



MdM chapters operating in the occupied Palestinian territory
Joint statement on Gaza ceasefire
24 May 2021

The MdM chapters operating in the occupied Palestinian territory welcome the announcement of a ceasefire in the most recent escalation of violence in Gaza but warn of the deepening humanitarian crisis which must be immediately addressed. Even before this most recent aggression, Palestinians in Gaza were living with between [4-8 hours of electricity per day](#), with [96% of their water undrinkable](#) and with an almost total limitation on their [freedom of movement](#).

Between 7 to 20 May, there have been a substantial number of **fatalities and casualties in Gaza**, with 257 killed, including 69 children and 8,538 injured. 12 people in Israel have also lost their lives due to rocket fire from Gaza. **MdM calls on the international community to investigate the targeting of civilians, as required by international law.**

Health Care – on the brink of collapse

At least 30 health care facilities in Gaza have suffered damage, partial destruction, or near-complete destruction, including the Hala Al Shawa primary care clinic and the central COVID-19 testing laboratory at Rimal clinic in Gaza City. Water and sanitation facilities have also been affected, and the displacement of some 91,000 persons has exacerbated the on-going COVID-19 public health crisis. MdM has been working to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Gaza and is all too aware of the [imminent threat](#) it has on the recovery and welfare of the population at this time.

The [already fragile health care system](#) in Gaza is now facing fatal shortages of medicines, water and electricity, coupled with severe and ongoing barriers for access in and out of the Gaza Strip, making it even harder for humanitarian agencies, local organisations and MOH to respond to the needs of the population and provide vital assistance.

MdM would also like to express solidarity with our Gaza health worker colleagues and partners who have continued to provide care under difficult and desperate conditions. Five medical workers lost their life since the start of escalations and we send our sincere condolences to their loved ones.

Effect on Mental Health

The mental health impact resulting from the bombardment will be substantial and long lasting. Children aged 12 years old and above have now lived through their fourth war, as well as living their entire lives under an extremely restrictive blockade. MdM will work in our emergency response to support not only the medical needs of the population, including providing essential drugs and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to address the very real and serious mental health needs of Palestinians in Gaza.



Moving Forward

We must remember that a ceasefire is not an end to the blockade or the occupation and without addressing the root causes there is a high probability of a return to the violence we have seen during these 11 days.

MdM calls on the international community to remember that humanitarian and development aid cannot be a substitute for a lack of real engagement addressing the root causes of inequality in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory. Sustainable development can only thrive where international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations are not constantly being violated.

A ceasefire must only be a first step. Now more than ever, it is vital that third States work to ensure Israel lift the blockade on Gaza and end the occupation.

In line with the [Health Cluster](#) in the occupied Palestinian territory, MdM also calls for:

1. **End the violence** in the occupied Palestinian territory and work towards a situation where Palestinians can enjoy their full rights, including their right to the highest attainable standard of health.
2. Ensure the **respect and protection of civilians and health care**, in line with international law. Health care is not a target.
3. Urgently **facilitate humanitarian access** to the Gaza Strip, to allow the entry of essential medical supplies, the passage of medical teams and humanitarian personnel, and the exit of patients in need of health care outside the Gaza Strip.
4. **Ensure support for the Palestinian health system** for an effective emergency humanitarian response and to maintain and strengthen essential health services. The Health Cluster is launching an urgent appeal for \$11 million so that essential medicines, supplies and services can reach those in need in the occupied Palestinian territory.