

Central Committee FMH

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To the central Committee of the Swiss Medical Association (FMH)

Subject:

FMH position on the genocide in Gaza and the handling of medicines from the drug manufacturer Mepha (Teva Group)

September 2025

Dear Ms Gilli,

As participants of the "Swiss Healthcare Workers Against Genocide" network, the majority of whom are physicians, we approach you with a concern that affects both our professional ethical responsibility and our societal role. We are therefore requesting for a statement from the FMH - our professional organization on:

- the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has been recently qualified as genocide, with particular attention to the unprecedented attacks on healthcare workers and facilities,
- the possibility of a boycott, which we have called for on the pharmaceutical company MEPHA, belonging to the TEVA group, whose policies support the occupation activities of the Israeli government in the Palestinian territories.

We are convinced that the FMH, which is regarded as a guide in professional and ethical issues by its members, cannot remain silent in the face of a situation whose severity has no precedent in recent history.

We base our request on the following facts (see also the appendix "additional information" below).

Genocide/ crimes against humanity by the Israeli Government

The current situation in Gaza, has been described as genocide by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory¹ This follows the assessment by the International Court of Justice as a "plausible" risk of genocide². The genocide researchers of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) also describe Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide in their resolution of 31. August 2025³.

Other NGOs, international and Israeli, medical and non-medical, also came to this conclusion. These include: Physicians for Human Rights-Israel⁴, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF⁵), Amnesty International⁶, OXFAM⁷, Human Rights Watch⁸, the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem⁹ and previous UN reports¹⁰.

In the medical journal "The Lancet", papers were published that estimate much higher fatalities than the official figures^{11, 12} and call for an end to Europe's complicity in the famine and genocide¹³.

Unprecedented attacks on the healthcare sector

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has been worsened by the unprecedented attacks on the healthsector: hospitals, outpatient clinics and medical staff have been the target of the occupant military force^{4, 14, 15, 16}. While humanitarian law prescribes that these should be protected in a conflict, the destruction has been systematic: calculations show that the casualty rate of Health Care Workers is 2.6x the general population. A whole generation of Health Care Workers has been wiped out, with a lasting impact on access to health in the region.

Role of Teva Pharmaceutical Industries (Mepha/ Ratiopharm)

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries is Israel's largest pharmaceutical company and its affiliated company Mepha (Basel) is the most important generic drug manufacturer in Switzerland.

Teva is implicated in the activities of the Israeli forces and government.

- Teva makes significant financial payments to the Israeli state (\$565 million in taxes between 2005 and 2023¹⁷), and thereby contributes substantially to the Israeli state budget.
- Reports document Teva's support of the Israeli army^{18,20} through deliveries of pharmaceutical products and the program "Adopt-a-Battalion".^{19,20}
- In the occupied Palestinian territories, Teva allegedly benefits from a "captive market"²⁰ in which Palestinians are forced to purchase Israeli medicines, which hinders the development of their own pharmaceutical industry.
- Various reports indicate that Teva was named in a 2017 United Nations draft²⁰ in a preliminary list of companies accused of activities in the illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, noting their participation was contrary to international law. Teva was not included in the final report.

Against this background, the question arises as to whether it is compatible with our ethical principles to use the products of a company that maintains structures of occupation and oppression through its business activities.

Naturally, patient safety always comes first. In cases where no equivalent alternative exists, treatment must never be endangered or delayed. However, where therapeutically equivalent alternatives are available, the FMH could provide an important impetus through a public statement or at least guidance to its members.

We therefore call upon the FMH to:

1. publish a clear statement on the genocide in Gaza, the importance of respecting the protections of healthcare workers under international humanitarian law, and the special role of health professionals in the protection of civilians, especially of the sick and wounded.
2. examine to what extent cooperation with Mepha/Teva can be critically reflected upon or even a boycott recommended
3. To point out to doctors the possibility of prescribing generics from other manufacturers when this is possible without risk to patients.

In our view, a clear position by FMH would not only strengthen its credibility as a professional representative, but also underline its commitment to the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

We thank you in advance for your attention and ask for your careful consideration of this concern.

Best regards
Swiss Healthcare Workers Against Genocide

Signatory in our own capacity in addition to our network:

Dr. med. Regula Grabherr, FMH Specialist in Gynaecology and Obstetrics

Dr. med. Mustafa Ghanem, FMH Specialist in Ophthalmology and Ophthalmic Surgery

Prof. Dr Med. Pietro Majno-Hurst, FMH specialist in visceral surgery

Additional information:

Excerpt from the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) resolution (dated 31.08.2025)

In the resolution on the situation in Gaza, the IAGS states, among other things the following:

- Recognising that the actions of the Israeli government against Palestinians have included torture, arbitrary detention and sexual and reproductive violence²¹, deliberate attacks on medical professionals, humanitarian aid workers and journalists; and the deliberate deprivation of food, water, medicine, and electricity essential to the survival of the population;
- Recognising that Israel has forcibly displaced nearly all of the 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip multiple times, and demolished more than 90 percent of the housing infrastructure in the territory;
- Recognising that the consequences of these crimes have included destroying entire families and multiple generations of Palestinians;
- Recognising that Israel has destroyed schools, universities, libraries, museums, and archives, all of them essential to the continued existence of Palestinian collective well-being and identity;

Lancet publications on deaths

A study published in the Lancet, from February 2025 estimates that the mortality rate is 41% higher than that reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH)¹². This figure does not take into account deaths from non-traumatic injuries or indirect mortality due to disruptions to health care, inadequate access to basic services, or the broader humanitarian impact of the conflict, which would further increase the total number of fatalities.

In another Lancet publication, from July 2024 the following was written (while using the death rate of that time): "In recent conflicts, such indirect deaths range from three to 15 times the number of direct deaths²². Applying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death to the 37 396 deaths reported, it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186 000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza"¹¹. Converted to the mortality rates of 14.09.2025 with 64,871 deaths²³ multiplied with 4 it would mean 259,484 deaths since October 2023- over 1/4 million people.

Gaza - the most dangerous place in the world for children (UNICEF)

Over the course of nearly 2 years of attacks in the Gaza Strip, an average of at least one Palestinian child per hour has been killed by Israeli forces. The number of children killed is now over 20,000, according to the organization 'Save the Children'²⁴. "Death by bombardments. Death by malnutrition and starvation. Death by lack of aid and vital services. In Gaza, an average of 28 children a day - the size of a classroom - have been killed", according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).²⁵ UNICEF describes the Gaza Strip as the most dangerous place in the world for children.²⁶ Newborns (example: article 'Infants found dead and decomposing in evacuated hospital ICU in Gaza'²⁷) and people with disabilities are also at risk ^{28, 29} (Muhammed Bhar with Down syndrome attacked by IDF dog and left to die³⁰).

In addition to direct killings, the lack of access to vital medical services has also led to an increase in preventable maternal and neonatal deaths^{31, 32}.

Between November 1, 2023 and April 30, 2024, nearly 70% of confirmed fatalities in Gaza were women and children ³³.

Systematic shooting at children

Investigations and international medical personnel who have been on missions in Gaza testify how children are systematically shot and die from the injuries of targeted shots in the head, neck, chest^{34, 35, 36, 37}. Cases in which children were also killed by several shots by the Israeli forces are also known. An example is the case of Hind Rajab, a 5-year-old girl - a tragic, but not isolated incident³⁸. She died with multiple shooting injuries and after waiting in the family car for help for several hours next to the lifeless, shot bodies of her loved ones. The medical staff, which came to help in a clearly recognizable ambulance were also shot by Israeli forces. Original sound recordings of Hind's telephone call for help were released in the film adaptation in 2025.

‘This is not aid. This is orchestrated killing’ (MSF)

Unarmed starving civilians, which were in search of food also arrive in hospitals with gunshot wounds. According to organizations such as MSF and the UN Human Rights Office, almost 1400 people have been killed and more than 4000 injured in the Gaza Strip while searching for food (as of 1.8.2025). They were killed in or near the controversial aid distribution centres of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which is administered by Israel^{39, 40, 41}.

(Often with "daily patterns", in which one day mainly headshots were observed, and on the other day mainly shots on the pelvis. This gives the impression that there is an agreement among the snipers as to which parts of the body are to be used as targets on certain days⁴².)

In the MSF analysis report '*This is not aid. This is orchestrated killing*', there are also reports of gunshot wounds to children at the relief aid distribution centres. MSF teams were "mentally prepared for responding to conflict — but not to civilians killed and maimed while seeking aid", it says⁴³.

For situations where a wounded child survived but no longer has a family member, a new acronym was used by MSF: WCNSF - Wounded child, no surviving family⁴⁴. Thousands of children fall into this category.

Expulsion-blockade since 2007- now famine-genocide

Prior to the latest escalation, the Gaza Strip suffered from an ongoing humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by Israel's ongoing blockade since 2007. Around 80% of the population were dependent on Humanitarian aid⁴⁵. The health facilities had difficulties meeting the needs of the population. The health system suffered from chronic lack of qualified personnel, medical supplies, medicines and electricity⁴⁶. The Palestinian people have been experiencing expulsion for decades and clearly restricted rights, but now according to multiple experts^{3, 47} the status of genocide and an preventable famine⁴⁸ is reached.

The Hippocratic Oath

As doctors bound by “do no harm”-principle, we must consciously choose which pharmaceutical companies we support through our prescriptions. Both physicians and patients deserve full information to make deliberate choices.

When we graduated medical school, we vowed to serve humanity with respect for life and dignity. We cannot abandon this promise now and we cannot remain silent while colleagues die in Gaza for upholding this very oath. We take our vows seriously, and we take seriously every murdered and threatened colleague and civilian.

The dehumanization of Palestinian civilians is intense. We must ask: Do we struggle to define human rights, or do we struggle to define who counts as human?

"Whoever stays until the end will tell the story. We did what we could. Remember us." From Gaza MSF-Team: Dr. Mahmoud Abu Nujaila, Gaza 20.10.2023

Sources

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