



# Call To Action: Ensuring women and children receive humane medical services for vital surgery

There is something we can do to recover some of our humanity. In the midst of war we forget too often that we have more in common than we choose to believe. Who cannot want to change the situation in Gaza?

Over the last 15 weeks, since the atrocities of 7<sup>th</sup> October, over 25,000 people have been killed, 70% of the casualties women and children. The scale of the suffering far exceeds any relief that is being provided but we have to start and we can make an initial impact by focusing on those who are most vulnerable. To achieve this: immediately establish a field hospital for injured children and pregnant women. This is the minimum we can do to uphold decency and humanity.

Every day 160 women deliver their babies in unsafe conditions, some in the streets. We know that emergency amputations are performed on children without anaesthetic, and that women needing caesarean sections with subsequent hysterectomies, also have to endure the process without analgesic. There is no medication, no sanitation, and no vaccinations for the babies and children. This harm is irreparable.

Israel says that it is acting in self-defence, but surely it cannot be argued that children, or women giving birth, are a threat.

Women giving birth and children are protected under international law, but beyond the clear obligations, it should not take legal dispute to expose the very obvious: **immediate medical help must be given so that mothers can give birth safely and injured children can be operated on in minimum sanitary conditions inside Gaza.**

How? States have to use this opportunity to prevent further irreparable harm by ensuring that life-saving hospital services are accessible to women and children who need them.

**A simple solution: establish a field hospital at the Rafah crossing specifically to provide medical aid for pregnancy and amputations.** This could be funded and organized through the UN with its partners, including the newly established office of the UN's senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator for Gaza. Egypt and Israel should ensure supplies are able to pass freely into Gaza and maintain humanitarian corridors to and from the field hospital. Israel must commit to ensuring they will not perpetrate violence that could compromise the integrity of the process or the security and functioning of the hospital. Indeed, in its response at the ICJ, Israel assured the court that:



*Israel is committed to working with agencies and States involved in the aid effort to overcome the hurdles and continue to increase the aid to the people of Gaza`...*

**It now has the opportunity to prove this claim: saving children, and newborns and their mothers. Our common humanity demands no less.**

For more information:

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