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Letter to the Editor

Zion Hagay, Yossi Walfisch & Malke Borow

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Letter to the Editor

To the editor,

Regarding the recent article: Suitable medical care based on the patient's medical needs and available resources: Belligerents in Israel¹: Although we personally know the authors and believe they have the best interests of all in mind, they unfortunately misrepresent some important facts.

The fact is that Hamas terrorists are given all necessary care—whether in the Israeli Prison Services (IPS), in the IDF medical facility in Sde Teiman, or, when such facilities do not suffice, in Israeli hospitals, where they receive full treatment. It is not clear what the authors refer to when they say that these terrorists receive care “unequal to the care received by Israeli citizens and soldiers”? Even the authors themselves contend that expecting equal treatment is unrealistic (especially since nonresidents do not receive all the benefits provided to residents under the National Health Insurance Law) but claim the need to provide appropriate and humane care. This, we contend, is being provided. Everyone—citizen, non-citizen, or terrorist—receives necessary life-saving or life-preserving care on the level the authors justifiably expect: “suitable medical care based on the patient's medical needs and available resources.”

The authors quote the requirements under International Humanitarian Law in treating prisoners of war, but neglect to mention that Hamas terrorists would not be defined as POWs since ostensibly they do not fulfill the requirements set out in Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention.²

One of us (Y.W.) has visited the IDF medical facility as part of a delegation of medical ethics and

professional experts and can attest to the fact that the prisoners there are receiving appropriate medical care within the necessary precautions taken to ensure the safety of the medical staff.

Clearly in light of the existential trauma Israel has undergone post October 7, there may be (and we would venture to confess, probably are) discrete instances of ethical violations. However, the Israeli Medical Association has come out with a clear statement emphasizing the need for appropriate medical care for all,³ and to the best of our knowledge our physicians continue to uphold their ethical responsibilities in this and other areas.

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Zion Hagay
Israel Medical Association (IMA)

Yossi Walfisch
IMA Ethics Bureau

Malke Borow
IMA Division of Law and Policy
✉ malkeb@ima.org.il

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¹Zohar Lederman, Nadav Davidovitch, and Shmuel Lederman. 2024. Making a case for appropriate and humane treatment of Hamas Belligerents in Israel. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 24 (2): 8–10. doi:[10.1080/15265161.2023.2296411](https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2023.2296411).

²<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gci-1949/article-4> (accessed February 29, 2024).

³<https://www.ima.org.il/ENG/ViewContent.aspx?CategoryId=20228> (accessed February 29, 2024).