

The Special Role of Medics in the Gaza Crisis

Dr Muhammad Akhter

*General Practitioner, London,
BIMA LifeSavers Project Lead*

Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain

Tutor in Social Media and Medicine & History of Medicine at Barts Medical School - London

Correspondence: wajid.akhter@britishima.org

It is a testament to the absolute devastation being wrought by the Israeli government during the plausible genocide in Gaza that there is no sector of normal life left untouched by it.

Education, housing, mosques, water, food, security... the list is endless. When faced with a multi-faceted emergency requiring a response, there are very few fields as capable of addressing it as much as healthcare.

Medics are especially used to prioritise, managing and reassess life and death situations regularly and often coldly. In a mass trauma event, we have the discipline to triage those who we feel are more likely to survive and leave those who we don't. In a war zone, we are able to treat enemy combatants with the same care and diligence as those on our own side. It is for this reason that we must give special attention to the process of saving and then rebuilding Gaza. We know all too well what the 2nd or 3rd wave killers are, and that will stalk the population long after the bombs fall silent.

We know the hidden mental health disaster that will unfold largely out of sight but not out of mind. We know the impact of poor sewage systems and unclean roads and unburied thousands on the public health of the entire

population. With knowledge comes power. With power comes responsibility. With responsibility comes a test. The people of Gaza are passing their test with resilience and patience, which is sublime. Will we?

In order to do this, we will need to be organised and dedicated to working in a way that moves beyond a haphazard or emergency response. BIMA is starting the process of doing this through experienced members like Dr Najeeb Rahman of DWW (Doctors Worldwide), Dr Adil Riaz of Aghosh, Dr Hammad Lodhi of UKIM (UK Islamic Mission) and Dr Kiran of ChildrenNotNumbers that is helping with treatment and medical evacuation for injured children.

We are also working with our more experienced colleagues in other Islamic Medical Associations, especially IMANA (Islamic Medical Association of North America).

However, in order to move to the next level, we will need to continue to build the infrastructure within BIMA and the Muslim community in the UK so that we can play a leading role in protecting the healthcare of the people of Gaza and elsewhere following disasters.