



## Editorial



## The Impact of "Veto" on Maternal and Neonatal Health

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### Abstract

More than one hundred days since the war between Hamas in Gaza and the soldiers of the Israeli army from the seventh of October 2023 till the date of writing this article, twenty-sixth of January 2024.

According to the official statistics of Palestinian Ministry of health and the World Health Organization (WHO) the health sector is one of the most damaged sectors because of bombing all over this period. more than twenty-six thousand people killed and more than sixty-five thousand injured, at least two-thirds of them were women and children. The number of children who were killed reached more than eleven thousand, while the number of women who were killed reached more than seven thousand. In addition, one hundred forty-six of UNRWA workers were killed alongside doctors, journalists, and children.

Unfortunately, despite repeated calls by Security Council and United Nations, a humanitarian ceasefire is still not in place to stop the killing of people in Gaza and enable the safe delivery of food, medicine, water, and shelter.

The right of "Veto" used by the United States of America, resulting in non-entry of humanitarian aids, including medical supplies and services due to continuous pumping and failure to ceasefire.

Finally, the right of "Veto" must be completely abolished, out of respect for the principle of Democracy prevailing in the world, until this is achieved, we believe that the use of the right of "Veto" must be suspended when discussing decisions affecting the humanitarian aspect (including maternal and neonatal health)

**Key words:** Veto; maternal; neonatal; children; health

## **Introduction**

The world has followed - and is still - what is happening in the Palestinian territories of a fierce war between Hamas in Gaza and the soldiers of the Israeli army over more than one hundred days, from the seventh of October 2023 till the date of writing this article, twenty-fourth of January 2024.

Let us present in these few lines some of the dangers to which women and children in Gaza are exposed because of the continuous bombing by the Israeli army, and the impact of this on maternal, neonatal, and pediatric health.

In this war there were more than twenty-six thousand people killed and more than sixty-five thousand injured, at least two-thirds of them were women and children according to statistics of the Palestinian Ministry of Health and United Nations (UN) [1].

According to the latest statistics of the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Human Rights Watch after one hundred days of Israeli aggression on Gaza, the number of

children who were killed reached more than eleven thousand, while the number of women who were killed reached more than seven thousand [2]. In addition, one hundred forty-six of UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency) workers were killed alongside doctors, journalists, and children [3].

UNRWA said: "The massive death, destruction, displacement, hunger, loss, and grief of the last 100 days are staining our shared humanity". Thousands have been killed, maimed, and orphaned and hundreds of thousands are deprived of education; their future is in jeopardy, with far-reaching and long-lasting consequences. [3]

"This war affected more than 2 million people- the entire population of Gaza. Many will carry lifelong scars, both physical and psychological. The vast majority, including children, are deeply traumatized. UNRWA said [3].

**World health organization (WHO) statistics after one hundred days of war**

The World health organization (WHO) reported that more than 70% of health sector including the hospitals in the Gaza Strip were destroyed and out of service as a result of the Israeli bombing of hospitals and medical centers, in addition to killing of more than 1,000 health sector workers, including doctors, nurses and ambulance crews [4].

### **The Egyptian support**

On November 2023, three out of thirty-nine premature babies died in the Dar al-Shifa hospital, the largest hospital in the Gaza Strip, due to running out of fuel and nurseries shutting down, according to Palestinian medics. So, President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on November 16, 2023 gave the orders to transfer those thirty-six preterm infants who need treatment in NICUs from Gaza to Egypt to be treated in Egyptian hospitals to save their lives [5].

The Egyptian Ministry of Health announced that it received 36 newborn infants inside Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip, in coordination with the Palestine

Red Crescent Society, which told him that "they are trying to put 3 children in one incubator, because they do not have enough energy to support them." A step which was considered un-safe during transport of the newborns.

### **Humanitarian organizations and societies**

Humanitarian organizations like the Palestinian Red Crescent, the Egyptian Red Crescent, and the Red Cross societies are unable to provide humanitarian services to the residents of the Gaza Strip, including women and children, due to the continued bombing and un-safe environment [4].

### **United Nations and Security Council**

UN (United Nations) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his deep regret at what the people of the Gaza Strip are being subjected to, especially women and children with the displacement of thousands of children and their exposure to hunger, thirst, malnutrition, the spread of infectious diseases and other health disasters [5].

More than 7 meetings of the Security Council - and the General Assembly of the Security Council - were held to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Palestine, including the health conditions in the Gaza Strip after the destruction of most of the Strip's hospitals [6]. Unfortunately, despite repeated calls, a humanitarian ceasefire is still not in place to stop the killing of people in Gaza and enable the safe delivery of food, medicine, water, and shelter.

### **The impact of veto**

On December 22, 2023, the Security Council was held to discuss a project of ceasefire in the Strip and allowing the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, including the requirements for the health sector, hospital supplies, ambulances, .... etc. All countries who are members in Council agreed to adopt this decision and ceasefire, but unfortunately the decision was rejected by using the right of "Veto" by the United States of America, resulting in non-entry of humanitarian aids, including medical

supplies and services due to continuous pumping and failure to ceasefire.

In a similar situation during the war between Russia and Ukraine, when the Security Council met to discuss a project to stop the war and the majority of the Council countries agreed to stop the war, but unfortunately Russia used its right of "veto" to reject the project, and the decision to stop the war failed in spite of support of the majority of countries [7].

### **The right of veto and democracy**

The question is: Is it reasonable and logical for one country to cancel a decision adopted by more than 136 countries?? Is this the concept of Democracy in a world that is supposed to respect the opinion of the majority? Is it humane to reject a humanitarian decision for the sake of political or military gains? We think the answer will be it is un-logic and unhuman to use the right of veto to obstacle humanitarian projects.

We think in order to guarantee the work of humanitarian organizations or societies - including those concerned with health in

general and maternal and neonatal health in particular - international law must therefore guarantee that all health and humanitarian bodies work without falling under the jurisdiction of a state or a political or military institution and should be protected at all times. International law must also guarantee a mechanism to punish countries or institutions that obstruct the performance of these humanitarian or health organizations or societies.

Finally, the right of "Veto" must be completely abolished, out of respect for the principle of Democracy prevailing in the world when discussing humanitarian situations, especially those that deal with the health of women and children. Until this is achieved, we believe that the use of the right of "Veto" must be suspended when discussing decisions affecting the humanitarian aspect (including maternal and neonatal health), out of respect for the principle of brotherhood in humanity.

#### **Conflict of interest**

No conflict of interest

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**Fig (1):** Crowdedness of neonates receiving ryle feeding before transfer



**Fig (2):** Some of neonates who died before transfer

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