The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region

ASPHER statement condemning terrorist attacks on civilian populations

10 October 2023

ASPHER strongly and unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks on civilians in Israel perpetrated by Hamas. To date, Hamas has killed over 900 civilians including women, children, and 260 young people who attended a music festival. ASPHER considers these attacks as a severe violation of human rights and an infringement of international law. As a public health association, ASPHER is deeply concerned about the many lives lost and the negative repercussions on the physical and mental health of individuals and communities.

ASPHER is fearful for the wellbeing of about 150 non-combatant civilians taken hostage by Hamas, including children, disabled and elderly persons. Their lives, as well as their physical and mental health, are at great risk. ASPHER calls for their immediate release. ASPHER calls for rapid intervention on their behalf by organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent.

ASPHER is concerned about non-combatant civilians in the Gaza strip. They deserve protection like civilians everywhere.

This latest atrocity by Hamas has only added to the cycle of violence in the region. ASPHER appeals to all parties involved to seek for peaceful lives together, respecting the rights of all people in the region.

ASPHER is a membership organization representing more than 120 schools and institutions of public health education and training in 43 countries (www.ASPHER.org). ASPHER again stresses the need for peace work. ASPHER has previously outlined the roles and actions Schools of Public Health can take, guided by the principles for peacebuilding, to support civil society with critical skills and competences during conflict. ASPHER greatly values colleagues in schools of public health in the region. We know that you have in the past sought to work harmoniously together in the interests of health and peace. ASPHER will support you in all your further efforts.