

# APA Statement Calling for an Immediate, Permanent, and Comprehensive Ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza Conflict

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The American Psychological Association calls for an immediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict. In response to the violence, loss of life, and trauma caused by the ongoing conflict, APA expresses its deep concern for all Israelis, Palestinians, and other people impacted. APA urges cessation of violence and supports aid to the most vulnerable in the region be a top priority. The heightened, unceasing conflict since the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas inside Israel threatens the human rights, life, liberty, physical and psychological health, and well-being of civilians in the Middle East. APA has previously deplored the human cost of aggression and is deeply disturbed by the loss of life and liberty for civilians caught in this escalating conflict (APA, 2023a). APA is an organization that stands for human rights and the psychological and physical health and well-being of all people worldwide (APA, 2021a). A call for an immediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire is not meant to advocate or criticize any of the parties engaged in conflict, but rather calls for an end of continued bloodshed as a solution to the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Violence in the Israel-Gaza conflict has caused immense harm to civilians, with staggering levels of death, injury, displacement, malnourishment, and psychological and physical trauma (Manzanero et al., 2024; Taha et al., 2024). Further, military actions have disrupted access to resources needed to fulfill basic needs and destroyed critical infrastructure, including medical facilities, educational institutions, and cultural centers (Abed, 2024a; Asi et al., 2024).

The immediate and long-term harms from military conflict disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, such as children (Akbulut-Yuksel, 2014; APA, 2021b; APA, 2023b; Çelik, & Özpınar, 2017; Werner, 2012), women (Plümper & Neumayer, 2006), refugees (Melese et al., 2024), older adults (Kimhi et al., 2012), people with disabilities (Al-Masri & Serhan, 2024) and people living in impoverished conditions (Goodhand, 2003; Jordans et al., 2016). Psychological research has consistently demonstrated the detrimental effects of exposure to violence and conflict on mental health, including increased rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression (Aziz et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2008; Murthy & Lakshminarayana, 2006). The immediate deleterious impacts of armed conflict on individuals have also been associated with significant long-term negative psychosocial outcomes that ripple out to families and communities and persist across generations (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Lin & Suyemoto, 2016; Ron, 2011). An immediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire

is an essential step in the prevention of future armed conflicts, alleviating immediate suffering, preventing further deaths, and creating conditions conducive to long-term peacebuilding and reconciliation to halt the long-term effects on individual and social determinants of health (Abed, 2024b; López-López et al., 2021; Rettenberg & Ugarriza, 2016; Wu & Yang, 2011).

APA recognizes that there are many factors, including psychological processes, that lead to armed conflict (Christie & Montiel, 2013; Leader Maynard, 2019; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). APA urges all actors to prioritize the protection of civilians, to adhere to international humanitarian law, and to engage in meaningful dialogue and negotiation toward just and sustainable resolutions. APA further urges the international community to commit sufficient resources to strengthen the ability of peacekeeping forces (Duursma, 2023), enforced demilitarized zones (Duursma, 2021; Fortna, 2003), economic support (Jordans et al., 2012; Wolff, 2001), diplomatic mediation (Bercovitch & Gartner, 2006; Clayton, 2013), and independent monitoring (Karakus & Svensson, 2020).

APA calls for increased access to culturally responsive, contextually relevant, evidence-based psychological resources for those affected by armed conflict and living through humanitarian emergencies (D'Andrea et al., 2023; Hamber et al., 2015; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2022; Kaim et al., 2024; Wessells, 2009). APA is committed to promoting research, education, practice, and advocacy to address the psychological impacts of conflict and violence, supporting the resilience and recovery of affected individuals and communities, and advancing strategies for constructive conflict resolution and repair.

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