

For the [Correspondence](#) letter by Manduca and colleagues see *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 397–98

For the [Editorial](#) see *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 469

Following publication on July 23, 2014, of the Correspondence letter by Paola Manduca and colleagues—"An open letter for the people in Gaza"—we received a large number of responses, critical and supportive. We have published 20 letters in print and online reflecting the diversity of this response, together with an Editorial exploring Gaza's ongoing conflict from a health and humanitarian perspective. To conclude this exchange, as we usually do, we have given the authors of the original letter an opportunity to reply.

The Lancet Editors



Israel–Gaza conflict Authors' reply

Our Correspondence¹ has prompted supportive as well as opposing responses—some of which have been surprisingly personal, perhaps reflecting the violence of recent events in Gaza. We submit this reply in the spirit of participating in an open and respectful discussion. We welcome the opportunity to address some of the main concerns raised by our critics.

First, we were challenged to declare our competing interests. We declared no conflicts since none of us has any relevant financial interests. We do have experience and affiliations enabling us to support Palestinian civil society and to engage in professional exchange (appendix). We hope that most people will read our past work as evidence that we have considerable experience of the situation we described and commented upon.

Second, we have been questioned about allegations that gas might have been used in Gaza.² We noted that, "should the use of gas be further confirmed...". Indeed, before any definitive judgment is made, we believe that the independent Commission of Inquiry set up by the UN Human Rights Council to

investigate purported violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws is the best place to test the veracity of these, and other, claims.

Finally, it is worth recalling the context in which we wrote our strongly worded letter. As the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported the day before our letter was published (July 22), "The huge loss of civilian life, alongside credible reports about incidents where civilians or civilian objects (including homes) have been directly hit by Israeli shelling, in circumstances where there was no rocket fire or armed group activity in the close vicinity, raise concerns about the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law."³ Specifically, during the preceding 2 days, one Palestinian child was being killed every hour; a hospital was hit by an Israeli air strike killing three people, injuring 40, and destroying the top two floors of the health facility; more than 100 000 people had been displaced from their homes and faced acute shortages of water; the targeting of homes was killing multiple members of the same family (six children aged 3 to 13 years in one family, and three children aged 7 to 11 years in another); and "a request for a humanitarian pause" was "rejected by the Israeli authorities".³ What we were seeing was an urgent and escalating health and humanitarian crisis. The events that followed have shown that our concerns were justified.

We may respectfully disagree with correspondents on many issues regarding this conflict. But we believe our critics and supporters would all agree that the best way of advancing health, human security, peace, and justice for Palestinians and Israelis alike is through adherence to international law and a positive commitment to negotiation and political solutions to remove what we see as the major causes of this conflict—occupation and blockade.

For a complete description of our affiliations and experience, please see appendix.

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- 1 Manduca P, Chalmers I, Summerfield D, Gilbert M, Ang S. An open letter for the people in Gaza. *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 397–98.
- 2 Ministry of Health Gaza, press release. War crimes in Gaza must cease, says MOH Gaza. GazaScoop.ps. July 18, 2014. <http://gaza.scoop.ps/2014/07/war-crimes-in-gaza-must-continue-says-moh-gaza/> (accessed Aug 18, 2014).
- 3 OCHA oPt. Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza emergency. Situation report (as of July 22, 2014, 1500 hrs). http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_23_07_2014.pdf (accessed Aug 18, 2014).

Department of Error

Zhao Q-M, Ma X-J, Ge X-I, et al. Pulse oximetry with clinical assessment to screen for congenital heart disease in neonates in China: a prospective study. *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 747–54—In the figure in this Article, in the asymptomatic newborns cohort, clinical plus pulse oximetry should be clinical assessment plus pulse oximetry. In the clinical assessment plus pulse oximetry group, 116 944 negative results should be 117 125 negative results and 116 773 no CHD should be 116 954 no CHD, and 3763 positive results should be 3582 positive results, and 2889 no CHD should be 2708 no CHD. In table 1, 3763 test-positive asymptomatic newborn babies who had either clinical assessment or pulse oximetry should be 3582, and 138 who had both clinical assessment and pulse oximetry should be 319. These corrections have been made to the online version as of Aug 29, 2014, and to the printed Article.

Green, A. Ebola emergency meeting establishes new control centre. *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 118—In this World Report (July 12), the credit for the image was missing. It should have been "SEYLLLOU/AFP/Getty Images". This correction has been made to the online version as of Aug 29, 2014.

Ng M, Fleming T, Robinson M, et al. Global, regional, and national prevalence of overweight and obesity in children and adults during 1980–2013: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2013. *Lancet* 2014; **384**: 766–81—In this Article (published online on May 29), the name and affiliation of XiaoRong Wang were incorrect. These corrections have been made to the online version as of Aug 29, 2014, and to the printed Article.

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See Online for appendix