



Joint Statement from Doctors Against Genocide and the Lemkin Institute

Rudy Giuliani's Anti-Palestinian Racism: Incitement to Genocide and child murder.

Released on 30 October 2024

Doctors Against Genocide (DAG) and the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention condemn recent remarks by Rudy Giuliani, the former New York mayor and a loyal Trump confidante, who claimed over the weekend that “[*the Palestinians are taught to kill us at two years old.*” He made this claim during a speech supporting former president Donald Trump, who is running for a second presidential term.

Giuliani’s inflammatory and criminally dangerous language directly endangers Palestinian lives by characterizing even the youngest children as inherent threats. Framing an entire population, including toddlers, as violent aggressors is a profoundly malicious form of anti-Palestinian racism that serves as a tacit endorsement for violence. Giuliani’s demonization is not merely prejudice; it is incitement to violence and genocide toward Palestinian children, creating a dangerous force that can and does kill. This exact language is what is driving the genocide in Gaza, laying the groundwork for further discrimination, dehumanization, demonization, criminalization, and violence toward Palestinians, both in the U.S. and abroad.

We have already seen the tragic consequences of this rhetoric. A six-year-old Palestinian-American child, Wadee Alfayoumi, was murdered in Plainfield Township, Illinois on October 14, 2023 by a 71-year-old man who was a friend of the family. The killer stabbed the child repeatedly in an act that reflects the burning hatred incited by such demonizing language. Local police charged the killer with a hate crime that they themselves noted was committed in response to events in Israel-Palestine. More precisely, Alfayoumi’s murder occurred after a week of Israeli and US demonization of all Palestinians in the wake of Hamas’s October 7 attack on Israel.

We hold Giuliani responsible for contributing to a climate that fosters such violence and for any attacks against Palestinian children that may follow his incitement.

In Gaza alone, over 20,000 children have been murdered amidst ongoing violence, a staggering figure that underscores the urgent need to challenge these narratives. One of the justifications for the enormous civilian death toll has relied on the demonization of Palestinians as such, irrespective of their age or gender.

Tragically, we have yet to see American institutions — government agencies, universities, think tanks, newspapers, professional organizations, or healthcare systems — speak up against the massive killing of children, the systematic starvation of a civilian population, and the denial of every basic need to Palestinians in Gaza. The silence of healthcare systems and associations is particularly disheartening, as it contrasts sharply with our shared medical ethics, which demand action against harm and advocacy for the protection of all lives.

The health implications of dehumanizing language are profound. Such narratives create somatic stress for the targeted peoples, erect additional barriers to medical care, discourage humanitarian assistance in times of crisis, and expose healthcare providers and patients to direct threats. When leaders perpetuate harmful stereotypes, especially those that criminalize an entire group and frame them as cosmic enemies, they erode international commitment to ethics, law, and justice, depriving threatened populations of much-needed support and assistance, which, makes it easier for acts of violence and rights violations to continue unchallenged.

As two organizations committed to the prevention of genocide in the short and long term, we call on political, academic, legal, medical, and humanitarian leaders to denounce these manipulative and criminally dangerous statements and to take a stand against all forms of dehumanizing language. Acknowledging and confronting anti-Palestinian racism is critical to preventing further harm to Palestinians, protecting children and civilians in Gaza and the Occupied Territories, and upholding the dignity and safety of all people around the world.

Doctors Against Genocide and the Lemkin Institute urge everyone to recognize the gravity of Rudy Giuliani's hateful rhetoric and to join us in advocating for language that promotes peace, health, and human rights over division and violence.