

**Benjamin Netanyahu**  
The Prime Minister's Office  
Building C, Kiryat Ben Gurion  
Jerusalem

**Benny Gantz**  
Ministry of Defense  
37 Kaplan Street  
Tel-Aviv

**Gabi Ashkenazi**  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Sderot Yitshak Rabin, Kiryat HaLeom  
Jerusalem

Sent via email

1 September 2020

**Dear Mr Netanyahu, Mr Gantz and Mr Ashkenazi**

### **Medical treatment in Gaza**

We are writing to you on behalf of the BMA (British Medical Association) to express our grave concern regarding the treatment of Palestinians in the Gaza region. Specifically, we are alarmed about the availability of the medical care within the region and individuals' ability to seek treatment.

We understand that since the Palestinian Authority ended its coordination with Israel, the Palestinian Civil Affairs Committee stopped its bureaucratic function of coordinating medical exit permits for Gazan patients, meaning no official Palestinian body is fulfilling this duty. Palestinians cannot leave Gaza for medical treatment without a medical exit permit. Israel, despite creating this system, has not adapted its policy to these developments and still requests patients to apply for a medical exit permit in order to access medical care outside of the Gaza Strip.

The results have been nothing short of disastrous from a health and human rights standpoint. The ability of Palestinians to seek medical treatment has been severely curtailed, leading to serious unnecessary harm and even death. In the last two months, Physicians for Human Rights

**Chief executive officer:** Tom Grinyer



Israel (PHRI) has assisted 195 patients, including over 100 women and 35 children. Of these patients, only half were finally permitted to leave Gaza for treatment. Three patients, including two minors, have died.

This treatment of the Palestinian population of Gaza marks a violation of their right to health, which is enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights which Israel signed in the early 1990s, and further concerning evidence of the repression of the Gazan population.

We strongly urge the Israeli authorities to lift the requirement that Palestinians may only leave Gaza for 'urgent' medical treatment and allow those who do not require emergency treatment to access medical care within a reasonable time-frame appropriate to the severity of their medical condition.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr John Chisholm CBE**  
Chair, BMA medical ethics committee



**Dr Terry John**  
Chair, BMA international committee