

WHO's Executive Board adopts resolution on access for life-saving aid into Gaza and respect for laws of war

10 December 2023 - Geneva - In a special session held today in Geneva, WHO's Executive Board adopted a resolution aimed at addressing the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The resolution was adopted by consensus.

This is the first time since 7 October that a resolution on this conflict has been adopted by consensus within the UN system. It underscores the importance of health as a universal priority, in all circumstances, and the role of healthcare and humanitarianism in building bridges to peace, even in the most difficult of situations.

Among other points, the resolution calls for “immediate, sustained and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief, including the access of medical personnel.” It calls on “all parties to fulfill their obligations under international law and reaffirms that all parties to armed conflict must comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and medical personnel.”

The resolution also commends WHO and health cluster partners in the field for remaining and delivering. Just yesterday, 9 December, amid extremely difficult circumstances, WHO and partners delivered supplies for up to 1500 patients and transferred patients from the Al-Ahli Hospital in the north to one in the south.

In remarks delivered throughout the day, many Member States offered sympathies for the loss of life of civilians, as well as health workers and UN employees, including WHO colleague Dima Alhaj.

In his closing remarks, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the adoption of the resolution was a starting point. “It does not resolve the crisis. But it is a platform on which to build.” He added that “Without a ceasefire, there is no peace. And without peace, there is no health. I urge all Member States, especially those with the most influence, to work with urgency to bring an end to this conflict as soon as possible.”

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