

21 March 2025

Dr Sue Wareham OAM
President, Medical Association for Prevention of War
PO Box 1379
Carlton VIC 3053

Dear Dr Wareham

Thank you for recent letter to the Australian Medical Association (AMA) regarding the ongoing conflict in Gaza and drawing our attention to the recent Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) report "Torture of Medical Workers in Israel - A Call for Urgent Action".

In January of this year, the AMA wrote to the World Medical Association (WMA) drawing their attention to the concerns of many in the Australian community who have written to us regarding the detention of health workers in Gaza. The WMA responded by stating they have received a wide range of correspondence from National Medical Associations reporting individual cases of attacks on physicians and hospitals in Gaza and flagrant violations of humanitarian law and human rights. They have reassured us that they inform the Israel Medical Association of such cases as they arise and they continue to recall the [World Medical Association Resolution on the Protection of Healthcare in Israel and Gaza](#) (adopted by the WMA General Assembly in Helsinki last October) which demands, among other things, respect by all parties for international humanitarian law and the principle of medical neutrality to protect health facilities, health personnel and patients.

At the end of October 2024, the AMA wrote to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to update him on recent developments at the WMA General Assembly regarding the importance of medical neutrality in conflict zones and the protection of healthcare workers, specifically in relation to the ongoing health and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. At the General Assembly, the AMA along with delegations from the 114 National Medical Association member countries, the officers and members of the Council of the WMA, and representatives of the Associate Members, voted unanimously in favour of the *WMA Resolution on the Protection of Healthcare in Israel and Gaza*.

This correspondence follows a letter to the Prime Minister in May 2024 drawing attention to the *WMA Council Resolution on the Protection of Healthcare in Israel and Gaza*, which was passed by the WMA's leadership group (including the AMA) at their Council session.

In our letters to the Prime Minister, we strongly urged the Australian Government to support the recommendations from the resolution which are as follows:

PREAMBLE

In response to the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza, the WMA is gravely concerned by the deepening healthcare and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the growing starvation and the lack of medical care and deeply concerned about the continued imprisonment and abuse of hostages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WMA Council and its constituent members call for:

- 1. A bilateral, negotiated and sustainable ceasefire in order to protect all civilian life, secure the release and safe passage of all hostages and to allow the transfer of humanitarian aid for all those in need.*
- 2. The immediate and safe release of all hostages.*
- 3. Pending their release, humanitarian aid and healthcare attention to be provided to the hostages.*
- 4. All parties to abide by international humanitarian law and the principle of medical neutrality to safeguard the rights and protection of healthcare facilities, healthcare personnel and patients from further threat, interference and attack.*
- 5. Unimpeded and accelerated humanitarian access throughout all of Gaza, including the entry of humanitarian aid and safe passage of medical personnel. This also includes the evacuation of urgent medical cases to reduce secondary morbidity and mortality, public health risks, and alleviate pressure on hospitals inside Gaza.*
- 6. The re-establishment of access to healthcare and the creation of a safe working environment for healthcare personnel to work in through the restoration of medical capacity and essential services.*
- 7. Verified investigations into alleged gross violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law including attacks on healthcare staff and facilities and the misuse of those facilities for military purposes.*
- 8. The upholding by physicians of the principles in the WMA Declaration of Geneva and other documents that serve as guidance for medical personnel during times of conflict.*

The recommendations are the latest in a series of policies adopted by the WMA (and [supported by the AMA](#)) to raise awareness of the importance of medical neutrality in conflict zones and the protection of healthcare workers, specifically in relation to the ongoing health and humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

I would like to reiterate our previous sentiment that while the AMA does not generally make public statements directed at individual countries or parties involved in specific international conflicts, we support the WMA's advocacy and influence at an international level and continue to promulgate their policies on medical neutrality to the Australian public and government officials, where appropriate.

As a matter of interest, the AMA will be attending next month's WMA Council session in Montevideo, Uruguay where further policy work on the protection of medical neutrality may be discussed. We will keep AMA members informed of the outcomes of that session.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle McMullen', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Dr Danielle McMullen
AMA President