

Padua, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025

## **BREAK THE SELECTIVE SILENCE ON THE GENOCIDE IN GAZA**

**Life expectancy at birth in Gaza has collapsed more than in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide: an appeal to institutions published in «The Lancet» has already gathered 3.300 signatures: SILENT IS NOT AN OPTION**

**An article published today in The Lancet calls on institutions, professional associations and academics in the fields of healthcare, public health and social sciences to publicly acknowledge the genocide in Gaza and to review their official positions.**



**It was authored by Professor Roberto De Vogli of the Human Rights Centre and of the Department of Developmental and Social Psychology at the University of Padua, in collaboration with his colleagues Jonathan Montopoli (Anaesthesia and Resuscitation Unit at the Infermi Hospital in Rimini), Ghassan Abu-Sittah (University of Glasgow, UK) and Ilan Pappè, University of Exeter (UK).**

De Vogli and colleagues emphasise that there is substantial and well-documented evidence pointing to a catastrophic public health emergency in Gaza: «Palestinian children have been disproportionately affected. Since 7 October 2023, Gaza has recorded more child deaths than any other conflict zone and has the highest number of children with amputations per capita in the world. The healthcare system has also been systematically dismantled. Between October 2023 and May 2025, there were 720 documented attacks on healthcare targets, including 125 healthcare facilities, 34 hospitals and 186 ambulances. Gaza has recorded the highest number of casualties among healthcare workers (over 1,400 deaths), United Nations personnel (295 deaths) and journalists (212 deaths) in any conflict zone. Hunger is repeatedly and relentlessly used as a weapon of war. »

The open letter that forms the basis of the Lancet article *Stop the silence: Academic associations must recognise the genocide in Gaza* – which has already gathered over 3,300 signatures – denounces the serious food insecurity and the alarmingly levels of malnutrition-related deaths for the entire population.

Moreover, the article underlines the striking decline in life expectancy at birth in Gaza, from 75.5 years to 40.5 years in 2024. This represents a greater decline in longevity than that recorded during the genocide in Rwanda, where life expectancy at birth fell from 42.9 years in 1993 to 12.2 years in 1994.

**Publicly acknowledging the genocide and calling for immediate international intervention for a permanent ceasefire and humanitarian access, legal accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, are just some of the key points contained in the open letter covered in the Lancet article.**

Leading human rights organisations, United Nations agencies and United Nations special rapporteurs have officially recognised the genocide in Gaza. This position is also supported by a large and distinguished group of genocide scholars. However, most public health, medical, and social science associations have remained silent or issued vague statements, a response that contrasts sharply with their swift and strong support in other conflicts, such as the one in Ukraine.

The letter is an exhortation to academic and health institutions to challenge this ‘selective silence’, a phenomenon related to “selective empathy” or tendency to express solidarity towards people who are perceived as belonging to a particular group.

The initiative prompted three major public health associations – the European Public Health Alliance, the European Public Health Association and the World Federation of Public Health Associations, representing over 5 million health professionals globally – to issue a new joint statement recognising the genocide.

«The genocide in Gaza is a decisive ethical test for the global health community, social scientists and academic associations - the letter states -. Silence is not an option. As scholars and health professionals, we face a difficult choice: either we defend our collective ethical responsibility and raise our voices to prevent further mass violence and starvation, or we will be remembered for our silence and inaction during one of the most urgent moral moments. »

**Link to The Lancet article:**

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01541-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01541-7/fulltext)

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