

# Medicine vs. War: Why Peace is a Prerequisite for Health

## MEDICINE & PEACE



### HEALING: A Moral Stance

- Medicine is rooted in the "do no harm" principle
- Views every life as inviolable, regardless of politics and views equal access to care



## WAR & CONFLICT



### DESTRUCTION: Perceived Legitimacy to Kill

- War confers a perceived legitimacy to kill and destroy
 
 ILLUSION OF VICTORY
- Historical narratives often use "victory" to justify massacres
- 'History is Written by the Victors' often obscures civilian deaths and human value erosion



## PEACE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PREREQUISITE



### POSITIVE PEACE: Social & Institutional Well-being

- TTS officially recognizes peace as essential for health strategies
- Advocates for integrating peace into medical curricula, teaching "lung health in conflict settings"
- Opposition to all forms of genocide, reaffirming the right to a healthy life

## LUNG HEALTH IN CONFLICT SETTINGS



### Clean Air, Healthy Lungs



### WAR AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANT

- Explosives, fuel, and building collapses release particulate matter and toxic metals
- Surges in COPD, asthma, and acute respiratory infections
- Long-term toxic contamination renders land unusable, threatening respiratory health for generations



## THE COST OF CONFLICT: A Public Health Crisis



### HEALTHCARE Health Crisis



### NEGATIVE PEACE: Absence of War, but are Civilians

### STATISTIC: 80% of War Victims are Civilians

- Mortality rates in refugee camps increase ten- to twentyfold, with 25% dying later from poor environmental conditions
- Particularly frequently target health facilities, obstructing the right to health and access to medications.

## Türkiye's Positive Peace Decline (2013-2022)



Largest decline in European region.

## THE HUMANITARIAN TOLL IN GAZA

(Since Oct 2023)



**\*\*STATISTIC:  
70,000+ Killed**  
Majority are civilians, half women & children; "worst-case famine scenario"



**DESTRUCTION OF THE FUTURE**  
88% infrastructure damaged  
66% schools, almost all universities



**SYSTEMIC HEALTH COLLAPSE**  
161,600 units and bombed hospitals  
→ a total breakdown of health systems and disease control.

# The Vulnerable Toll of War

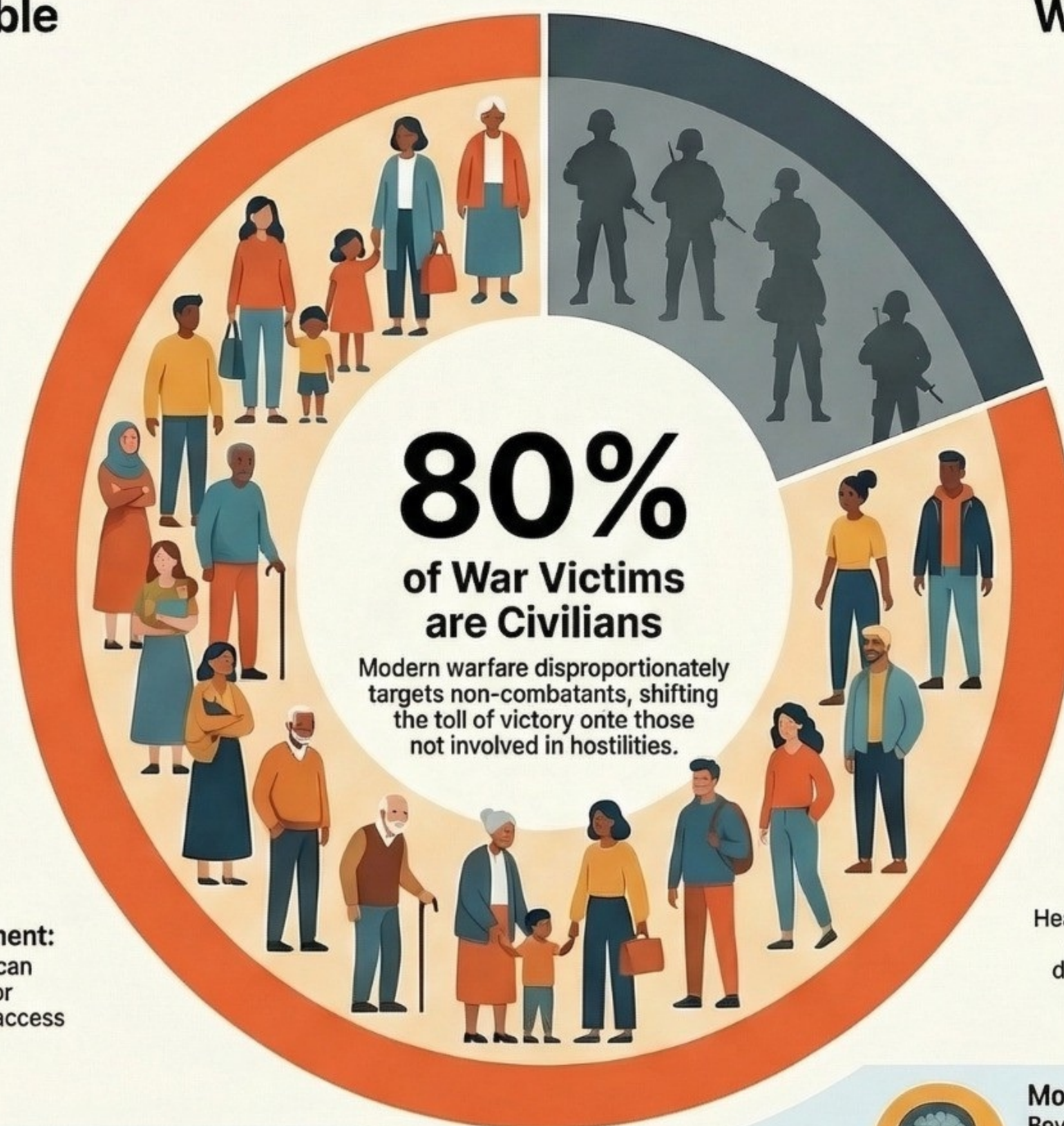
## The Most Vulnerable Bear the Brunt



**Women, older adults, and children** are the populations most affected by the direct and indirect consequences of armed conflict.



**Increased Mortality in Displacement:** Mortality rates for refugees in camps can increase ten- to twentyfold due to poor environmental conditions and lack of access to primary care.



## War as a Respiratory Health Crisis



**Destruction of "The Right to Breathe":** Explosives and building collapses release massive amounts of particulate matter and toxic substances, leading to spikes in COPD, asthma, and acute respiratory infections.



**Environmental Contamination:** Heavy metals and chemicals from weapons contaminate agricultural land and water, disrupting the food chain and threatening long-term food security.



**Moral Injury:** Beyond PTSD, war causes "moral injury"—profound psychological distress resulting from witnessing or being forced to participate in acts that violate one's deeply held moral beliefs.

## The Turkish Thoracic Society (TTS) Declaration

### Section: The Rights of the Child

**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):** Article 37 protects children from deprivation of liberty, crucial in conflict zones.

#### A Stolen Future in Gaza:

Facts regarding school and university destruction. Widespread damage to education infrastructure severely compromises the future of children and young adults.

### Pillars of Positive Peace (IEP) & Impact on Health



**Well-functioning Government**

Ensures accessible and high-quality health services.



**Equitable Distribution**

Guarantees equal service provision for all citizens.



**Free Flow of Information**

Supports health literacy and informed medical choices.



**Low Levels of Corruption**

Ensures medical funding reaches patients and facilities.

# The Turkish Thoracic Society Announces Seven Core Declarations for Peace

1

Peace is a fundamental prerequisite for public health.



2

Peace policies must be integrated with public health strategies.



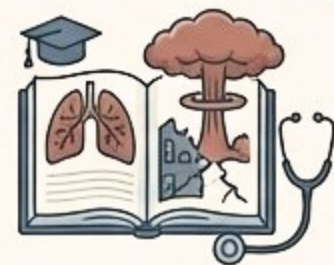
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Peace is an essential condition specifically for lung health.



4

The respiratory impacts of war must be integrated into medical education.



4

The respiratory impacts of war must be integrated into medical education.



5

Research initiatives on peace and lung health will be actively supported.



6

Real patient experiences from war zones will drive  
The right to life is inviolable; we oppose all forms of genocide, particularly the atrocities in Gaza.



# Peace as a Health Prerequisite: A Declaration for Life



## The Incompatibility of War and Medicine

### The Existential Conflict

War legitimizes killing and destruction, while medicine is a moral stance rooted in the scientific preservation of life and the principle of "do no harm."

### Health is Complete Well-being



According to the WHO, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease.

### Peace as the Foundation:

Peace is a prerequisite for a healthy and sustainable society, enabling immunisation, clean air policies, and resilient health systems.

## The Framework for Positive Peace

### The TTS Declaration & Call to Action

**"Peace is a Public Health Issue"**  
The Turkish Thoracic Society declares peace a fundamental prerequisite for lung health and public health.



#### Integrate Peace into Education

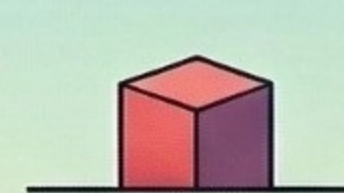
TTS calls for a mandatory curriculum on "lung health in conflict and war settings" in medical training.



#### Active Health Advocacy

Health professionals must advocate for peace and document human rights violations as a professional and ethical responsibility.

### Positive vs. Negative Peace



#### Negative Peace

The mere absence of violence.

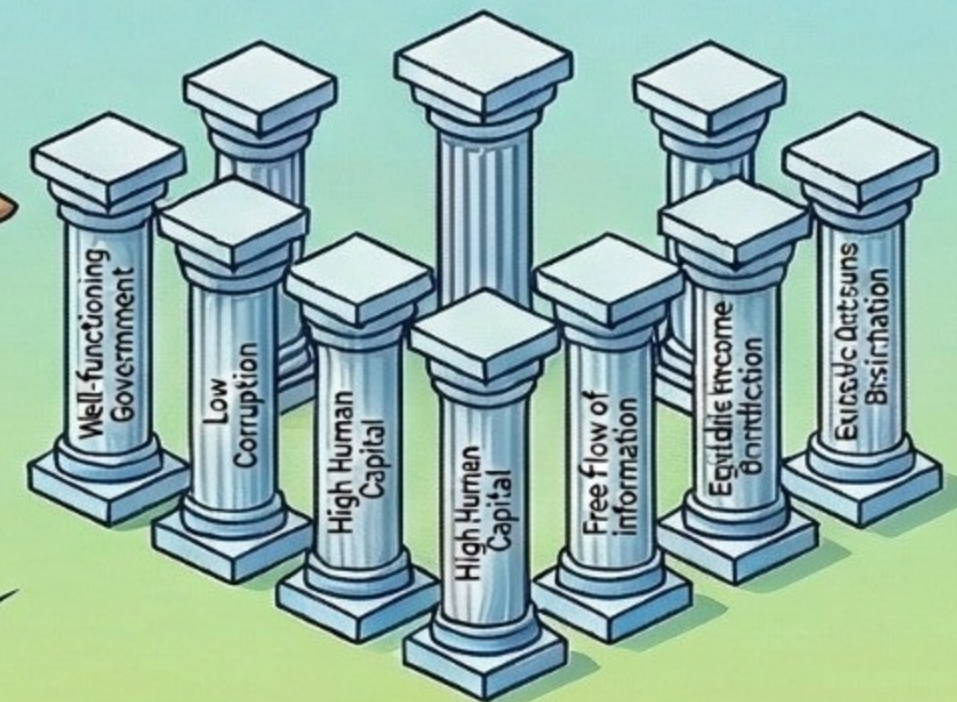


#### Positive Peace

Represents the attitudes and institutions (like equitable resource distribution) that sustain development.

### Eight Pillars of Stability

Resilience is built on well-functioning government, low corruption, high human capital, and the free flow of information.



## The Public Health Toll of Conflict



80% of War Victims are Civilians



Vulnerable populations, specifically women, children, and the elderly are disproportionately affected by the breakdown of health services.



### Destruction of Respiratory Health

Explosions and building collapses release particulate matter and toxic metals, causing spikes in COPD, asthma, and acute respiratory infections.



### The Burden of "Moral Injury"

Beyond PTSD, war causes moral injury - profound emotional distress resulting from witnessing or falling to prevent acts that violate one's deeply held moral beliefs.

### Access & Outcomes Comparison

	Refugees/ Displaced	Host/Local Population
Lack of Primary Care Access:	13%	6%
No Access to Family Physician	9%	4%
Mortality Rate:	10x to 20x Increase	Baseline

### Environmental Peace

True peace includes a sustainable relationship with nature, where clean air and climate stability are recognized as indicators of societal health.

