

- Human Rights Council 47th Session
- Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- Joint statement¹
- 23 June 2021

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HRC must address root causes of Israel's violation of Palestinians' right to health

Special Rapporteur,

We welcome your report and particularly appreciate its intersectional approach.

Consistent with your priorities, we draw your attention to Israel's settler-colonial and apartheid system and its impact on Palestinians' right to health:

Throughout the oPt, Israel's health-apartheid is exemplified by its refusal to provide COVID-19 vaccines to the occupied Palestinian population, despite clear legal obligations to do so.

In the occupied Gaza Strip, Israel's 14-year illegal closure has driven Gaza's healthcare system to the brink of collapse. Lacking essential medicines, supplies, and equipment, Gaza's patients are forced to seek treatment outside the Strip, subject to severe movement restrictions and a complex, discriminatory permit regime imposed by the Occupying Power.

Following its latest bombardment on Gaza in May 2021, Israel further tightened its unlawful closure measures, preventing even the most seriously ill patients from accessing needed care. Amr Abdul-Qader al-Kurd, 15, and Hassan Ahmed al-Kharti, 62, passed away after Israeli authorities denied them exit-permits to access lifesaving treatments in West Bank hospitals.

Israeli attacks targeted and damaged several medical facilities, including Gaza's only COVID-19 testing lab, and injured 1,212 Palestinians, putting further pressure on the already fragile health care system—while ensuring impunity from its domestic legal system.

Based on the gravity of the current health situation in the oPt and Gaza in particular, we invite you to further investigate this issue and urge this Council and its Member States to recognize and address the root causes of this situation.

Thank you.

¹ Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Addameer - Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man and Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies