

Peer Review File

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Reviewer A

Comment 1: *To make the letter easier to read, the letter would benefit from being re-written in accessible and clearer English. The content of the letter is good; it is only the wording and sentence formation that needs revising.*

Reply 1: accepted suggestion

Changes1: the text has been revised/rewritten by one of the American Authors (Dr. A. Rothchild) resulting in diffuse changes.

Paragraphs heading were inserted in bold (lines 26, 36, 42, 50, 59, 63, 74, 83, 101, 106)

Reviewer B

Comment 1 *On the duty to protect the people in Gaza. How collapse of health system plays into genocide intentions". I do think this point could be more elaborated at the end of the letter – as a conclusion tying up to the title - accepted.*

Changes 1: we introduced a summary section elaborating on the title - lines 107 to 128. we mention the duty to protect line 101-102

Comment 2: *Suggest adding reference for the following / or shortening/deleting - accepted*

Changes 2: we inserted more references. From ref 4 downwards were introduced references as appropriate.

Comment 3: *Consider shortening the letter. Some of the specifics might not be necessary for the overall picture - declined.*

Reply 3: Intensity and repetition of the attacks show their intent and are evident signature of something not casual, accidental or justifiable, but of a plan. Presenting more specific cases makes this point visible.

Comment 4: *Is this sentence correct? Please check the wording "South Africa is asking the International court of Justice to deliberate preventive measures against an ongoing genocide" -accepted and corrected*

Reply 4: Thanks for signaling our wrong wording.

Changes 4: We inserted the correct wording, as from the Court, lines 97-99, and the reference 22

Reviewer C

Thank you for this urgent and timely letter. This letter draws attention to an urgent crisis in global health. The genocide in Gaza not only has killed tens to thousands of civilians. It has also decimated the health system and its ability to deal with war injuries, let alone the everyday work of caring for non war related diseases. Thus, this paper is important in highlighting the intent to kill and maim a besieged population.

Reviewer D

This letter is timely. It addresses the urgency of the situation in Gaza and the need for a collective global effort to end the war on Gaza. It also highlights the responsibilities of different stake holders to make a stance.

It is vital to document the current destruction to health systems and human lives in Gaza and challenge the climate of fear and threat to the academic freedom of speech.

Reviewer E

Comment 1: *Dear authors, this is not an academic paper, it reads more like an opinion piece.*

Reply 1: It is an observational report of facts ascertained by multiple sources, most with medical professional experience and in official charge of ascertainment. It expresses the main scientific opinion, arising from analysis of the facts.

Changes 1. We inserted in the text many additional references, even if not exhaustive of all the sources utilized.

Comment 2: *The role of Hamas, laws of war, and review of existing health solutions provided by Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the international community is omitted or ignored.* declined

Reply 2 Indeed, it is unclear this appeal to the role of Hamas, Egypt or Jordan as providers of health solutions, and may be in patching the wounds inflicted by Israel in disregard of the Geneva convention part II, articles 15 onward. Patches not quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient as "health solutions". Is this comment suggesting to cancel Israeli's responsibility in destruction by claiming that others anyhow will remediate the demolition? In particular Israel has obstructed medical aid provision throughout and explicitly claimed so.

Comment 3: *Furthermore, the authors argue that there is genocide in Gaza, an extremely controversial statement, without providing proof or even a definition of how they measure genocide.*

Reply 3: We, and all the jurisprudence, claim there is collective punishment that, although not new and history for Gaza under blockade, has reached a level and quality and expressed its intentionality now and that indicates that genocide is likely being pursued. Presenting the facts that prove collective punishment

and intentional attacks on medical structures is the topic of this paper. The "measure" of genocide is legal, unchanged since 1949. The official definition is in ref 22.

Reviewer F

Comment 1: Criticism of Israel's conduct of the war and the degradation of medical care would be legitimate, but this letter consists largely of partisan and decontextualized political ranting, which does not constitute a reasoned and evidence-supported contribution to a medical journal.

Reply 1: Registering and exposing the modalities that are used to destroy the health system and their consequences on the population is hardly a ranting, but due criticism; legitimate if not needed, as also acknowledged by this reviewer. The context is very clear and known, a military action by air, sea, and land with use of disproportionate force and using weaponry with indiscriminately radius of action, combats waged against virtually all hospitals, not to mention also all other health facilities, not considered in this report but also destroyed. It is of major concern for the medical profession that this purposeful devastation can happen and go unnoticed, or mystified as necessary in name of self protection. This is important given medical professional role of preventing and healing, and because informed medical professionals can better appreciate the meaning for the present and the future health of Gaza people of the devastation that is being imposed on the hospital and the health system.

Comment 2: The statement that only 3 of 36 hospitals in Gaza are functioning does not accord with a UN report of January 31 2024,

Reply 2: Your reference is not correct as it refers to report on January 30. The manuscript was submitted on the 20th of January and the proper reference was and is presented up to that date. You may also know that after each prolonged closure and partial destruction, the hospital facilities attempted to reopen doors, although with most often very limited capacities, specialties and personnel, and working as first presidium for wounded and not wounded whose house was destroyed. These are referred as partially functioning in official reports and their number varies. E.g. It is documented that at a point Shifa managed to set up working again few dialysis machines, utterly insufficient...but had no more maternity intensive care and very reduced trauma care, thus become "at least partially functional". Same happened for Al Awda, Indonesian, Al Alhi hospitals, only proof of the unrelented attempts by decimated health care teams to offer at least some relief.

Comment 3: The statement that injuries are going untreated and chronically ill patients are being deprived of medications is no doubt accurate. The authors should also have acknowledged that the same hardships are being endured by the dozens of civilians who were kidnapped in the invasion that precipitated the war, and are still held hostage by the military forces of the Gaza administration.

Reply 3: I do not know what is the medical care for the civilians from Israel jailed in Gaza. Nor is the focus or topic of the paper which is the denial of health of 2,3 millions people. In conversational terms, I can tell you that all I know is from the published medical reports from the Israeli hospital of those that returned that

in no case was reported illness, my source Times of Israel. Anyhow if the standard is very low for the 2.3. millions, it cannot be "super luxury" for anybody, I would guess, given the lack of medical supplies for all. Always in conversational terms, I would suggest rather to compare prisoners' health hardships, and so with the conditions in which the few medical personnel kidnapped in Gaza and that were freed; these last returned with signs of clear physical and moral abuse.

Comment 4: *None of the statements between lines 29 and 64 are accompanied by citations. They can therefore only be considered to be unsubstantiated allegations*

Reply 4: We were only limiting the number of references as this is a letter. Now more references were inserted from line 41 to 126, as appropriate. These are anyhow only part of the sources available and consulted by us.

Comment 5: *The authors state "The attack on health facilities is forbidden by international laws ...". this is accusation according to Geneva conventions, and crime of collective punishment.....genocide requires intent and extent to part or whole population identified on religious, ethnic ground. This seems to be the main justification for their accusation of genocidal intent... ..that hospitals in Gaza have been misused for military purposes, which strips them of their protected status and makes them legitimate targets. For example, the Director of one of the hospitals admitted to serving as an officer for Hamas, and acknowledged that the facility (Kamal Adwan Hospital) was being used as a military command center*

Reply 5: You put various items together in an improper and confused fashion. One by one:

a) Glad you acknowledge the breach of the Geneva convention part II from article 15 onward. There is no proof of use of hospitals as place from which battle was waged or a single bullet came. So no ground for exception.

b) So called evidence was videos produced by IDF, and only one embedded journalist was allowed to film a tunnel without context. Other people have produced data that debunked all these "proofs". The material evidences were destroyed before independent press or an international commission would be allowed to access them.

c) I invite you to follow the discussion on the breach of the Genocide convention and the multiple sources that suggest that intention of for a formally defined genocide has been amply expressed by personalities in government and politicians and IDF. We refer here to the experts opinions ref 17-19, and to the content of case brought by South Africa and accepted for analysis at the ICJ, ref 22.

d) As to the "confession" of the medical director of the Kamal Radwan in Israeli jail, from IDF source, for now we can only consider that is questionable, given the duress of the methods reported by many medical personnel ex-prisoners, the video of the treatment these published by IDF, the conditions when these were

discharged wounded and often almost naked. So, it is at least questionable if this man was speaking under duress.

Comment 7: The authors refer to "planned destruction of health structures". Whereas health structures have been indeed damaged and destroyed, there is no evidence to support that this was planned or deliberate, other than in the case of those which became legitimate targets when discovered to have been converted to military installations (as noted above)

Reply 7: We refer to "planned destruction of health structures" because the destruction of health structures by imposing de-development, by denying supplies, tools, permission for training to personnel abroad is history of a long term policy advocated by the Israeli occupation and siege; This has been documented extensively through the years by many expert sources, one for all, in successive WHO reports. This is policy is reaching a climax in this last attacks. As already mentioned above there is not proof of the legitimacy (which is only exceptional, according to Geneva conventions) of the attacks, and as we question in the manuscript "is it possible that all the Gaza hospitals were active general command centers of resistance?" Thus, also in face of lack of any access to (independent) proof, yours is an empty assertion or a partisan position.

Comment 8: Their closing sentence misquotes the UN resolution of December 12, 2023. This resolution did call for a ceasefire, but NOT for an unconditional one; this is an important misrepresentation. In fact, the use of the term "unconditional" in the resolution was used to demand the immediate release of all the people who were abducted during the invasion of Israel by Hamas and are still held as hostages in Gaza.

Reply 8: here in full the UN resolution, not misquoted and, too bad, not accepted by the UNSC and fiercely battled by Israel. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144717>

1. Demands an immediate humanitarian ceasefire; (no conditions but compliance to international law, as point 2 below); 2. Reiterates its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians; 3. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access; 4. Decides to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

Comment 9. The quality of the English in the letter is very poor, in parts almost unintelligible. As four of the authors appear to be native English speakers it seems likely that at least these 4 had no significant involvement in writing or editing the letter. It is unacceptable to include anyone as an author who did not have a material role in creating or reviewing the content.

Reply 9: The language was revised fully again in the present version by one of the 4 EN first language authors. Yet, it is frankly offensive, gross and also revealing prejudice, that you are implying some kind of neglect or abuse of some authors (the corresponding one) on others. It is only division of tasks, once the

concept paper is created and shared collectively, and once no objections were raised by any author to the submission.

Reviewer G

Comment 1: It is a political one sided letter which ignores: 1. hamas has and still does use of hospitals, schools, and children gardens, including UNRAW facilities for their terrorist activities.

Reply 1: Unfortunately, no independent commission was accepted by Israel to give strength to your still unilateral statements about active military use of these facilities requiring exceptionality according to the Geneva conventions.

Comment 2: hamas has kidnapped and maliciously murdered and tortured hundreds of innocent babies and families

Reply 2: totally off topics and utterly misleading argument

Comment 3. ISRAEL provides daily humanitarian supply to Gaza including medical supplies.

Reply 3. Not confirmed by facts or USA or UN sources, update yourself, indeed the contrary is documented, not adequate supply in kinds and quantities were reaching (and are reaching) and obstacles to the distribution of that which entered.

Comment 4. THE ACC in HAAG had declared no genocide acts by Israel i GAZA.

What is ACC in HAAG? If you refer to ICJ in Hague, then its decision was taken in January 26 and was that the genocide is "Plausible" and therefore "provisional measures" were requested. Israel will have to refer in few days to the court. But this decision come after we submitted the manuscript on January 20, so is not there.