



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Over 40 Faculty Members Rebut One-Sided *BMJ* Article on Israel-Gaza Conflict

WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 27, 2021 — Over 40 faculty members in public health, medicine, and related fields have signed a [statement](#) in response to both a *BMJ* article, “Gaza: Israeli airstrikes kill doctors and damage healthcare facilities,” and the comments which used a one-sided, anti-Israel narrative to describe the impact of the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas on the health care system in Gaza. The statement was initiated by five members of the Academic Engagement Network (AEN).

The statement, called “[Health Professionals Should Not Fuel Hatred; They Should Work For Peace](#),” raised several questions necessary for a fuller understanding of the conflict and its impacts: “How and why was this destructive arsenal assembled for use in the first place? Who is the aggressor, seeking to use violence and destruction, and for what objectives? Who is the defender, using force as required in order to protect the lives of innocent civilians under attack?”

The statement then provided crucial information and context as to the destructive aims of the Hamas terrorist group, its role in provoking the May 2021 conflict, and the ultimate responsibility it bears for the immense suffering wrought in both Israel and Gaza.

The statement concludes by emphasizing the importance of seeking and conveying the truth. “These basic facts highlight the importance of constructive dialogue. In contrast, false and biased narratives fuel the conflict and violate the basic Hippocrates requirement to do no harm.”

Dr. Linda Landesman, a Visiting Lecturer in Health Promotion and Policy at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst, was one of the co-organizers of the statement. She spoke of her disappointment that the *BMJ* refused to publish any rebuttal to their article.

“Constructive dialogue can only happen when scholars, practitioners and policymakers have the opportunity to examine the full circumstances that create and perpetuate ongoing conflict. By rejecting our response and only publishing one-side of these events, the *BMJ* missed an important opportunity to moderate the gap in views and advance this discussion.”

Landesman also highlighted how public health can be a catalyst for bridge-building and collaboration between communities, in contrast to the division and discord that result from one-sided narratives such as that published in the *BMJ*.

“To advance a peaceful co-existence despite the ongoing conflict, all in the medical and public health community must focus on regional cooperation and working together to strengthen the healthcare and public health systems. This is even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic.”

For more information about the statement, please contact Dr. Linda Landesman at lindalandesman@aol.com, or Raeefa Shams, Director of Communications and Programming at AEN, at raeefa@academicengagement.org.

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