

19. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan ([A67/41](#))

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Background to agenda item(s)

The secretariat report [A67/41](#) was requested from the Director-General by the resolution [WHA66.5](#) adopted in 2013. The report provides an overview of the health situation in Palestine and highlights the progress in relation to key areas of WHO support in the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

The WHO Secretariat also received and published two information documents from the permanent mission of Israel in Geneva ([A67/INF./2](#)) and the Government of Syria ([A67/INF./2](#)).

PHM Comments

The WHA resolution [WHA66.5](#) requested the Director-General to report on the implementation of the resolution. The Secretariat report [A67/41](#) provided an overview on the health situation in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) with hints on some of the underlying causes of this situation. In addition, it elaborated about the key areas of the cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Palestine. However, the Secretariat paper did not report on the implementation of what Israel and member states were urged/requested to do by the resolution.

The report recognized the implications of the restricted mobility of Palestinian citizens on accessing health services. It also recognized the obstacles that UNRWA is facing to serve the refugees population. However, in both cases the report does not discuss the causes and responsibilities for these restrictions.

The report failed to link the limitations on mobility and the difficulty in accessing the health facilities to practices of the occupation forces. It failed to recognize the fact of an occupation, the continuous aggression of the occupation forces and the use of collective punishment as major threats to people's lives, physical and mental health, dignity and livelihoods.

The report does not mention the attacks on health personnel, the conditions of political activists in the prisons of the occupying forces. The report does not report the number of deaths and the much larger numbers of handicapped people – consequent upon the conflict arising out of the occupation of the region.

In its report to the Assembly ([A67/INF./3](#)), the Permanent Mission of Syria has described the deterioration of the health situation of the population of occupied Golan without any mention to the situation in Syria which resulted in hundred thousands of deaths, millions of refugees and unprecedented health crisis in Syria and the neighboring countries.

Instead of addressing, defending or even denying the few facts contained in the Secretariat report (out of many others), the report submitted by Israel seeks to divert consideration to whether or not the Assembly is the place for this discussion.

Notes from WHA67 Debate

Documents

- [A67/41](#) (Secretariat report)
- [WHA66.5](#) (2013 Resolution: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan)
- [A67/INF./2](#) (Israel: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan)
- [A67/INF./3](#) (Syria: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan)
- [A67/INF./4](#) (UNRWA: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan)
- [A67/INF./5](#) (MOH Palestine: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan)
- [A67/B/CONF./1](#) (Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan; Draft decision proposed by the delegations of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen)
- [A67/B/CONF./1 Add.1](#) (Report on financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of decisions proposed for adoption by the Executive Board or Health Assembly)

Egypt: presenting draft decision ([A67/B/CONF./1](#)); thanks to Sect for preparing reports and to UNRWA, EU and Swiss Federation who have provided health care; express concern about barriers to accessing health care; and shortage of basic health services and drugs for prisoners; unable to travel to Golan; the draft decision contains a ref to noble health goals incl in constitution of WHO; attainment of health is fundamental to well being of all; decision before us is without any political overtones; delegations proposing this draft decision are trying to achieve consensus; lots of informal consultations; hoping for unanimity but roll call if there is any

opposition; finally sponsors of this dec hopes that the org at its present session will confirm that the right to health is a basic human right and should be realised for all occupied peoples.

Turkey: wish to be added to the list of sponsors. Thanks to DG. Reports describe the ongoing suffering of Palestinians. Deprived of basic needs. Illegal practices, undermine fundamental rights and freedom. Restrictions of movement are concerning and illegal. 28 year old women died after delays and infant while waiting 6 weeks for access to Turkey. Preventable causes. CV diseases, diabetes; availability of life-saving drugs; underline other issues of concern. WHO advocacy is good. Valuable efforts do not have enough effect. Contribution of Turkey to basic medicines; conclusions: the health of all people is important; asks MS to support draft decision.

Israel (D): stresses Israel's forceful rejection of introducing a political issue into a busy agenda; note with satisfaction that WHO provides sig support to Pal MOH; Israel has same goals as WHO; works closely with Pal MOH to provide training, referrals, clinical services; dozens of docs rec training; incr no of children rec trg in Israel; sad coexistence of suffering of israeli and Palestinian children; re Golan have we lost our bearings? quoting crisis in Aleppo; across Syria the lives of >9.3m affected; water treatment not working; polio; health conditions in Golan is excellent; calls for a vote

Tunisia: thank secretariat for report ([A67/41](#)) on implementation of resolution. Underlines condemn restrictions of movement of people within Palestinian territory, check point, travel permits. Permits and check points . Tunisia values all measures who were adopted by WHO. More capacities has to be available for PHC and secondary care. Dangers of HIV, tobacco. We call WHO as leading organisation, to do more efforts and to ease in health. Call on countries to support this report.

Algeria: on behalf of 47 MS in Afro; AFRO group keen on RTH which is a *sine qua non* for health and security; is very concerned about the health situation in the occ Pal territory; very concerned about the impact of the blockade of Gaza; serious threat to the respect to the RTH and needs dismantling of crossings checks and checkpoints; difficulties faced by MOH in delivering health; prisoners; violate HR standards esp child rights and women; need to tackle this crisis; access to health care; humanitarian aid

USA: Regarding WHO agenda Item 19, we wish to acknowledge the changed approach as against previous years. But current draft does not respond to shared objectives of WHA . This is politicized agenda item. USA finds that the objective has to get on by public health agenda. This doesn't help to make peace between PAlestine and Israel. We continue our work with Israel, Palestine, through development aid. We are major donor of UNRWA?. Call for vote. We will vote against.

Palestine: pay tribute to you Chair and the bureau of this committee and the WHO staff incl DG and RDs; thanks to all countries who provide assistance to Pal; and to UNHCR who are providing services for 60 years; from the title it is clear that there is occupation, a clear imbalance; the Israeli occ does not provide health care like Mayo clinic in the US; referring to statement by rep of Israel; access to treatment is a right, should not be provided at the choice

and charity of the occupying power; this is a right; call on WHO to uphold its resp to 120 prisoners who died in Israeli prisons who died for lack of attention; not rec'g treatment, recorded by the Red Cross; deaths and deliveries at the checkpoints and patients being sent away bec of lack of medical equipment; drugs expire bec not allowed in Pal territory; on March 15 Israeli occupying forces attacked a camp and two people were shot; one was first injured called for help and then was shot again; medical suffering; lack of access to nec medical equipment; the Israeli rep says that they provide assistance; but the cost of equipment and drugs are paid for out of tax collected from Palestinian people;

Pakistan: We have taken note. We appreciate the role of WHO; Pakistan is deeply concerned of the health situation. All levels of poverty. We can not be ignorant. Restrictions of movement in West Bank. Situation resulted denial of access to secondary and tertiary care. Affected performance of health sector. Impossible to respond to NCD. Forced to do without essential medicines. We appreciate WHO technical assistance in efforts to modernize . More has to be done. Technical assistance of UNHCR. Crisis has direct effect. Practices of victimisation. We lend full support on agenda item 19. To support people in occupied territory.

Cuba: Gov of Israel cont aggr against Pal; attacks and settlements, confiscation of Pal land, wall, demolishing of housing are practices which exacerbate; lift the blockade of the Gaza strip; Israel practices make health care very difficult; not able to ach MDGs, occ of Syrian Golan a matter of concern; denying RTH; must comply with resolutions of WHO, UN, UN HRC; Cuba reiterates rights of Pal in 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital

Libya: Thank you chair. Thank secretariat. Excellent report. This report contain: 40% are under 14 years, 30% are 0-40, unemployment 18.2% in West Bank. The restrictions of the movement of people prevent people to cross crosspoint to reach healthcare; Main expenditure is OOP. Libya support draft. On behalf on EMRO countries in name of the right to health, to support draft.

Venezuela: supports Conf 1 doc ([A67/B/CONF.1](#)); difficult situation in Pal territories; can't let this opportunity pass; urge unanimous support for this draft resolution; situation perpetrated by israel as the occ power;

Syria: Thanks. The health status of the Syrian population in Golan still the same and deteriorating. People are facing lack of access to health services because they refused the Israeli nationality. Citizens in Golan are being arrested and put in prison with no health services or care. Israel uses Golan for the nuclear wastes which is a crime. Israel established a field hospital to provide health services for the terrorists to come back to Syria and fight against its people; Israel cannot talk about the situation in Syria since it remains an aggressive occupation force in the region; We request the WHO jointly with the red crescent to form a committee to assess the health situation in Golan.

Oman: Read with interest the report. Right to health is essential. We strongly support draft. Shares concerns of worsening health situation. Inhuman conditions. WE therefore ask occupying forces to comply with the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on the separation wall [Ref

OP1(3) of WHA66.5]. Call Israeli to implement Geneva convention on protection of citizens and health protection. We share concern about prisoners, we therefore call to intensify efforts to guarantee health care.

Bahrain: has studied Sect rep; thanks to DG; expr grave concern re damage suffering in Occ Territories; hinders health care and development of a Pal state; Pal authority needs tech assistance in the LT to build; tech assistance; steps to be taken to meet the health needs; supports the draft decision

Jordan: Thanks. Jordan is the nearest country to the suffering of Palestinian people. The limited mobility due to the check points which put obstacles for patients to reach the health care facilities. You have heard about the several cases of labour that happened at the checkpoints. The practices of the occupation forces harm those who are in need of health care. You may imagine how would be the effect on patients. I call upon the Assembly to adopt the decision.

Maldives: Maldives acknowledge work done. the Maldives remains concerned about the health situation. Maldives deeply concerned of situation in Golan. As always Maldives support decision on this agenda item.

Canada: has concerns about incl of political dec in specialized UN body where there should be only technical; one sided decision; unable to support

China: Thank you. This is a cause of serious concern. Restriction in movement, on health personal, circulation of goods, ... all of these things have hindered the building of health system. China would like to expr concern in that respect. Great work is done by WHO and on improving public health. China would like to comment there is work done. For a long time has provided assistance to Palestine. China supports draft.

Bangladesh: Thanks you. Bangladesh takes note of the report of the secretariat. The report indicates that serious health and human suffering are happening in Palestinian territories. Believes in right to health for all and Bangladesh supports the draft decision.

Australia: concerned by poor health conditions in Palestine; calls for two state solution for lasting peace; urges Israel and Pal to return to direct negotiations; opposes decision bec political in this technical body; in support of two state solution; supports UNRWA. in delivering health care in Pal

Indonesia: My delegation takes note of report. Key issues to assist to Pal is how to promote institution capacity building. Islamic development bank, cardiac hospital. Initiative to increase capacity building. Having said this, in support of draft on health conditions.

Greece: Consistent with the Constitution of the WHO, it should be a technical body. WHO is handling the issue in a different manner. Appreciate the willingness of the sponsors of this resolution to make it as technical as possible and replacing a resolution with a decision directed to the DG. EU will support the decision

South Africa: SA delegation congrats chair, thank Sect for report; appr process of WHO survey; SA notes poor health care in the Pal territories; including bec Israel policies and practices; call for imple of A66.5 calls for dismantling of check points; facilitate access to Pal health institutions in occ East Jerusalem; est health facilities for Occ Syrian Golan; appreciates the dev partners; call on int community to support; supports the draft decision

Afghanistan: Afghanistan believes that access to health is not privilege but basic right. Individuals and communities with NCD and CD are a problem. Support for proposed report

Lebanon: Thank you. We want Lebanon to be added to sponsoring the draft decision. The draft decision is consistent wirth the consitution of the WHO. We endorse it.

We share the concerns that were expressed by the majority of the participating countries.

Qatar: supports the draft decision; Qatar provides diff kinds of assistance to Pal residents; call upon all members of this august body to provide help to Palestinians

UNRWA: we continue to help Pales. refugees. Pal. refugees are part of global community. Urge global health committee to support so that they will not be behind. Diabetes is highly prevalent, linked to poverty. Mental health, domestic violence and other health risks are clearly reported. Difficult financial situation. Thank donor states. Progress is encouraging. Financial situation is unstable. Health cost for NCD is continuous increase. Socio-political determinants of health: In GAZA there is no regular supply to safe water or electricity. Under such situation the impact of HCS can be minor.

Secretariat (DrAlward): Thank you. Acknowledge the discussion and debate. No further comments.

Legal counselor: The draft decision. Voting.

Iran: wants explanation of voting before voting.

Israel: I object for explanation of Iran before voting

Abstentions 6 (Andora, Armenia, Burundi, Congo, New Zealand)

Against 5 (Australia, Canada, USA, Israel, Papua New Guinea)

Absent: Philippines, Nepal, Mongolia, Servia, Fiji, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Kerbas, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mynmar, Nepal, Uzbekistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, DRC, Laos, Dominican Republic, Tanzania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Siera Leone, South Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Chad, Timor Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Zambia.

For 105 (Russia, Finland, France, Gabon, Guinea, Guatemala, Greece, Hungary, Cook islands, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Libya, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan,

Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Morocco, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibian, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Uganda, Pakistan, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Korea, Moldova, Czech, Romania, UK, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe)

Iran: set back for WHO. Should have adopted a robust resolution. However, we voted in favour because of solidarity with Palestinians. Reservation with 2 parts which could be construed as recognition of the legitimacy of the Israeli regime

Singapore: political elements should not be in the hands of WHO. This decision was more technical so we are happy with the direction of the report.

See [First Report of Committee B](#)

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