



Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the right to health

In response to the request for submissions on health and care workers, key input #2: Examples of acts committed against health and care workers related to their work defending the right to health:

Israel's targeting of Palestinian healthcare workers: an act of genocide

30 May 2025

I. Introduction and Background

Palestinian healthcare workers in Gaza are on the front lines of the ongoing genocide: under constant airstrikes as Israel carries out mass killings, forced displacement, and deliberate starvation of the Palestinian people, Palestinian healthcare workers are relentlessly defending the right to health – indeed, they are defending the Palestinian people’s right to life itself.

Israel has killed more than 1,400 healthcare workers in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 14 May 2025.¹ From the period of October 2023 to January 2024, the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) killed healthcare workers in Gaza at a rate of five per day.²

Israel has destroyed or rendered inoperable every single one of Gaza’s 36 hospitals since 7 October 2023. Israel’s systematic destruction of the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip, carried out with an intent to destroy Palestinian in Gaza, is an act of genocide.³ By deliberately targeting hospitals, healthcare workers, and healthcare infrastructure in the Gaza Strip while subjecting the Palestinian population to constant airstrikes, killings, mass displacement, and forced starvation, Israel is inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and is committing violations of international humanitarian law.

It is important to note that Israel’s deliberate targeting and killing of Palestinian healthcare workers occurred well before 7 October 2023. For example, in June 2018, during the Great March of Return protests in Gaza – a nonviolent demonstration that occurred every Friday to call for the realization of the Palestinian people’s inalienable right of return and self-determination, an end to occupation, and a dismantling of the crippling blockade and siege on Gaza – Israeli forces shot and killed 20-year-old volunteer paramedic Razan al-Najjar as she was delivering aid

¹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #288 (14 May 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip>.

² UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot, Gaza Strip (24 December 2024), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-24december-2024-1500> Healthcare Workers Watch, The Killing, Detention, and Torture of Healthcare Workers in Gaza (7 October 2024), p.5, <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/publications/reports/the-killing-detention-and-torture-of-healthcare-workers-in-gaza/>; (“HWW has confirmed the killing of a total of 587 healthcare workers in Gaza since October 7th, 2023, and are in the process of verifying the killing of a further 420 healthcare workers”); Gaza Ministry of Health released a report on the 17 September 2024 counting 1,151 healthcare workers killed (at least 165 killed were doctors, 260 were nurses, 300 were management and support personnel, 184 health associate professionals, 76 pharmacists and 12 other health workers), see Huthifa Fayyad, *Nearly 1,000 Palestinian health workers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza named*, Middle East Eye (17 September 2024), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/nearly-1000-palestinian-health-workers-killed-israeli-forces-gaza-named>.

³ See Al-Haq, *The Systematic Destruction of Gaza’s Healthcare System: A Pattern of Genocide*, (23 January 2024).

to injured Palestinian demonstrators.⁴ Al-Najjar was wearing a first responder uniform, clearly distinguishing her as a protected healthcare worker and visible to any Israeli sniper from a distance, indicating that she was deliberately targeted.⁵ A UN Commission of Inquiry report found that Israel likely committed war crimes for the killing and injuring of civilians during the Great March of Return, including children, journalists, and paramedics, among them al-Najjar.⁶ No one has ever been held accountable for her killing.

Finally, Israel's targeting of Palestinian healthcare workers and infrastructure is not limited to the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian healthcare system is impacted as Israel is increasing the intensity of its military operations and forced mass displacement of Palestinians across the West Bank, while expanding its illegal settlements throughout. On 30 January 2024, IOF soldiers disguised themselves as doctors and women before infiltrating a hospital in Jenin, killing three Palestinians as they were laying in their hospital beds seeking medical treatment, demonstrating Israel's violations of international humanitarian law. These violations include the targeting and killing individuals who are protected as they seek medical treatment, and the crime of perfidy by feigning both civilian status and protective emblems of medical workers.⁷

Furthermore, on 28 August 2024, Israel launched the largest raid on the West Bank in more than two decades, specifically targeting the Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas areas for seven days. Hundreds of Israeli ground troops invaded the north of the West Bank, advancing in bulldozers, armoured vehicles, and supported by drones and fighter jets that carried out airstrikes. During the incursion, the Israeli military killed at least 39 people and injured 140 others.⁸ Israeli forces repeatedly attacked healthcare workers and ambulances, and surrounded the MSF-supported Khalil Suliman Hospital in Jenin while those trapped inside struggled to access water and

⁴ UN News, UN agencies express outrage over killing of Palestinian volunteer medic in Gaza, (4 June 2018), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1011261>; Al-Haq, *Al-Haq Reaffirms Rights-Based Root Causes of Great Return March at its One-Year Commemoration in the Gaza Strip*, (30 March 2019), <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/6078.html>.

⁵ Mersiha Gadzo, *Israeli forces 'deliberately killed' Palestinian paramedic Razan*, Al-Jazeera (18 July 2018), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/7/18/israeli-forces-deliberately-killed-palestinian-paramedic-razan>.

⁶ A/HRC/40/CRP.2, Report of the detailed findings of the independent international Commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, (18 March 2019), https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_74_CRP2.pdf.

⁷ Aref Tufaha, Melanie Lidman, & Wafaa Shurafa, *Israeli undercover forces disguised as women and medics kill three Palestinians in West Bank hospital*, PBS News (31 January 2024), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-undercover-forces-disguised-as-women-and-doctors-kill-three-militants-at-west-bank-hospital>; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (Protocol I), Art. 37(c)-(d) Prohibition of perfidy and Art. 85(3)(f) Repression of breaches of this protocol (qualifying abuse of protective emblems of the Geneva Conventions as a grave breach of Protocol I).

⁸ MSF, *Palestinians struggle to access medical care in the West Bank as Israeli raids intensify*, (5 Sept. 2024), <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/palestinians-struggle-access-medical-services-west-bank-israeli-military-raids-intensify>.

electricity.⁹ A paramedic trained by MSF testified that Israeli soldiers entered his home and threatened him, stating, “Israeli forces broke down my door. I informed them several times that I was a volunteer for medical organizations, but they dragged me out and kicked my back before pointing a weapon at my head.”¹⁰ The intensifying Israeli attacks on the West Bank is causing increasing difficulty for Palestinians to reach medical care.¹¹

II. Israel is deliberately killing and targeting healthcare workers in Gaza in furtherance of genocide

Israel killed more than 1,400 healthcare workers in Gaza between October 2023 and May 2025.¹² From the period of October 2023 to January 2024, the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) killed

⁹ MSF, *Palestinians struggle to access medical care in the West Bank as Israeli raids intensify*, (5 Sept. 2024), <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/palestinians-struggle-access-medical-services-west-bank-israeli-military-raids-intensify>.

¹⁰ MSF, *Palestinians struggle to access medical care in the West Bank as Israeli raids intensify*, (5 Sept. 2024), <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/palestinians-struggle-access-medical-services-west-bank-israeli-military-raids-intensify>.

¹¹ MSF, *Palestinians struggle to access medical care in the West Bank as Israeli raids intensify*, (5 Sept. 2024), <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/palestinians-struggle-access-medical-services-west-bank-israeli-military-raids-intensify>.

¹² UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #288 (14 May 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip>; MAP, *Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) calls for protection of healthcare workers as another paramedic killed in Gaza* (28 March 2025), <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/medical-aid-palestinians-map-calls-protection-healthcare-workers-another-paramedic-killed-gaza>; Healthcare workers killed by Israel between October 2023 and November 2024, listed by name: PNGO, *List of healthcare workers killed by Israel attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023*, (16 November 2024), <https://www.pngo.net/en/content/publications/399.html>; UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot, Gaza Strip (24 December 2024), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-24-december-2024-1500>; Healthcare Workers Watch, *The Killing, Detention, and Torture of Healthcare Workers in Gaza* (7 October 2024), p.5, https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/HWW-report-The-killing-detention-and-torture-of-HCWs-in-Gaza_October-7-2024_Final.pdf; (“HWW has confirmed the killing of a total of 587 healthcare workers in Gaza since October 7th, 2023, and are in the process of verifying the killing of a further 420 healthcare workers”); Gaza Ministry of Health released a report on the 17 September 2024 counting 1,151 healthcare workers killed (at least 165 killed were doctors, 260 were nurses, 300 were management and support personnel, 184 health associate professionals, 76 pharmacists and 12 other health workers), see Huthifa Fayyad, *Nearly 1,000 Palestinian health workers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza named*, Middle East Eye (17 September 2024), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/nearly-1000-palestinian-health-workers-killed-israeli-forces-gaza-named>; Healthcare Workers Watch, *The Killing, Detention and Torture of Healthcare workers in Gaza* (7 October 2024), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/publications/reports/the-killing-detention-and-torture-of-healthcare-workers-in-gaza/>.

healthcare workers in Gaza at a rate of five per day.¹³ As of April 2025, at least 412 humanitarian aid workers, including 291 UN staff, were killed by Israeli forces.¹⁴ The World Health Organization (WHO) has recorded 670 attacks on healthcare infrastructure in Gaza between October 2023 and March 2025.¹⁵

There are countless notable cases of Israeli killings of Palestinian healthcare workers. For example, Dr. Ahmed Al-Maqadmeh and his mother, Dr. Yusra Al-Maqadmeh, were found executed near Al-Shifa Hospital during the Israeli siege and invasion of the hospital in March 2024.¹⁶ On 21 November 2023, the IOF directly struck Al-Awda Hospital in the north of Gaza, killing three doctors and one patient. The doctors killed were Dr. Ziad Al-Tatari and two Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) staff, Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Nujaila and Dr. Ahmad Al-Sahar. MSF had regularly shared information about Al-Awda as a functioning hospital and the presence of medical staff there with the IOF, including sharing the GPS coordinates of the facility with Israeli authorities the day before the strike.¹⁷ One month before he was killed, Dr. Abu-Nujaila wrote on a whiteboard regularly used for planning surgeries in the hospital: “Whoever stays until the end, will tell the story – we did what we could, remember us.”¹⁸ A photo of his message on

¹³ UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot, Gaza Strip (24 December 2024), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-24december-2024-1500>; Healthcare Workers Watch, The Killing, Detention, and Torture of Healthcare Workers in Gaza (7 October 2024), p.5, https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/HWW-report-The-killing-detention-and-torture-of-HCWs-in-Gaza_October-7-2024_Final.pdf; (“HWW has confirmed the killing of a total of 587 healthcare workers in Gaza since October 7th, 2023, and are in the process of verifying the killing of a further 420 healthcare workers”); Gaza Ministry of Health released a report on the 17 September 2024 counting 1,151 healthcare workers killed (at least 165 killed were doctors, 260 were nurses, 300 were management and support personnel, 184 health associate professionals, 76 pharmacists and 12 other health workers, see Huthifa Fayyad, *Nearly 1,000 Palestinian health workers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza named*, Middle East Eye (17 September 2024), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/nearly-1000-palestinian-health-workers-killed-israeli-forces-gaza-named>; Healthcare Workers Watch, The Killing, Detention and Torture of Healthcare workers in Gaza (7 October 2024), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/publications/reports/the-killing-detention-and-torture-of-healthcare-workersin-gaza/>.

¹⁴ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #278 (8 April 2025), [https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-278-gaza-strip#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20since%207%20October,reportedly%20killed%20in%20Khan%20Younis>](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-278-gaza-strip#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20since%207%20October,reportedly%20killed%20in%20Khan%20Younis>:); MSF, *Why we won't accept the narrative of 'regrettable incidents' in Gaza*, (18 February 2025), [https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/why-we-wont-accept-the-narrative-of-regrettable-incidents-in-gaza/>](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/why-we-wont-accept-the-narrative-of-regrettable-incidents-in-gaza/>:); Al-Haq, *Field Focus: Impunity Unbound – Israel's Attack on Humanitarian and Medical Workers*, (7 April 2025), <https://www.alhaq.org/monitoring-documentation/26272.html>.

¹⁵ WHO, oPt Emergency Situation Update, Issue 57 (14 March 2025), https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_57.pdf?ua=1.

¹⁶ MAP, The destruction of Shifa Hospital is latest evidence of Israel's systematic dismantling of Gaza's health system (2 April 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/destruction-shifahospital-latest-evidence-israels-systematic-dismantling-gazas-health-system>.

¹⁷ MSF, MSF doctors killed in strike on Al-Awda hospital in northern Gaza, (21 November 2023), <https://www.msf.org/msf-doctors-killed-strike-al-awda-hospital-northern-gaza-palestine>; UN OCHA, *Flash Update #46 (21 November 2023)*, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-46>.

¹⁸ @MSF_uk, X (6 December 2023), https://x.com/MSF_uk/status/1732403598007435695?s=20.

the whiteboard, destroyed in the same strike that killed him, was published by MSF's social media account on X.

As of February 2025, the IOF has unlawfully detained at least 384 healthcare workers in Palestine, 339 of which were from the Gaza Strip.¹⁹ At least 96 healthcare workers who were released have testified that they were subjected to torture, ill treatment, deprivation of food and water, threats of rape and sexual violence, and degrading treatment while in Israeli detention.²⁰ The UN Commission of Inquiry on the OPT has determined that mistreatment of Palestinian detainees by Israeli authorities is the result of an intentional policy.²¹ One surgeon testified that prison guards were given instructions to deliberately damage his hands, stating "They wanted to make sure I could never return to work."²²

At least 185 healthcare workers are still being held in detention, and 24 healthcare workers remain missing after their hospitals were invaded by Israeli soldiers.²³ At least four healthcare workers have been killed in Israeli custody.²⁴

Dr. Iyad Al-Rantisi, head of the obstetrics department at Kamal Adwan Hospital, was detained on 11 November 2023 by Israeli forces at a military checkpoint along with

¹⁹ Healthcare Workers Watch, *Unlawful Detention of Healthcare Workers by Israeli Occupation Forces in Palestine since October 7, 2023*, (25 February 2025), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HWW-update-on-unlawful-detention-of-HCWs-in-Palestine-February-25-2025_Updated.pdf>.

²⁰ WHO, oPt Emergency Situation Update, (25 Sept. 2024), <https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_46b.pdf?ua=1>; WHO, UN News (5 January 2024), <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145317>> (Nearly 600 attacks on healthcare in Gaza and West Bank since war began); HRW, Israel: Palestinian Healthcare Workers Tortured, (26 August 2024), <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/26/israel-palestinian-healthcare-workers-tortured>>; Healthcare Workers Watch, *The Killing, Detention and Torture of Healthcare workers in Gaza*, (7 October 2024), <<https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/publications/reports/the-killing-detention-and-torture-of-healthcare-workers-in-gaza/>>; Healthcare Workers Watch, *Unlawful Detention of Healthcare Workers by Israeli Occupation Forces in Palestine since October 7, 2023*, (25 February 2025), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HWW-update-on-unlawful-detention-of-HCWs-in-Palestine-February-25-2025_Updated.pdf>.

²¹ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 102.

²² Tania King et. al., *Health-care workers should not be a target. In Gaza, their detention and death affect the entire population*, The Conversation (11 March 2025), <<https://theconversation.com/health-care-workers-should-not-be-a-target-in-gaza-their-detention-and-death-affect-the-entire-population-251146>>.

²³ Healthcare Workers Watch, *Unlawful Detention of Healthcare Workers by Israeli Occupation Forces in Palestine since October 7, 2023*, (25 February 2025), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HWW-update-on-unlawful-detention-of-HCWs-in-Palestine-February-25-2025_Updated.pdf> ("175 were released (5 of them were detained twice then released, 19 were released as part of prisoners exchange deal, at least 2 were released after being used as human shields). On average, a Palestinian detained healthcare worker spent in Israeli prisons 246 days (median = 343 days), ranging from 1 day to 480 days").

²⁴ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 9.

several other doctors who were ordered to flee south from Kamal Adwan Hospital.²⁵ Six days later, Dr. Al-Rantisi was killed as a result of torture and ill treatment in Shikma Prison, where he was reportedly interrogated by Shin Bet (the Israeli Security Agency).²⁶

Just one month later, on 18 December 2023, Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, head of the orthopedic department at Al-Shifa Hospital, was detained and taken by Israeli forces along with other doctors in Al-Awda Hospital.²⁷ Shortly after, a detainee released from Sde Teiman prison camp reported that he saw Dr. Al-Bursh in the camp with bruises on his body and complaining of chest pain.²⁸ Dr. Al-Bursh was later killed in Ofer Prison in April 2024, with signs of torture on his body.²⁹ He was reportedly raped to death.³⁰

Dr. Ziad Al-Dalou, an internal medicine physician, was taken by Israeli forces from Al-Shifa Hospital on 18 March 2024. Just three days later, on 21 March, Dr. Al-Dalou was killed in Israeli custody. His death was not reported until September 2024.³¹

²⁵ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 71; Institute for Palestine Studies, Documenting the Targeting and Destruction of the Health Sector in the Gaza Strip, Abduction of Dr. Iyad al-Rantisi, <<https://gazahealthsector.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1945>>; Institute for Palestine Studies, Documenting the Targeting and Destruction of the Health Sector in the Gaza Strip, Iyad Mohammed al-Rantisi, <<https://gazahealthsector.palestine-studies.org/index.php/en/node/1297>>.

²⁶ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 71; UN Palestine, Statement on the killing and arbitrary detention of health workers in Gaza - OHCHR, (25 June 2024), <<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-gaza-ohchr-25jun24/>>.

²⁷ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 71.

²⁸ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 71; UN OHCHR, Israel's escalating use of torture against Palestinians in custody a preventable crime against humanity: UN expert, (5 August 2024), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israelsescalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable>>; B'Tselem, "Sde Teiman is only the tip of the iceberg": Israeli detention centers turned into a network of torture camps for Palestinians (5 August 2024), <https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20240805_welcome_to_hell>; UNRWA, Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War, <https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf>; (last accessed 30 December 2024).

²⁹ UN HRC, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/79/232 (11 September 2024), para. 71; UN News, Rights expert condemns death of Palestinian doctor in Israeli custody, urges independent inquiry (16 May 2024), <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1149856>>; UN OHCHR, UN expert horrified by death of Gazan orthopedic surgeon in Israeli detention (16 May 2024), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/un-exporthorried-death-gazan-orthopedic-surgeon-israeli-detention#:~:text=standard%20of%20health,-Dr>>.

³⁰ Simon Speakman Cordall, Dying in 'Hell': The fate of Palestinian medics jailed by Israel, Al Jazeera (24 November 2024), <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/24/dying-in-hell-palestinian-medics-jailed-by-israel>>.

³¹ Visualizing Palestine, Disappeared Doctors: Israel's systematic torture of Palestinians health workers (October 2024), <<https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/disappeared-doctors/>>.

Mr. Hamdan Hassan Ennaba, a senior paramedic at Nasser Hospital, was detained by the IOF on 2 December 2023 along with four other paramedics as they evacuated patients in an organized convoy south from Al-Shifa Hospital along the Israeli-designated “safe-route.”³² His family was informed in September 2024 that he was killed in Israeli custody.³³

Israel continues to withhold all of the bodies of the healthcare workers killed in their custody.³⁴

The intentional mistreatment of healthcare workers in particular is exemplified by the IOF’s siege of Kamal Adwan Hospital on 27 December 2024, and the arrest of Dr. Hussam Abu-Safiya, the director of the hospital, along with at least 30 other medical staff and patients.³⁵ As of May 2025, Dr. Abu-Safiya is still in Israeli custody, and it is reported that he is being subjected to torture and abuse.³⁶

Israel has engaged in conduct that includes deliberately targeting, detaining, torturing, and killing healthcare workers owing to their membership in the group as Palestinians primarily, and healthcare workers secondarily, indicating that Israel is perpetrating the crime of genocide against Palestinians generally, and healthcare workers specifically.

³² Healthcare Workers Watch, *The Third Palestinian Healthcare Worker Killed in Israeli Torture and Detention Facilities*, (9 September 2024), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/press-releases/the-third-palestinian-healthcare-worker-killed-in-israeli-torture-and-detention-facilities/>.

³³ Healthcare Workers Watch, *The Third Palestinian Healthcare Worker Killed in Israeli Torture and Detention Facilities*, (9 September 2024), <https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/press-releases/the-third-palestinian-healthcare-worker-killed-in-israeli-torture-and-detention-facilities/>.

³⁴ Al-Haq, *The Systematic Destruction of Gaza’s Healthcare System: A Pattern of Genocide*, (23 January 2024), p. 43.

³⁵ Abeer Salman, Irene Nasser and Jomana Karadsheh, “Israel arrests hospital director and other staff in raid on last functioning facility in northern Gaza, health officials say”, CNN World (28 December 2024), <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/28/middleeast/kamal-adwan-israel-arrests-hospital-director-gaza-intl/index.html>; Detained Gaza hospital head Hussam Abu Safiya suffers serious eye injury after Israeli beatings, The New Arab (23 March 2025), <<https://www.newarab.com/news/dr-hussam-abu-safiya-suffers-eye-injury-after-israeli-beatings>>.

³⁶ UN OHCHR, *UN experts horrified at blatant disregard for health rights in Gaza following deadly raid on Kamal Adwan hospital*, (2 January 2025), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/un-experts-horrified-blatant-disregard-health-rights-gaza-following-g-deadly>>; Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya’s lawyer reveals abuse he faces in Israeli prison, Al-Jazeera (13 March 2025), <<https://www.aljazeera.com/video/newsfeed/2025/3/13/dr-hussam-abu-safiyas-lawyer-reveals-abuse-he-faces-in-israeli-prison>>; Detained Gaza hospital head Hussam Abu Safiya suffers serious eye injury after Israeli beatings, The New Arab (23 March 2025), <<https://www.newarab.com/news/dr-hussam-abu-safiya-suffers-eye-injury-after-israeli-beatings>>.

a. Spotlight: The killing of Hind Rajab and Israel's deliberate targeting of paramedics

On 29 January 2024, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) received a call from 15-year-old Leyan Hamada and her five-year-old cousin, Hind Rajab. They were requesting urgent rescue after their family came under Israeli attack while trying to flee to safety in their car in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood of Gaza City, which was placed under an Israeli displacement order.³⁷ Five other family members in the car with them were severely injured or killed by Israeli fire.³⁸ As Leyan was on the phone with PRCS, another round of Israeli tank fire on the car killed her.³⁹ Analysis of the crime scene shows that it is not plausible that the shooter could not have seen that the car was occupied by civilians, including children.⁴⁰ Hind, the only conscious survivor in the car, was on the phone with PRCS rescuers for three hours as she pleaded for help while the Israeli tank drew closer.⁴¹

PRCS dispatched an ambulance with two paramedics, Yousef Zeino and Ahmed Al-Madhoun, after its route had been coordinated with Israeli forces.⁴² The ambulance was hit by a tank shell 50 meters away from the family's car. Hind was still alive when the ambulance was dispatched.⁴³ Hind died as a result of Israeli forces preventing her rescue, killing the paramedics with the knowledge that they were heading to her aid.⁴⁴ The bodies of Hind and her six family members were unretrievable for 12 days after the attack.⁴⁵ The destroyed ambulance was found nearby, with the remains of the paramedics inside.⁴⁶

The killing of Hind Rajab is indicative of a wider Israeli practice of targeting healthcare workers, infrastructure, and vehicles.⁴⁷ There are several instances recorded of Israeli forces targeting

³⁷ Forensic Architecture, *The Killing of Hind Rajab*, <<https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-hind-rajab>>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Press release, *Gaza: Killing of Hind Rajab and her family – a war crime too many, warn human rights experts*, UN OHCHR (19 July 2024), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/gaza-killing-hind-rajab-and-her-family-war-crime-too-many-warn-experts>>.

⁴² A/79/232, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (11 Sept. 2024), para. 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ AJ+, Instagram (11 Feb. 2024), <https://www.instagram.com/ajplus/reel/C3NfVAiLySa/2hl=en>.

⁴⁵ A/79/232, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (11 Sept. 2024), para. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ICRC, *Customary IHL Rule 28: Medical Units and Rule 29: Medical Transports and Rule 30: Persons and Objects Displaying the Distinctive Emblem*; Geneva Convention IV, Art. 18 Wounded and Sick III. Protection of hospitals; Geneva Convention I, Art. 19 Protection of medical units and establishments, <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gci-1949/article-19?activeTab=undefined>>; Geneva Convention I, Art. 35 Protection of medical transports.

⁴⁷ HRW, *Gaza: Israeli Ambulance Strike Apparently Unlawful*, (7 Nov. 2023), <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/07/gaza-israeli-ambulance-strike-apparently-unlawful#:~:text=Without%20identifying%20those%20responsible%2C%20the%20medical%20facilities%20and%2028%20ambulances>>, (Israeli airstrike on ambulance outside Al-Shifa Hospital 3 November 2023: video shows a woman on a stretcher and several dead and injured surrounding the ambulance, including five children, immediately following the strike); WHO, *Attacks on health care in Gaza Strip unacceptable, says WHO*, (4 Nov. 2023), <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza-strip-unacceptable-says-who.html>.

ambulances, paramedics, and humanitarian aid vehicles.⁴⁸ A blockade on resources, including fuel shortages, and obstruction of access threaten the ability of ambulances to reach the critically injured and render aid.⁴⁹ From 7 October 2023 to 25 September 2024, WHO documented 115 ambulances affected by Israeli attacks on healthcare infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.⁵⁰

b. Spotlight: Israel's deliberate execution of 15 paramedics

On 23 March 2025, a PRCS ambulance was dispatched on an emergency call to reach victims of Israeli shelling in Rafah.⁵¹ Contact was soon lost with the team in the ambulance. Another two ambulances with a team of emergency first responders set out to find the lost ambulance, with their siren lights turned on. The two ambulances came upon the lost ambulance with bodies lying on the roadside. Emergency first responders exited their vehicles wearing their reflective uniforms. At that point, they came under direct Israeli gunfire for more than five minutes. Minutes later, Israeli soldiers also fired on a UN car that came on the scene. The PRCS lost contact with the team.⁵²

A week later, Palestinian and UN officials were able to reach the scene for the first time, where they found 15 emergency first responders buried in a shallow mass grave, along with the ambulances. The bodies of the emergency first responders and their vehicles were mangled, driven over by Israeli tanks. Several team members were found with their hands and feet bound and executed at close range with bullet wounds to the head and torso. The 15 team members included eight PRCS paramedics, six civil defence workers, and one UN worker.⁵³

A video found on the phone of paramedic Rifaat Radwan shows the moment that the two ambulances approached the scene and Israeli gunfire erupted. He can be heard asking his mother for forgiveness, "Forgive me, mom. I just wanted to help people. I wanted to save lives," before

⁴⁸ UNOCHA, Flash Update #65 (10 Dec. 2023), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-65>; UNOCHA, Flash Update #193 (19 July 2024), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-193-gaza-strip>; UNOCHA, Flash Update #231 (22 Oct. 2024), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-231-gaza-strip>.

⁴⁹ UNOCHA, Flash Update #206 (19 Aug. 2024), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-206-gaza-strip>.

⁵⁰ WHO, oPt Emergency Situation Update, 25 Sept. 2024, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_46b.pdf?ua=1; WHO, UN News (5 Jan. 2024), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145317> (Nearly 600 attacks on healthcare in Gaza and West Bank since war began).

⁵¹ Pia Blondel, *Gaza: Paramedic still missing after aid worker killings, Palestinian Red Crescent Society calls for answers*, UN News (4 April 2025), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1161911>.

⁵² Pia Blondel, *Gaza: Paramedic still missing after aid worker killings, Palestinian Red Crescent Society calls for answers*, UN News (4 April 2025), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1161911>; Al-Jazeera, *Israeli report on killing of Palestinian medics in Gaza: What to know*, (21 April 2025), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/21/israeli-report-on-killing-of-palestinian-medics-in-gaza-what-to-know>.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

reciting the shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith, before he was killed. His phone was discovered with his body.⁵⁴

The international community's lack of concrete action and unconditional impunity granted to Israel have enabled it to commit "the single most deadly attack on the Red Cross Red Crescent workers anywhere in the world since 2017."⁵⁵ Since 7 October 2023, Israel has killed at least 412 aid workers, including 291 UN staff in Gaza.⁵⁶

III. Conclusion & Recommendations

We reiterate with urgency the need for an end to Israel's ongoing genocide, a total ceasefire, an arms embargo, and for the international community to address Israel's systematic targeting of healthcare workers, hospitals, and medical units, as part of Israel's campaign to create conditions in the Gaza Strip to destroy Palestinian life.

Israel has systematically destroyed or rendered inoperable every single hospital in the Gaza Strip in pursuit of its goal to render Gaza incapable of sustaining Palestinian life. As healthcare workers endure genocide themselves, they are working tirelessly to provide medical care under an inhumane Israeli siege that deliberately prevents access to critical medical supplies, electricity, and clean water in Gaza. Amid their own struggle for survival, Palestinian healthcare workers continue to uphold the right to health – and the right to life itself – as the international community has utterly failed and is unwilling to put an end to Israel's crimes.

Dr. Tanya Haj-Hassan stated over one year ago:

"People think you're safe when you're working in a hospital but that's clearly not the case here. We were having to pick who lived and died, because there are such limited resources. All the patients I saw were civilians. Almost all the Palestinian doctors I have spoken to have lost at least one loved one since the war started. Many of them have friends or family still missing, or colleagues arbitrarily detained by the army. It's hard to appreciate how much they have gone through. It's really difficult to process the injustice of it."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Al-Haq, *Field Focus: Impunity Unbound – Israel's Attack on Humanitarian and Medical Workers*, (7 April 2025), <<https://www.alhaq.org/monitoring-documentation/26272.html>>; IFRC Press Release, IFRC condemns the killing of eight Palestine Red Crescent medics in Gaza, (30 March 2025), <<https://www.ifrc.org/press-release/ifrc-condemns-killing-eight-palestine-red-crescent-medics-gaza>>.

⁵⁶ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #278 (8 April 2025), <<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-278-gaza-strip#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20since%207%20October.reportedly%20killed%20in%20Khan%20Younis>>; MSF, *Why we won't accept the narrative of 'regrettable incidents' in Gaza*, (18 February 2025), <<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/why-we-wont-accept-the-narrative-of-regrettable-incidents-in-gaza/>>; Al-Haq, *Field Focus: Impunity Unbound – Israel's Attack on Humanitarian and Medical Workers*, (7 April 2025), <<https://www.alhaq.org/monitoring-documentation/26272.html>>.

⁵⁷ MAP UK, 'There are no more words' - Six months of Israel's total siege and bombardment of Gaza leaves tens of thousands dead, the healthcare system in ruins, and a starving population, ReliefWeb (8 Apr. 2024), <<https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/there-are-no-more-words-six-months-israels-total-siege-a>>.

Israel's relentless attacks on hospitals are continuing at full force — the [European Hospital](#), [Al Nasser Hospital](#), and [Al Awda Hospital](#) were bombed earlier this month. Just this week, nine of Dr. Alaa al-Najjar' ten children were killed in an attack on their home as their mother, a pediatrician at the Nasser medical complex, was at work.

Palestinian healthcare workers and all Palestinians in Gaza must be protected urgently.

Recommendations:

1. The Special Rapporteur should raise attention to the specific targeting of healthcare workers and the destruction of the healthcare system in Gaza in particular, as well as across all of occupied Palestine, both before and after 7 October 2023;
2. The Special Rapporteur should call for all healthcare workers and all those arbitrarily arrested, disappeared and detained to be released immediately, including the release of withheld bodies of healthcare workers and others killed in Israeli custody;
3. The Special Rapporteur should call on Third States to take tangible and specific action to put an end to Israel's genocide, dismantle Israel's settler colonial apartheid regime, end the illegal occupation and blockade, including the latest siege on the Gaza Strip since 2 March imposing a man-made famine on over 2 million Palestinians;
4. The Special Rapporteur and Third States should name and condemn Israel's ongoing genocide by calling for a ceasefire and taking all action available to impose a ceasefire and prevent Israel from continuing its genocide of the Palestinian people;
5. The Special Rapporteur and Third States should impose a two-way arms embargo on Israel. States continuing to transfer arms to Israel are in grave breach of the Arms Trade Treaty, which requires States to terminate arms transfers to Israel amid ample evidence of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity being committed. In particular, the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, and France must cease all arms transfers to Israel or risk facing charges for complicity in genocide;
6. The Special Rapporteur and Third States should demand open and unimpeded access to the Gaza Strip, and send international investigators to investigate conditions in detention facilities, including documented instances of rape, sexual violence, torture, physical and mental abuse, and medical neglect of detainees;
7. The Special Rapporteur and Third States should call for an end to Israel's arbitrary detention of Palestinians, particularly as an increasing number of Palestinians are being killed in Israeli detention; and provide for the rehabilitation of the sick, injured, and detained from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

[nd-bombardment-gaza-leaves-tens-thousands-dead-healthcare-system-ruins-and-starving-population#:~:text=The%20Israeli%20military%20has%20als>.](#)

