act. With few countries willing to admit Jewish refugees, a Euro-American project was launched to create a new and secure Jewish state friendly to Western interests in the Middle East. The 1948 formation of the Israeli state was followed by the forced displacement of Palestinians, the illegal occupation of Palestinian homelands, and the suppression of Palestinian human rights, including their right to statehood. As Senator Joe Biden said in 1986, “If there were not an Israel, the US would have to invent an Israel to protect American interests in the region.”^{xiii}

We strongly condemn:

- The October 7 attack and hostage taking by Hamas that has claimed 1200 lives;
- The ongoing Israeli assaults on the Gaza strip and the West Bank;
- The use of starvation and deprivation of potable water as weapons of war;
- All forms of torture and sexual violence;
- All forms of antisemitism and Islamophobia, including calls for the extermination of either Jews or Muslims.

We deplore the systematic targeting by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) of health care facilities and health care professionals:

- As of July 2025 1581 health care professionals have been killed in Gaza.^{xiv}
- Israeli Physicians for Human Rights state that the IDF had detained 250 health care professionals by September 2024 and 180 remained in custody as of February 2025, subject to “systematic abuse, physical violence, torture, and interrogation without legal representation.”^{xv} At least four physicians have died in Israeli custody.
- As of May 2025 the World Health Organization reported that 94% of hospitals in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Only 19 of 36 remain functional and one-third of those are able to provide only basic emergency care.^{xvi}

We reject any claim that:

- Armed conflict can lead to a just and lasting peace for either Israel or Palestine;
- Protests against the actions of the Israeli government are by definition antisemitic;
- Protests against the actions of Hamas or other Islamic organizations or states are by definition Islamophobic;
- One people can thrive in peace and security at the expense of another.

We demand:

- An immediate and permanent ceasefire by all combatants in Gaza and the region;
- An immediate restoration of humanitarian aid into Gaza including urgently needed potable water, food, nutritional support, medical supplies, and vaccines;
- Unhindered entry of medical and mental health personnel into Gaza;
- Repatriation of all hostages captured by Hamas on October 7, 2023;
- Repatriation of all Palestinians detained by the IDF without charge;
- Immediate US support for an international arms embargo on all parties to the conflict;
- Immediate cessation of any US sale or transfer of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel in accordance with the Leahy Law of 1997;
- Immediate reinstatement of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA);
- US acceptance of the rulings of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court;
- US recognition of the Palestinian state;
- US commitment to aid for a Palestinian-led rebuilding of Gaza and restoration of medical infrastructure.

The governing board of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility takes full responsibility for the opinions and demands represented above, which do not necessarily reflect the views of all of OPSR’s staff, supporters, or activists.

ⁱ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/israel-gaza-war-behind-record-high-us-anti-muslim-incidents-advocacy-group-says-2025-03-11/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/09/emissions-gaza-israel-hamas-war-climate-change>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/over-60000-palestinians-have-died-in-the-israel-hamas-war-gazas-health-ministry-says>

^{iv} <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn5well1pgdo>

^v <https://www.bmj.com/content/384/bmj.q509>

^{vi} [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

^{vii} <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165517>

^{viii} <https://opiniojuris.org/2024/04/05/the-icjs-findings-on-plausible-genocide-in-gaza-and-its-implications-for-the-international-criminal-court/>

^{ix} <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147976>

^x <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/>

^{xi} <https://msf.org.uk/issues/gaza-genocide>

^{xii} <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/07/28/israel-gaza-genocide-accusations/>

^{xiii} <https://www.c-span.org/clip/senate-highlight/user-clip-joe-biden-were-there-not-an-israel-the-usa-would-have-to-invent-an-israel-to-protect-her-interest-in-the-region/4962369>

^{xiv} <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-16jul25/>

^{xv} https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/6265_DetentionReport_Eng.pdf

^{xvi} <https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns>