

Uphold the rights of the Palestinians: End aggressions



AK ABDUL MOMEN

WHILE the Muslim world was observing the holy month of Ramadan, the people in the occupied territory of Palestine were

yet again facing the atrocities and brutality of the Israeli forces while trying to perform their prayers in the holy mosque Al Aqsa. The aggressions are continuing and so is the number of casualties (as of yesterday, it reached over 198 people, including 58 children), while the torch-bearers of human rights and humanity are watching from the sidelines, blaming Palestine for failing to protect themselves.

Since becoming a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in February 1974, Bangladesh has been continuing to play an active role in the activities of the organisation based on the "Islamic values for Sustainable Peace, Solidarity and Development". We are also an active member in the Al Quds Committee and resolve in reaching a solution to the Palestinian cause. Today's scenario reminds me of 1947, when persecuted Jews were given shelter in Palestine and Jewish people put up a banner that read "The Germans destroyed our families and homes—Don't destroy our hopes". Sadly, the once persecuted Jewish community are now destroying the homes, families and hopes of unarmed Palestinians, those

who provided them shelter during their difficult days. It is time for the leadership to reflect and review, and come forward to establish justice.

A renowned American Philosopher Professor of MIT, Noam Chomsky, Jewish by birth (but not Zionist), refuted the argument of Israel that, in a war, casualties are normal. He said, "Israel uses sophisticated attack jets and naval vessels to bomb densely-crowded refugee camps, schools, apartment blocks, mosques and slums to attack a population that has no air force, no air defence, no navy, no heavy weapons, no artillery units, no mechanised armour, no command in control, no army and calls it a war. It is not war, it is murder."

Another relevant comment is by an Israeli former Air Force Captain, Yonatan Shapira. When he was asked about what Israel is doing, he replied, "It is a war crime, a massive war crime, a crime not only against Palestinian people but also against the Israeli people."

Bangladesh is saddened and expresses its deepest condolences to the victims, while strongly condemning the repeated attacks by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in Al-Quds Al-Sharif (Jerusalem), and the entire occupied land of the State of Palestine, preventing worshippers from accessing holy sites for their religious rites. We also condemn the storming by the Israeli occupation forces of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, followed by attacks on the Palestinian worshippers there. Bangladesh believes that there is no pretext that can justify killings



A Palestinian family sits outside their home after it was hit by an early morning Israeli air attack, in Gaza City, Monday, May 17, 2021. PHOTO: AP/KHALIL HAMRA

of innocent civilians; no argument can justify the breach of international humanitarian laws and human rights standards.

As the principal organ of the UN with the mandate to ensure international peace and security, Bangladesh urges the UN Security Council to take up the issue of violence and breach of security in the Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the entire occupied land of the state of Palestine. The OIC Group at the United Nations has taken note of the current act of aggression seriously and has issued a statement which Bangladesh endorses. Bangladesh also agrees with

the suggestion of the resumption of the 10th Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly if the Security Council fails to uphold its responsibility.

Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in her letter to the Honourable President of the State of Palestine, said, "I take this opportunity to reiterate Bangladesh's unflinching commitment in realising the inalienable rights of the brotherly people of Palestine for an independent homeland and a sovereign and viable State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital."

Bangladesh continues to maintain its principled position for a comprehensive and durable solution to the Palestinian issue in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Quartet Road Map. We believe that the international community should come together towards realising this solution.

Bangladesh opines that the decisions taken during the June 10, 2020 Open-Ended Virtual Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, at the level of Foreign Ministers, on the threats of the Israeli occupation government to annex parts of the State of Palestine's territory (occupied since 1967), are noteworthy and the international community in general and the OIC members in particular should continue their efforts to implement them. Implementation of the directives, together with our decisions from the open-ended meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the level of Foreign Ministers to discuss the ongoing developments in Palestine (held on May 16, 2021 virtually), will lead towards the realisation of a comprehensive solution for the Palestinian cause.

Only by mobilising and optimising our synergies can we create a society of shared peace and stability, which our future generations will inherit. At this crucial juncture, let us stand strong together and work for the betterment of humanity, and finally stop this massacre.

Dr AK Abdul Momen, MP is the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh.

WORLD FAMILY DOCTOR DAY

Family doctors can help us manage the pandemic

MD KABIR AHMED KHAN

THE observance of World Family Doctor Day on this day every year can highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in the healthcare system. Family doctors, or physicians who are regularly consulted by all family members in the time of medical need, have been the backbone of healthcare systems around the world. But what do we mean by family doctors, and why are they important?

A family doctor is a personal medical guide and health adviser with a holistic approach to patient management irrespective of age, gender or organs involved, which is known as the comprehensive approach. They are competent and equipped to serve diverse health needs. Usually, they are specialists in Family Medicine, which is a structured training programme to meet patients as a first point of contact, address their total health needs, both urgent and chronic, and offer personal medical care in one or more fields of healthcare within the context of the family and community.

The importance of family doctors lie in the fact that they link the community to higher medical centres for specialised healthcare. Therefore, they play a pivotal role by establishing effective referrals of patients. Family doctors also tend to be more aware about the specific health needs of the community, changing epidemiological patterns and diseases load, so they can be in important positions to plan health services.

Family doctors can also help to reduce health disparities in underserved population by strengthening primary medical care in the remotest areas of



PHOTO: COLLECTED

the community. Multiple evidences suggest that family doctors can provide quality and cost-effective healthcare and strengthen the prevention and promotion of health-related activities in the community to add value to the healthcare system.

World Family Doctor Day has opened up opportunities to create awareness amongst the general population and highlight the important contributions of family doctors, as well as create an atmosphere of global solidarity among family doctors. This year, the theme of this day is "Building the Future with Family Doctors", which is aligned with the Year of the Health and Care Workers 2021, declared by the World Health Organization (WHO).

There are also four fundamental pillars of World Family Doctor Day

2021 which aim to overcome challenges and build a better future. These are: family doctors working together with multidisciplinary primary care teams to strengthen health systems and deliver high quality and affordable care to all; putting patients at the centre of all activities to provide ongoing support and ensure continuity of care; adopting new technologies as fundamental tools, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic; and involving everyone to raise their voices, share their activities and efforts, and contribute to building the future with family doctors.

The world is now experiencing an unprecedented health challenge as the global coronavirus pandemic continues to spread, with almost all countries experiencing a second or even third wave. The threat of the third

wave is knocking at our door as our citizens are not following precautionary measures to ward off the infection, and our neighbouring countries are experiencing unprecedented sufferings in the face of the new Covid-19 variants.

Lack of access to quality healthcare has become a significant challenge in combating Covid-19 in Bangladesh. Due to insufficient resources, poor healthcare delivery infrastructure and lack of coordination in health sectors, patients are struggling to receive healthcare—not just to manage Covid-19, but for other chronic health conditions as well. We have also seen how patient loads can quickly overwhelm the local healthcare system, forcing patients to move from one hospital to another one without any support. In this scenario, a family doctor can act as a leader amongst frontline health workers and provide primary care, which is the first point of contact for those who seek any type of health services.

The need of the hour is to understand and incorporate into our healthcare system well-trained family doctors who can form the backbone of our healthcare system. As "gatekeepers" at primary care facilities, they can improve the cost-effectiveness of healthcare delivery, during the pandemic and beyond.

In the present pandemic situation, the roles and responsibilities of family doctors as primary care physicians are manifold. They can maintain the triage (order of treatment) at the frontline by disease screening, provide telemedicine consultations, train auxiliary healthcare providers, educate the community, guide community leaders and assist

public health authorities. They can act as a family friend and healthcare advocate in this crisis situation, and can address mental health issues as well. They can also reduce the load of patients in specialists' chambers as well as the number of hospital admissions. This would, in turn, improve patient satisfaction and build confidence in our healthcare system despite the resource constraints in the country.

Covid-19 infections have been divided into four categories—mild, moderate, severe and critical. Almost 80 percent of all cases are mild, and 15 percent are moderate. It is now well established that all mild and a small portion of moderate cases can be easily managed at home under the supervision of a family doctor through the help of telemedicine. In this way, trained family doctors can play a vital role in managing the current pandemic. For example, some private hospitals are providing access to quality healthcare through video consultations by well-trained family doctors and other family health professionals, along with testing for Covid-19, home sample collection and pharmacy deliveries all over Dhaka.

Bangladesh is in dire need of more family doctors in order to build a stronger health system. There should be strong policy directives with detailed roadmaps regarding the utilisation of family doctors in the public health system by the government. There should also be some initiative to raise awareness regarding the role of family doctors in caring for families and communities.

Dr Lt Colonel (Retd) Md Kabir Ahmed Khan is Consultant Family Medicine at Praava Health.

QUOTABLE Quote



BENNETT CERF (1898—1971) American publisher

The person who can bring the spirit of laughter into a room is indeed blessed.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

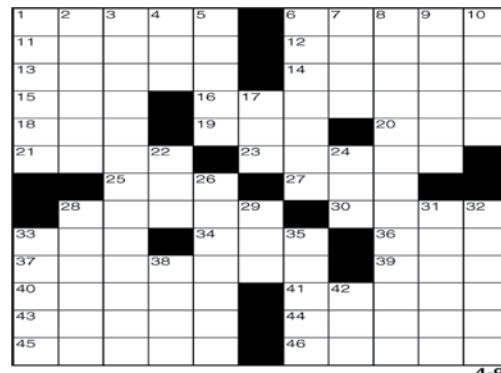
ACROSS

- 1 Play groups
- 6 Athlete-actor Grier
- 11 Blue hue
- 12 Singer Cara
- 13 "Splish Splash" singer
- 14 City of northern Italy
- 15 North Pole worker
- 16 Puts aside
- 18 Hot brew
- 19 Long, long time
- 20 Follower's suffix
- 21 Pouchlike parts
- 23 Bar in a cage
- 25 Stirrup setting
- 27 Game piece
- 28 Egyptian city

- 30 Capital on a fjord
- 33 Drama division
- 34 Singer Tillis
- 38 Young one
- 37 "Edward II" playwright
- 39 Stadium cry
- 40 Indian, e.g.
- 41 Stage comment
- 43 Flower girl, often
- 44 Tenement worker
- 45 Airport areas
- 46 Obey

DOWN

- 1 West Point attendees
- 2 Showy shrub
- 3 City way
- 4 Numerical prefix
- 5 Reason
- 6 Turned red, perhaps
- 7 Spoken
- 8 Indicator of length of active duty
- 9 Tangle
- 10 Baker's need
- 17 Little spring
- 22 Shop tool
- 24 Carnival city
- 26 Punk pioneers
- 28 Spiny tree
- 29 Original
- 31 Like some dice
- 32 Everyone else
- 33 In the thick of
- 35 Rein for rover
- 38 Doily stuff
- 42 Take to court



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

M	A	G	I	A	D	A	P	T
A	L	A	S	S	L	I	D	E
R	A	N	T	I	G	N	O	R
S	I	G	H	T	G	A	G	
S	T	R	U	T	S			O
M	O	U	S	E		M	A	N
U	R	N			T	E	N	D
T	I	G	E	R	R	A	G	
F	A	K	E	I	T	L	I	M
A	L	I	E	N	S	I	D	E
D	E	N	S	E		C	E	N

BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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