

October 22, 2023

Dr. Victor Dzau  
President  
National Academy of Medicine

Dear Dr. Dzau,

I am responding with my concerns to your “Statement by NAM President Victor Dzau on Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza” dated October 19, 2023.

Both of us I am sure want the death and destruction on both sides of our fraught border to end immediately. However, your statement is misguided and biased at best, and we fear is dangerously disingenuous and even harmful to civilians in Israel and Gaza, with both populations being victims of Hamas’ cult of death and destruction.

Your statement “.... including unconscionable attacks on civilians, hospitals, and emergency responders ...” levels defamatory accusations at Israel of deliberate attack on civilians that are in complete contradiction of the evidence. This calumny strengthens and adds legitimacy to the clearly disproven libelous accusation of an Israeli bombing of the Al Alhi hospital, at which the explosion was proven beyond a doubt to be the result of an Islamic Jihad rocket aimed at Israeli civilians – misfiring and falling instead on the hospital in Gaza. The timing of your letter, after the facts were independently verified by multiple sources, and after journalists at major news outlets (often hostile to Israel) themselves issued corrections – points to deliberate and dangerous defamation of Israel. The Israel Defense Forces, in its mandate of protecting Israeli citizens, has always and is now, making every effort, even endangering Israel’s own armed forces, to minimize injury and harm to non-combatants in Gaza. Obviously, you fail to even mention the Israeli hospital in Ashqelon systematically and deliberately targeted by Hamas missiles since day one.

On another note, although we do not celebrate, and even mourn, the suffering of non-combatant and civilian Gazan neighbors, why do you only mention them? Have you any idea what is going on our side of the border – in fact all over the country? Have you no concern for the citizens of Israel (Arab and Jewish) who like the Gazan population are all threatened by Hamas’ lethal madness? We now know that the Hamas attackers were deliberately further fueled in their murderous rampage of cruelty under direct orders to torture, rape, burn, disfigure, violate, mutilate, and capture or murder civilians of all ages and all backgrounds by being administered the synthetic amphetamine-type stimulant Captagon, clandestinely trafficked to Hamas terrorists.

For your information, and in contrast to your accusatory appeal, Israel continues to delay further steps in the legitimate campaign to permanently incapacitate Hamas and Islamic Jihad, precisely in order to enable implementation of humanitarian efforts on behalf of Gazan civilians. In absolute disregard for basic human rights and life – it is Hamas which impedes these efforts, stealing water and fuel provided by UNRWA for the benefit of hospitals and civilians, to support its military efforts and to prevent evacuees from moving to safer regions and in order to keep using them as human shields. This should be explicitly clarified in any statement addressing the ongoing tragedy inflicted upon Israel and Gaza by Hamas, particularly in a statement from the President of a scholarly statutory body, such as the National Academy of Medicine – which ought to demand truth and clear evidence so as to prevent and minimize humanitarian crises.

Furthermore, your statement makes passing mention of the horrific slaughter that took place on October 7<sup>th</sup> and nothing at all on the ongoing crimes against humanity of 210 captives, including at least 30 infants and children and scores of elderly and infirm held by Hamas in Gaza. There is no mention in your statement about the fact that the International Red Cross had not managed at that time to provide information about the accurate number and the health condition of the captives and has not been given access to visit them. Since the writing of your statement, we know that the International Red Cross has participated in the release of two women – indicating that pressure from worthy organizations, which call out such crimes, can potentially yield life-saving outcomes. For some reason, your letter also totally ignores continued deliberate targeting of Israeli civilian population centers by lethal Hamas and Islamic Jihad rocket attacks, resulting in destruction, death, and injury. Hamas states openly that its targets are Israeli civilians and civil institutions, aiming their indiscriminate fire at major population centres where Israel's leading medical facilities are located. The Israel Defense Forces is clear and explicit that its enemy is Hamas, and not the civilian population of Gaza. In contrast, Hamas has unlawfully and immorally chosen to store its armaments and military personnel not only in heavily populated civilian areas, but in mosques, schools, and hospitals and to unlawfully and deliberately put civilian women, men, and children in harm's way as human shields.

Israelis, including Jews and Arabs, in consideration of the well-being of civilians, continue to enable and even facilitate humanitarian aid to Gazan civilians. Your letter does nothing to help in this effort. In fact, by presenting such a distorted picture of reality you help incite and justify the hatred that can only impede resolution of the situation and promote further death and destruction in Gaza and in Israel.

You do not name Israel in your statement – but the letter is imbued with hatred of the Jewish state, as there can be no other explanation for the misleading falsehoods which receive cleverly disguised support in your statement.

It is my sincere hope that your letter does not reflect the view of the majority of the NAM's membership, and that you will be called to task by caring and humane members of NAM and all people of goodwill in the health academia and professions. In fact, my colleagues and I (some of

whom worked directly with you in clinical medicine) are aware of subsequent statements that you have made about “not taking sides” and of your background as a caring clinician. This is not a matter of “taking sides” or entering into the realm of a longstanding bitter dispute– but of recognizing and calling out absolute evil which aims to maim and murder civilians and promulgates falsehoods, and being able to distinguish such evil from unfortunate combat which seeks to uproot such evil while minimizing to the extent possible death and destruction to non-combatants.

Over the years, the Israeli medical community has treated thousands of patients, including senior leaders of Hamas, from both Gaza and the West Bank, with utmost professionalism and with deep humanity. We Israelis, Arabs and Jews alike, cherish and celebrate the life of every human being. Hamas-ISIS is about fear, brutality, and death.

This needs to be acknowledged, especially by people of the noble medical profession. We continue to hope that our shared aspiration, for loss of life and human suffering and injury to come to an end, and for peace and tranquility to be restored and realized as soon as possible. This requires the uprooting of absolute evil and advancement of sincere understanding and tolerance among people of goodwill.

As President of the National Academy of Medicine you should recognize and acknowledge evil and unequivocally condemn a terror group that brutally murdered, raped, burned human beings. You should strive to base your statements on evidence, exactly the way we all strive to do it professionally and be diligently aware of implicit biases that either you or others may possess.

You are in a position of great influence, with an acknowledged and decorated background of training and practice to pursue truth and peace in caring for human well-being. Therefore, we appeal to you to assist and not impede the essential effort to end the bloodshed and human suffering.



Rivka Carmi  
President