

EDITORIAL

War and Social Medicine

Guerra y Medicina Social

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71164/socialmedicine.v19i2.2026.2791>

As social medicine practitioners, we take a side. We have seen our broad civil society and academic efforts to convince U.S. and other countries' politicians to stop or not to participate in genocide fall on deaf ears. We recognize that the Zionist entity called Israel will not stop committing war crimes and its genocide in West Asia unless it is forced to.

We take the side of unconditional **peace, human rights, and equity** - comprehensively embodied in the principles and practice of Social Medicine. Therefore, we value the efforts to stop the attacks and deliver humanitarian aid to Palestine, Iran, and Lebanon. We also urge the protection of health and humanitarian brigades and the international press in a conflict that systematically kills those who fight disinformation or simply seek to save the lives of innocent civilians.

Actions by Israel leading to deaths, injuries, and destruction of facilities needed for survival do not happen only in their region. Israel has participated in or supported militarily other genocides and repressive governments around the world. These actions have led to devastating effects on health and survival for many countries in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, North America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Israel has described Palestine as a "laboratory" to test armaments, surveillance systems, and military tactics and strategies so that the Israeli government and Israeli corporations can sell them to dictators and repressive governments around the world.

This journal has already before taken a stance against the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people by the government of Israel, which on 30 March 2026 flagrantly spotlighted its apartheid occupation with a new law making the death penalty the default punishment for Palestinians in the West Bank when found guilty of deadly attacks unilaterally deemed to be acts of terrorism. The U.S. and the European Union have funded, provided the arms for, and given political cover to this genocide. Now the U.S. has joined with Israel in a tag team of sorts to assault Iran and Lebanon. In the opening of the war, the U.S. double-tapped a primary school for girls in Minab with two Tomahawk cruise missiles. It murdered primary school girls and their teachers with the first missile - then, family members, neighbors, and rescuers with the second, 40 minutes later - for a total of 170-some. This demonstrates the willingness of the U.S. to directly engage in the violation of international law, committing war crimes that have been a matter of course for Israel. In accordance with this law, the leaders of the U.S. and Israel ought to be held criminally accountable for the current aggression and wars.

As Social Medicine practitioners, we recognize the social determination of ill-health and premature deaths. We not only examine the proximate causes, but we also identify the determining large-scale social forces (structural determinants). In the current situation, we can identify a variety of them, including the use of Zionism as an organizing principle to justify a settler colonialist



apartheid that occupies the land of Palestine. Zionism's adherents include Christian fundamentalists. Furthermore, many U.S. military personnel are reporting that their officers are also telling them that they are fulfilling a divine mission as explicitly endorsed by some Congress members and officials of the Department of War. Similarly, Israeli authorities allude to "Greater Israel" as a religious justification for a perpetual war of aggression.

As Social Medicine practitioners, it is evident to us that the U.S. empire is in decline. History teaches us that declining empires overreach. The U.S. seeks to perpetuate this system through violence. By initiating the war of aggression against Iran, the U.S. and its tag team partner are contributing to the further decline of the U.S. empire. This is happening in a widespread, extreme, and dangerous manner which can lead to a devastating (and possibly the last) Third World War.

As Social Medicine practitioners, we recognize that the main costs of war are borne not just by combatants, but increasingly - and even primarily - by ordinary people. When critical infrastructure - such as airports, shipping, ground transportation, fuel, fertilizer, food supplies, water (desalination plants), sanitation, electricity, hospitals, clinics - are blown up by bombs, ordinary people die because they cannot obtain the things that make their lives possible. Meanwhile, war is promoted by the military industrial complex, which benefits greatly, further escalating already extreme global inequities.

To the east of the Persian Gulf, the countries of Asia, dependent on the flow of petroleum through the Strait of Hormuz, are in dire straits. Their people and their migrant workers are already starting to feel the pain.

In the Americas, the U.S. is violating all norms of international law. It has attacked civilian boats in international waters. The U.S. further violated Venezuela's sovereignty, sabotaged its water and power plants, and launched a military attack, wounding many and killing more than 75 Venezuelans and Cubans. It illegally kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro and his wife.

The war against Cuba continues. The US war of attrition, initiated in 1962, has taken a crueler turn by prohibiting the entry of oil, food, and medicine - betting that the growing failure to provide basic services, coupled with efforts to bring about famine - will create the conditions conducive to the "seizure" of Cuba. Such actions are accompanied by attempts at sabotage and military or paramilitary aggression. Paradoxically, the main excuse continues to be "freedom," "democracy," and "the fight against drug trafficking" . . . while President Trump has pardoned former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, imprisoned for drug trafficking.

This journal supports all efforts of governments, such as Mexico's, and various social and humanitarian organizations, to deliver food, medical supplies, and other necessities to the people of Cuba. Several of us have participated in collecting supplies and donations for the various convoys currently *en route* to this sister nation.

As Social Medicine practitioners, we want to emphasize that in war, no one wins. Thousands suffer, die, or are maimed, and economies are destroyed as the material cost of life support increases, which is why we advocate for the immediate cessation of war and the unrestricted respect for the sovereignty of peoples. In order to protect human lives, health and environmental integrity we urge all scientific associations and social movements to endorse a global antiwar movement against imperialist greed and aggression.

Ever onward to victory! *¡Hasta la victoria siempre!*



Social Medicine
Health For All

ISSN: 1557-7112