

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK of Academies & Scholarly Societies



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October 18, 2023

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We, members of the Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN), express our deep concern for the people of Israel and Gaza during the ongoing crisis. The IHRN is an alliance of national honorary scientific societies that defends the fundamental rights of scholars and health professionals worldwide. Through the IHRN and our own professional activities, we have strong and longstanding connections to professional colleagues in both Israel and Gaza. In 2005 our Network was involved in the founding of the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization, which worked to promote dialogue and interaction among Israeli and Palestinian scholars and supported joint scientific projects initiated by members of the two communities. We are devastated by the enormous losses that this conflict has already produced, including for many scientists, scholars, and health professionals.

We grieve for those killed during Hamas' horrific attack on Israel and are greatly concerned for those taken hostage. We also mourn the deaths of those civilians who have been killed during Israeli military attacks in Gaza, a territory under siege where children make up nearly half of the population.

As part of the IHRN's work, we have long advocated for the respect and protection of health professionals, health facilities, and access to health care in conflict settings throughout the world, as stipulated by international law. We strongly condemn all attacks on health care providers and facilities, including yesterday's deadly incident at Al Ahli Arab Hospital in northern Gaza. Our colleagues must be able to provide care in a safe environment to those in need. As of 17 October, the World Health Organization had documented 51 attacks on health care activity in Gaza, including the death and injury of dozens of healthcare workers. The current dire condition of hospitals in Gaza, along with restrictions on electricity, fuel, water, medicine, and humanitarian supplies, have left thousands of individuals without access to essential care. We join numerous human rights and humanitarian organizations around the world in calling for urgent access to medical and other life-saving supplies in Gaza and for safe passage of those who wish to leave. More broadly, we call upon the parties to the conflict to comply scrupulously with international humanitarian law (the international law of armed conflict), particularly their legal obligation to protect civilians, who are caught in the middle of this tragic situation and are enduring the greatest suffering.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rebecca Everly

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