



**MCAI** | Maternal & Childhealth  
Advocacy International

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CC: Permanent Missions of China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States

**Advocacy Brief | Giving Birth and living in Danger: An Urgent Appeal to the UN Security Council to Protect Mothers, Newborn infants and children in War Zones**

*(An Urgent Appeal to the UN Security Council by MCAI – June 16th 2025)*

**A Call for Action**

In today's war zones, thousands of women are being [forced to give birth alone, under fire, or in destroyed clinics](#). For newborns, survival begins in the rubble of collapsed health systems. The world is failing to protect the most basic right: the right to give birth safely. Thousands of children are being killed or [suffering appalling injuries](#) with longterm consequences in situations such as Gaza, where there is also enforced severe malnutrition and no drugs or anaesthetics to control pain resulting from major injuries.

Maternal, newborn and child healthcare is not a side issue—it is a core test of our humanity, our legal obligations, and our peace and security commitments.

We call on the United Nations Security Council to recognize this escalating crisis as both a humanitarian emergency and a security imperative—and to act.

**Where Mothers, Babies and Children Are Most at Risk**

| Region      | Countries or Territories Affected   |
|-------------|---|
| Middle East | Gaza and the West Bank, Syria, Yemen, Israel and Iran   |
| Africa      | Sudan, Ethiopia (Tigray, Amhara), Central African Republic, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Somalia |
| Asia        | Afghanistan, Myanmar  |

1 Columba Court

Laide

Achnasheen

Highland

Scotland, UK

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Eastern Europe  
Caribbean

Ukraine and Russia  
Haiti

## What the Data Show (as of May-June 2025)

**Gaza and The West Bank, Israel and Iran:** According to WHO and OCHA [Only 37% of 572 health facilities](#) in Gaza remain even partially functional; [just 5 hospitals continue to offer obstetric care](#). Pregnant women are delivering without medical assistance in shelters and rubble. There are, in the [words of the United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#) ‘*repeated, egregious attacks on healthcare facilities*’ which ‘*cause death and injury and deprive women of their essential right to access reproductive healthcare.*’ Women in particular ‘*have lost access to essential health services, including emergency obstetric care, prenatal check-ups, and safe delivery facilities, contributing to a drastic increase in pregnancy-related complications and maternal deaths.*’

**Sudan:** With fighting entering its second year, hundreds of thousands of pregnant women are cut off from care. UNFPA warns that access to emergency obstetric services is collapsing (UNFPA, 2025).

**Ethiopia (Tigray):** Despite a ceasefire, health systems remain in ruins. Women are still walking up to 50 kilometers to reach health centers—often without skilled staff or supplies.

**Myanmar and Yemen:** Targeted attacks and blockades have left vast rural areas without midwives or emergency care, causing surges in preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths.

**Ukraine (eastern regions) and Russia:** Ongoing shelling continues to disrupt maternity wards and perinatal care infrastructure, particularly in frontline areas. Children are traumatized by the massive loss of fathers killed on the frontlines. In March 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) publically issued arrest warrants for The Russian President and The Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. The pair were accused of the [‘war crime of unlawful deportation of population \(children\) and that of unlawful transfer of population \(children\) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation’](#).

## Our Urgent Requests to the UN Security Council (UNSC)

1. Urgently overcome the veto system whereby permanent members of the UNSC are interfering with the protection that should be provided by so many life saving Resolutions relevant to maternal and child healthcare.
2. Enforce [UNSC Resolution 2286](#): Condemn and prevent attacks on health facilities, especially maternity wards, antenatal clinics, and emergency rooms and wards caring for ill and injured children. Ensure protection for frontline health providers and patients.
3. Guarantee Humanitarian Corridors and Evacuations: Facilitate crossline and cross-border access to obstetric, neonatal and paediatric care—especially for high-risk pregnancies,

newborns in need of intensive care and children with severe illnesses (including life-threatening malnutrition) or injuries (such as those needing amputations) which ruin their lives.

4. Operationalize [UNSC Resolution 1325](#) (Women, Peace and Security): Embed maternal and newborn health into peacekeeping mandates, WPS national action plans, and post-conflict recovery frameworks.
5. Support Investigation and Accountability: Document and refer grave violations—such as denial of obstetric care or attacks on maternity or paediatric units—to international legal bodies, including the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ).
6. Mandate Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Metrics in Conflict Reporting: Require regular reporting on maternal, newborn and child outcomes in Secretary-General briefings and UN humanitarian cluster reports.

### **Why This Matters**

*“The health of women, newborns and children are not side issues—it is a test of our commitment to humanity, dignity, and the laws of war.”*

We must not accept a world where giving birth and being a child means risking death from abuse, bombing, or blockade.

**The Security Council has both the authority and the moral responsibility to act. Lives depend on it.**

**About [MCAI](#)** *Maternal and Child health Advocacy International (MCAI) is a humanitarian organization working to ensure safe and equitable maternal, newborn and child care in fragile and conflict-affected settings. We partner with governments, frontline health workers, and UN agencies to deliver life-saving solutions.*

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