

Doctors declare mental health sick leave in protest against Israeli genocide in Gaza

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A man inspects the damage in a room at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza

Strip on December 17, 2023, following Israeli bombardment.

(Photo by AFP)

Gaza City, December 30 (RHC)-- The NGO Doctors Against Genocide has announced a mental health sick leave in response to the relentless Israeli campaign of death and destruction in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Doctors Against Genocide, a global coalition of healthcare workers, said in a recent statement that the medical community can no longer carry on as if everything is normal.

"We are broken. After 15 months of seeing children and their families burnt and obliterated by unrelenting Israeli attacks, we cannot keep carrying on with our normal patterns of work and life," the statement read.

"On January 6th, we are taking a Mental Health Sick Leave to demand justice, accountability, and an end to this genocide," the statement read. "To all healthcare workers, professionals, and allies—stand with us. Pause. Grieve. Demand change."

The international order, built with the promise of preventing such horrors, has so far proved to be utterly incapable of putting an end to the slaughter, the non-governmental organization said.

"The international system has failed, and we are sick—sick from genocide, sick from complicity, and sick from silence."

"We are sick from our feelings of powerlessness, revulsion, despair, and complicity in the face of genocide. We are sick from genocide. Because we are sick, we can't keep reporting to our work as healers as if everything is okay."

The international order is deliberately enabling atrocities and Israeli genocidal campaign in the besieged Palestinian territory, it noted. "Our colleagues are being killed, burned, detained, raped, and tortured while we are expected to carry on as usual, worse, we are silenced when we speak out. Health and care workers, the backbone of humanitarian response, are systematically targeted, violating basic international law and human rights."

Destroying healthcare systems is a genocidal tactic to accelerate civilian deaths in Gaza, it said. The medical organization also said Israel is deliberately targeting health facilities and killing and torturing medical personnel in Gaza.

"Without functioning hospitals, lives cannot be saved. The last attack and burning of Kamal Adwan Hospital and the arrest of our friend and colleague with whom we have been in constant contact Dr. Husam Abu-Safiya shattered us—it turned a place of healing into a death trap. This deliberate decimation leaves communities defenseless, amplifying suffering and accelerating death."

Calls are growing for the immediate release of the Kamal Adwan Hospital director, Dr. Abu Safiya, who was forcibly detained by Israeli forces following his heroic resistance in the face of the regime's aggression.

Israeli forces have violently detained and interrogated the medical staff of Kamal Adwan Hospital, one of the last functioning health centers in Gaza.

The Gaza Health Ministry said an estimated 50 people, including medical staff, were killed in Israeli air strikes targeting the vicinity of the hospital on Friday and the rest were abducted by the occupation forces.

Dr. Abu Safiya was among those taken for questioning by the Israeli military over alleged links to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

Elsewhere in the statement, the NGO said that genocide scholars, human rights organizations, and even the United Nations have highlighted Israeli crimes in multiple reports.

“The reports are out there, filled with horrifying details of civilians being bombed, doctors being hunted down, and hospitals being reduced to rubble.

The legal definition of genocide isn't up for debate here - it 's being met in full view of the world. And yet, those in power have done almost nothing to stop it.”

International humanitarian agencies say the attacks on hospitals, ambulances, and health care personnel are a key tactic in the genocidal war on Palestinians in Gaza.

The Doctors Against Genocide conference in Washington, DC, highlighted the severe health crisis in Gaza, including forced famine, bombed hospitals, untreated diseases, medicine shortages, and psychological trauma.

Israel has killed at least 45,500 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza since October 2023.

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