



November 23, 2023

Ref: 238-2023

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Director General

World Health Organization

We, the heads of the ethics bureaus of Israel's health organizations, are contacting you to express our deep concern at the silence of the World Health Organization in response to the recent atrocities committed by Hamas at Shifa Hospital, and the ethical issues and ramifications raised by these acts.

On Saturday, October 7, while Israel was celebrating the last day of the Sukkot holiday, hundreds of Hamas terrorists crossed the border into Israel and began savagely murdering innocent men, women and children, killing over 1400, raping, burning and mutilating innocent civilians and taking approximately 240 hostages, including babies and the elderly.

Of extreme concern to us is the evidence being produced that Hamas has utilized Shifa and other hospitals in the region as a base of terror, storing armaments, shooting missiles, and even hiding hostages. The hospital is apparently in full control of Hamas and is connected to the network of tunnels the terrorist use for their murderous purposes.

Terrorist activity by Hamas in Shifa Hospital risks the lives of both patients and medical personnel in the current crisis. But even more troubling is the possibility that such actions and the silence of major organizations such as the World Health Organization, may lead to the establishment of a new norm, not just in Gaza but all over the world. Once terrorists or militants see that no objections are raised when hospitals are used for combat, they will feel free to do so on other occasions and in other locations as well. The rules of medical ethics and humanitarian law as well as the trust of the public in medical institutions, will be forever undermined.



By remaining silent, the WHO risks further harm to innocent lives and undermining these vital principles of international humanitarian law. We urge you to demand from Hamas an immediate cessation of the use of civilians as human shields and the use of health facilities for terrorist purposes. We ask that you use your position as an organization to fulfill what is stated in your own constitution: The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yossi Walfisch

Chairman of the Ethics Bureau
Israeli Medical Association

Mrs. Mali Kusha

Chairwoman of the Nursing Ethics Bureau
Israeli Nurses Association

Mrs. Yonat Bornstein

Head of the the Ethics Committee
Israel Psychological Association

Mr. Liran Aharon Ciffer

Head of Ethics Committee
Israeli speech Hearing & language association

Mrs. Zahava Davidow

Chairman of The Israeli Physical
Therapists Ethics Committee

Dr.Hilla Zaharoni

Head of the Atid Ethical Committee for
Dietetics in Israel

Copy:

WHO Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics