

ISLAMIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (IMASA) PRESS RELEASE

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IMASA Calls on the World Medical Association (WMA) to Uphold Medical Neutrality and Address Violations in Gaza

The Islamic Medical Association of South Africa (IMASA) expresses its profound alarm at the escalating humanitarian and ethical crisis facing the medical community in Gaza. The destruction of hospitals, obstruction of medical services, and unprecedented targeting of healthcare workers represent a direct assault on internationally accepted medical ethics and the principle of medical neutrality.

A recently published editorial in *La Tunisie Médicale* (Gaddas, London et al., 2025) highlights longstanding concerns regarding the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) and its silence on documented violations involving torture, obstruction of care, and complicity in abuses. Independent investigations—including reports by the United Nations, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the UN Special Rapporteur—confirm systematic attacks on Gaza's health sector and deliberate obstruction of lifes...

According to the WHO Health Cluster (2025) and UN OCHA, more than 1,700 Palestinian healthcare workers have been killed since October 2023, with hundreds more injured or detained. This represents the largest recorded loss of medical personnel in a conflict since the establishment of the World Medical Association (WMA).

Among the most urgent cases is that of **Dr Hussam Abu Safiya**, Head of Paediatrics at Kamal Adwan Hospital, who has been detained without charge and reportedly denied medical care. His case reflects the broader pattern of unlawful detention and mistreatment of healthcare workers, in violation of the WMA's own International Code of Medical Ethics (2022).

IMASA has a long history of engagement on this issue, having previously written to the WMA in 2010 and 2014. In 2025, the South African Medical Association (SAMA) took the principled decision to suspend relations with the IMA—demonstrating that ethical accountability must remain non-negotiable, even in politically charged contexts.

IMASA calls on the World Medical Association (WMA) to take decisive action:

1. Launch an independent inquiry into the ethical conduct and silence of the Israeli Medical Association (IMA).
2. Demand the immediate release of Dr Hussam Abu Safiya and all detained healthcare professionals.
3. Suspend the membership of the IMA pending the outcome of an independent investigation.
4. Establish a permanent WMA Task Force on Medical Neutrality to investigate attacks on healthcare services globally.

IMASA reaffirms that the medical profession must remain a guardian of humanity. At a time when Gaza's healthcare system has been systematically dismantled, ethical leadership from the World Medical Association (WMA) is urgently required.

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