



GLOBAL JEWISH HEALTH ALLIANCE

**UNHRC President Jürg Lauber
High Commissioner Volker Turk
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva
Switzerland**

Monday, January 27, 2025

Subject: Condemning Israeli Medical Boycott Proposal by UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese

Dear President Lauber and High Commissioner Turk:

We the undersigned, representing nearly a quarter million individuals across five continents, are writing to express outrage at recent statements by UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese, who suggested global separation of ties with Israel in the field of medicine. As practicing physicians and health researchers we consider this a horrendous suggestion that places all of humanity at risk. We are at a moment in time when open science and data sharing, particularly with 'innovation engines' like Israel, are powering forward at an amazing speed to bring new opportunities in healthcare to millions of patients. The global interconnections between scientists in our fields is the key to continued progress. To even consider introducing this sort of 'warfare' into our domain is tantamount to using humanity as a collective human shield, and risks unravelling intellectual and R&D links that have taken decades to build. New treatments and technologies would be delayed if not completely vacated. The untoward ramifications will extend well beyond Israel and into the multitude of nations whose medical institutions share research endeavours with Israel. Moreover, as always happens with these misdirected and reckless calls, the victims would be patients everywhere who benefit from innovation, including in the Muslim world and developing economies. Finally, severing ties with Israel's medical institutions will harm her citizens – Jews, Arabs, Christians, Druze, and Muslims alike.

It is a great inversion of reality to accuse Israel of targeting the Gazan healthcare system just a few months after it facilitated the polio vaccination of over a million children in Gaza in the middle of a war. The flagrant militarization of healthcare facilities in Gaza by Hamas, on the other hand, witnessed in their videos at Al-Shifa hospital's 'greeting' the Israeli hostages on October 7 was just the first hint. There is testimony from visiting physicians who witnessed Hamas fighters and military equipment in multiple hospitals, and from former Israeli hostages who were held and mistreated in these hospitals. A supposedly respected physician was found to be holding three hostages in his home at the time of their rescue in Nuseirat on June 8, 2024. And now there is the revelation of the military nature of Kamal Adwan Hospital,

abused as a haven for terrorists, and even its medical director is implicated in terrorist activity and holding rank in Hamas. Corrupting the ultimate safety zone of a hospital into a military base, as Hamas has done as a strategy, is of the most heinous crimes as well as a clear violation of the Geneva Convention. The failure of the world to condemn this in no uncertain terms encourages Hamas and other terror groups to continue to use human shields and commit war crimes with impunity.

The medical field has long stood as a sacred and apolitical space, dedicated to advancing human welfare and fostering collaboration across borders. Introducing political agendas into this realm threatens to erode the universal commitment to patient care, innovation, and global health progress. Medical and academic boycotts would inevitably stifle research, delay critical treatment developments, and compromise care for patients worldwide, leaving a legacy of harm that would be difficult to undo. Medicine is a unifying force and should never be intruded upon as a political strategy. Rather than breaking these vital bridges, we call upon medical and scientific colleagues to defend the integrity of our common domain, to refuse any intrusion of military or political activities and together continue our common work for the benefits of all humanity.

We are therefore calling upon the United Nations, the World Health Organization, as well as all ethically responsible medical professionals and healthcare researchers to condemn Rapporteur Albanese's disgraceful comments and to affirm your commitment to the unhindered collaboration of medical knowledge, expertise, experience, and advancements across the globe. Medical boycotts only harm patients; they do not make this world a better place.

Sincerely,

The Global Jewish Health Alliance and the undersigned organizations

