

Hypocrisy of moral imperatives in the Israel– Hamas war

In their Correspondence,¹ Roghieh Dehghan and colleagues call for ending the violence in Palestine, a worthy goal. But their premise—that they are upholding the core values of respect for life, beneficence, and justice—is at odds with their failure to condemn the culpable party for the crisis in Gaza: Hamas. The authors fail to even mention the Oct 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, whose charter calls for Israel's destruction and the genocide of Jews.² How are the authors' values consistent with Hamas's instalment and use of offensive tunnels containing explosive weaponry underneath and adjacent to hospitals, schools, and residences?³ Why do their principles not extend to the inhumanely imprisoned Israeli hostages or acknowledge the extensive civilian participation in the hostage-taking and imprisonment of Israelis? Where is the outrage over the torture, sexual violence, and mutilation of bodies by Hamas?⁴

As with any country, Israel is entitled to act in legitimate self-defence; the Israel– Hamas war hardly occurred in a vacuum. The authors' failure to acknowledge Hamas's culpability for the current terrible situation in Gaza is incomprehensible. To list just two examples of this culpability: Hamas prevented Gazan civilians from evacuating⁵ and has commandeered aid.⁶

If a "moral imperative exists for physicians to engage in political activism in the face of human rights violations and war crimes",¹ what should follow is the condemnation of Hamas's war crimes. We suggest that wilful ignorance of Hamas's genocidal intent and use of human shields—including children and hospitalised patients—is disingenuous. Hamas's

actions are the ones that require condemnation, including its most egregious crime: the massacre that started this horrific war.

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*Steven Roth, Hedy S Wald,
Nicole Z Spence, Ruth Oratz,
Daniella M Schwartz
rothgas@uic.edu

Department of Anesthesiology, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Chicago, Chicago, IL 60612, USA (SR); Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School, Providence, RI, USA (HSW); Boston University Medical Campus, Boston University, Boston, MA, USA (NZS); NYU Grossman School of Medicine, New York University, New York, NY, USA (RO); University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA (DMS)

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- 2 Wilson Center. Doctrine of Hamas. Wilson Center, Oct 20, 2023. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/doctrine-hamas> (accessed Jan 26, 2024).
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