

Release the Doctors: NGOs Call for the Release of Unlawfully Detained Health Workers in Gaza and the West Bank

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, demand an end to Israel's arbitrary detention of Palestinian health workers in Gaza and the West Bank. Among them are doctors, nurses, and other health professionals working with humanitarian organizations, including staff of MedGlobal and Children Not Numbers.

Healthcare workers are essential personnel. Throughout this conflict, they have risked their lives to care for hundreds of thousands of injured, malnourished and sick civilians. They themselves are civilians and explicitly protected in conflict situations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Yet instead of protection, hundreds of health workers have been forcibly removed from hospital wards and patient bedsides and subjected to prolonged detention in Israeli prisons and military camps. At least [185 healthcare workers](#) from Gaza and the West Bank were estimated to be in Israeli detention as of February 2025. The conditions of many of those still detained remain unknown. Many of those released have [reported](#) severe abuse, while some have died in custody.

These detentions are part of a wider assault on Gaza's health system. Since October 2023, there have been around [700 attacks on health](#), including aerial bombardments of hospitals, health clinics and ambulances. Over [1,500 health workers and 460 aid workers](#) have been killed.

Israeli authorities have repeatedly and blatantly violated international humanitarian law in repeated detentions of and attacks on health care workers. Such actions are also an affront to UN Security Council Resolution 2286—endorsed by over 80 states—which unequivocally condemns attacks on healthcare workers and health sites and demands their protection. Health workers must be free to do their lifesaving work without fear of violence, arrest, or intimidation. If health workers can be detained and attacked in one of the world's most closely watched conflicts with impunity, it sets a dangerous precedent for the treatment of health workers around the world.

Civilians are not lawful targets in war—whether in the attacks and hostage-taking by Hamas on October 7 or in Israel's unlawful detention and targeting of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank. International humanitarian law protects all civilians, including explicit protections for medical personnel, during conflict.

We call for Israel's immediate, unconditional release of unlawfully detained medical personnel and an end to these arbitrary detentions and wider unlawful attacks on health. We urge the international community to echo our call to uphold the fundamental legal and moral protection of medical personnel whose sole job is to heal.

Signatories:

1. Amnesty International USA
2. A New Policy
3. Al Awda Health and Community Association
4. Arab Educational Institute - Pax Christi - Bethlehem / Palestine
5. Children Not Numbers
6. Churches for Middle East Peace
7. Eyewitness Gaza
8. Friends Committee on National Legislation
9. Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA)
10. Glia Equal Care
11. HelpAge International
12. Human Rights Watch
13. Humanity & Inclusion - Handicap International
14. International Centre of Justice for Palestinians
15. KinderUSA
16. **Médecins du Monde International Network / Doctors of the World**
17. Médecins Sans Frontières
18. MedGlobal
19. Palestine Children's Relief Fund
20. Pax Christi International
21. Physicians for Human Rights
22. Première Urgence Internationale
23. United Against Inhumanity (UAI)
24. United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)
25. WESPAC Foundation, Inc.