



Statement to the 74th Session of the World Health Assembly, 24 May to 1 June 2021

on agenda item 25. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

PHM strongly condemns this month's attacks on the Palestinian people by Israeli occupying forces and expresses full and unequivocal solidarity with the Palestinian people.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the deliberate targeting by Israeli forces of hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities in Gaza. At least nineteen health facilities were severely damaged in the most recent violence, and two doctors were killed in their homes by Israeli airstrikes.

These attacks have devastated a health system already overwhelmed by systemic challenges, including chronic shortages of medicines and supplies, weak infrastructure, and inadequate health worker capacity, all of which are exacerbated by a now 14-year-old blockade.

The attacks risk exacerbating Gaza's COVID-19 epidemic. An Israeli airstrike on the al-Remal clinic forced the closure of Gaza's only COVID-19 laboratory, effectively halting the processing of tests in the territory. Amidst the shelling, 60,000 Gazans were displaced and forced into crowded shelters in which physical distancing is impossible.

As an occupying power, Israel is required by the Geneva Conventions to provide healthcare, including vaccines, to the Palestinian people. As of May 15th, Israel had successfully provided at least a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to over 60% of its residents, while only 5% of Palestinians had received at least one shot. This is deplorable, inhumane and an abdication of responsibility on the part of Israel.

We demand the urgent provision of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to the Palestinian people.