



Tony Blair  
Envoy to the Middle East Quartet  
The Office of Tony Blair  
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Dear Mr. Blair,

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June you accepted the difficult mission of becoming the Envoy to the Middle East Quartet and the 19<sup>th</sup> of July meeting in Lisbon confirmed the aim of creating favourable conditions for reconstructing the Palestinian State. Alongside the peace negotiations, the role you will play in relation to economic and institutional reforms will have an immediate impact on the lives of the Palestinian people. That is why we are writing to you.

*Médecins du Monde* is a humanitarian medical organisation that has been present in the Palestinian territories since 1995. In partnership with local public and private structures, our medical and paramedical staff provides care for civilian populations and training for healthcare professionals. Until recently, we were providing quantitative and qualitative support to local staff. In the past few months, however, our role has shifted in order to compensate for the literally devastated healthcare system.

For many years, we have regularly alerted politicians and the public about humanitarian concerns and the health of the Palestinian people. In November 2006, concerned by the consequences of the international embargo, we published a report entitled "*Gaza Strip, the impact of the international embargo and Israeli army attacks on the health of the population*". This report was presented at the International Development Select Committee of the UK Parliament. The document presented the difficulties experienced by the population in accessing water, food and healthcare. We highlighted in particular evidence of depression and psychological trauma and underlined the necessity of giving guarantees to the population so that they could recover hope rather than descend into a spiral of violence. One year later, we are seeing the outcome of this anticipated disaster: the total collapse of both the economic and health systems and of the fragile Palestinian State.

As a humanitarian actor, we are delighted by the international enthusiasm that accompanied your nomination. However, in light of your new functions and responsibilities, we would like to remind you that embargos have never resulted in toppling the power against whom they had been implemented. Moreover, they have often contributed to feed the extremism they were intended to fight. The reestablishment of a working economy and stable institutions are essential factors for peace. Therefore, we join the appeal launched by the UNRWA urging you to call for

the circulation of goods in the Gaza Strip and to end the embargo that is worsening the already precarious situation of 1.5 million people.

The Quartet's concern for humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip was translated into the setting up of a temporary mechanism. From our work on the ground we see how insufficient it is for the population and how debilitating it is to the efforts made to develop competent public services and administration. We have transmitted our concerns about this on several occasions to the members of the Quartet and to the European Union in particular.

As one of the few remaining organisations present in the Gaza Strip, we ask you to strive:

- To establish a direct dialogue with the democratically elected Hamas representatives. Other regimes with behaviour that was doubtful, even sickening, have been treated with the same kind of pragmatism. The will to access and support the population must be given priority.
- To put pressure on Israel for the restored flow of tax revenue, food, water, and medicines, as well as the circulation of people and goods.
- To press the Quartet to restore all the economic and financial measures in place prior to the embargo.

We hope you will undertake the necessary steps to ensure a rapid and lasting improvement of the health of the Palestinian people.

As our teams remain in place on the ground, we remain at your disposal to keep you informed about the daily lives of the Palestinian people.

Yours sincerely,

President, Medecins du Monde France

President, Medicos del Mundo

President, Medecins du Monde Suisse

President, Medecins du Monde UK

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