



ISSOP

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY for
SOCIAL PEDIATRICS and CHILD HEALTH

Statement on Gaza-Israel Conflict

October 11, 2023

ISSOP condemns, in the most forceful terms possible, all acts of mass violence—in particular those perpetrated against civilians and children. There are no acceptable justifications or rationalizations to legitimize indiscriminate violence. Violence generates more violence. Pain generates more pain. And children suffer disproportionately as the victims.

In the current conflict in Israel/Gaza, Hamas has committed brutal attacks and kidnappings of civilians in Israel. However, this cannot justify the indiscriminate bombing and siege of the Palestinian people in Gaza that will lead to the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians. We call for the cessation of violence by both sides and the immediate initiation of high-level diplomacy supported by the UN and regional powers.

While the world is focused on the Middle East, acts of extreme violence against children continue in Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Sahel, Myanmar, Haiti, Ethiopia and multiple other places worldwide. Beyond physical injury, the psychological trauma experienced by children engulfed in violence and armed conflict will affect their health and well-being throughout their life course. These actions represent profound violations of children's rights.

No discipline bears witness to the impact of armed conflict on children more so than pediatrics and other child health professionals. As such, no discipline has a greater responsibility to respond. We call on pediatricians and other child health professionals and professional organizations globally to demand an end to child rights violations in regions impacted by indiscriminate violence and armed conflict, and to promote peace and the prevention and cessation of all hostilities where they occur.

We acknowledge the complexity of the geo-politics driving armed conflicts in regions throughout the world. History teaches that it is necessary to identify the root causes of conflicts and understand their determinants in order to respond. History also reveals that in the face of structural violence fueled by hatred, there is little that can be accomplished through the thirst for revenge and punitive measures.

We must not allow the complexity of geopolitics to preclude our collaborative efforts as child health professionals to advance children's rights to optimal survival and development. We must learn from history the lessons as to how to do so. And, we must engage children and youth to help us understand how to live in peace—enlightened by dignity and respect for universal rights.