

WHO



Topic B: "Gaza, lack of vaccination for Polio in children and its increasing deaths numbers."

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Welcoming letter

Dear delegates,

Welcome to this edition of Colegio Fontanar Model of the United Nations. We are very excited to have you at the World Health Organization, thank you for choosing this committee.

In this committee, we will talk about Euthanasia, focusing on the right to life as the fundamental right, and we will address the lack of vaccination for polio of children at Gaza, its devastating impact, and the increasing death toll resulting from this preventable disease.

We are confident that each of you will bring unique perspectives and insights to the table, and we look forward for productive and engaging sessions.

Best of luck to all of you, and we wish you a successful experience at this Model of the United Nations.

Sincerely,

Paula Pérez and María José Armada
Moderator and Chair of WHO

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I. Committee Background

The World Health Organization (WHO), founded in 1948, is a United Nations agency dedicated to combat disease and promote global health.

WHO collaborates with 194 member states worldwide to address various health issues, such as infectious diseases, maternal and child health, environmental health, among others. WHO's primary focus is to improve health outcomes globally, address healthcare crises, and support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of the key situations WHO has contributed to, include the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pandemic Treaty aimed at preventing future pandemics, the Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence to respond to health emergencies, mental health initiatives, among others.

II. Introduction to the Topic

The ongoing conflict in Gaza has disrupted several healthcare systems, leading to a resurgence of polio, a preventable viral disease that causes paralysis and death.

Despite global efforts to eradicate polio, the lack of widespread vaccination in Gaza has left many children vulnerable to the disease.

Political instability, limited access to vaccines, and damage to healthcare infrastructure have all contributed to this crisis.

Polio's return has led to an increase in deaths and disabilities, worsening the already fragile health situation in Gaza. WHO and international partners are working to address these challenges, but security and logistical barriers continue hindering vaccination efforts.

This situation underscores the urgent need for global cooperation to improve vaccination coverage and protect children from preventable diseases like polio.

III. Evolution of the Topic

Polio was largely controlled globally through widespread vaccination, with significant progress made toward eradication. However, in conflict zones like Gaza, political instability, security issues, and infrastructure destruction have disrupted healthcare systems, preventing effective vaccination campaigns. While global efforts to eliminate polio continued, Gaza's lack of access to vaccines and regular immunization programs allowed the disease to resurface. The WHO and other international organizations have attempted to address this through emergency vaccination drives and mobile units, but these efforts are often hindered by ongoing conflict and limited resources.

Today, polio remains a serious health threat in Gaza, highlighting the challenges of vaccinating in conflict zones and the urgent need for international cooperation to prevent further deaths and disabilities. The situation in Gaza has turned what was once a success story in global health into a pressing humanitarian crisis.

IV. Relevant Events

- **Launch of Global Polio Eradication Initiative**
In the late 1980s, the WHO launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), which significantly reduced global polio cases. However, conflict zones like Gaza were excluded from its success due to instability and disrupted vaccination efforts.

- **Polio Resurgence in Gaza (2013)**
In 2013, Gaza saw its first polio outbreak in over a decade, highlighting the breakdown of immunization efforts due to political instability and limited access to vaccines.

- **WHO Emergency Response (2013-2014)**
After the outbreak, the WHO launched emergency vaccination campaigns, including door-to-door programs in Gaza, though political and security challenges hindered full implementation.

IV. Relevant Events

- Polio Outbreak in Syria (2013)

The 2013 Syria polio outbreak spread the disease to neighboring areas, including Gaza, further underscoring the need for widespread vaccination in conflict zones.

- Polio Resurgence in Gaza (2018-2019)

Another outbreak occurred in 2018, with a rise in vaccine-derived polio cases, leading to increased deaths and disabilities in Gaza, revealing the ongoing public health crisis.

- Global Health Alert (2021)

In 2021, the WHO and UNICEF issued a global health alert about the continued threat of polio in Gaza, urging international action to support vaccination efforts and improve healthcare access.

V. UN and External Actions

a) UN Actions

- Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)

The UN, through the WHO and UNICEF, has been a major force behind the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), providing technical, financial, and logistical support for vaccination campaigns in high-risk areas, including Gaza.

- Emergency Health Responses in Gaza

The UN has coordinated emergency vaccination campaigns in Gaza, providing vaccines and healthcare personnel to reach children in conflict zones. These efforts are essential to counter the polio outbreaks that occur in unstable regions.

- Humanitarian Aid and Support

The UN has facilitated the delivery of medical supplies, including polio vaccines, to Gaza, with agencies like UNRWA supporting the health needs of Palestinian refugees, especially children.

V. UN and External Actions

- Advocacy and Policy Development

The UN advocates for children's health rights in conflict zones, pushing for ceasefire agreements to enable uninterrupted vaccination efforts and raise awareness about the importance of immunization.

b) External Actions

- NGOs and Humanitarian Organizations

NGOs like MSF and Save the Children have played a crucial role in delivering vaccines in Gaza, providing medical teams, vaccines, and logistical support during outbreaks.

- Regional Cooperation

Countries like Egypt and Jordan, along with the Arab League, have supported vaccination efforts in Gaza by providing medical aid, facilitating vaccine delivery, and supporting regional collaborations.

V. UN and External Actions

- Donor Contributions

Donor countries, including the US and EU members, have contributed financially to the GPEI and other initiatives focused on vaccinating children in Gaza.

- Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

Countries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia have funded vaccination campaigns in Gaza, working with the WHO and local authorities to ensure widespread vaccine distribution.

- Private Sector Contributions

Pharmaceutical companies such as Sanofi Pasteur and GSK have donated vaccines, supporting the GPEI's vaccination efforts in Gaza and other conflict zones.

VI. Conclusion

The lack of polio vaccination in Gaza is a critical humanitarian issue that requires immediate global attention. Despite significant efforts from the UN, NGOs, and external actors, challenges like political instability, conflict, and limited healthcare access continue to impede vaccination efforts. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) has made progress, but logistical and security barriers hinder widespread coverage. International collaboration remains essential to ensuring vaccines reach vulnerable populations, particularly children in Gaza. Advocacy, ceasefire agreements, and continued resource mobilization are necessary to address both the immediate health crisis and the broader goal of global polio eradication. Solving this issue is crucial not only to save lives but also to support global health objectives, ensuring healthcare access even in conflict zones.

VII. Committee Focus

- How can the international community improve the coordination of vaccine delivery to Gaza in the face of political and logistical challenges?
- What measures can the UN and its agencies take to ensure that vaccination campaigns continue uninterrupted during periods of conflict or ceasefire?
- How can countries in the region, including Egypt and Jordan, collaborate more effectively with the WHO and UNICEF to support vaccination efforts in Gaza?
- What strategies can be implemented to increase local healthcare infrastructure in Gaza to support polio vaccination and other essential health services?
- How can the international community address the root causes of the health crisis in Gaza, such as poverty, conflict, and limited access to healthcare, to ensure sustainable health solutions in the long term?

VIII. Participation List

- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Commonwealth of Australia
- Federal Republic of Germany
- French Republic
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Italian Republic
- Kingdom of Belgium
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Kingdom of Spain
- Lebanese Republic
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Iraq
- Republic of Korea
- Republic of Turkey
- Russian Federation
- State of Israel
- State of Qatar
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United States of America

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