

Statement on the death of Muhammed Bhar in Gaza

Nathan Rowe



Down Syndrome International (DSi) is deeply shocked and concerned about the reported tragic death of Muhammed Bhar in Gaza, as shared by his family. According to their account, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) raided their home, during which Muhammed was allegedly attacked by a military dog and was later found dead after the family was forced to leave.

This incident is part of a series of troubling reports emerging from Gaza, including the alleged assault of another young man with Down syndrome by IDF forces and reports of individuals with disabilities being left vulnerable on the streets after their families were killed.

In Gaza, we have received distressing updates about the conditions for children with Down syndrome, many of whom are reportedly severely malnourished. Our member organisation in Gaza, the Right to Live Society, has communicated the severe hardships faced by the Down syndrome community. Alarming, they have lost contact with many of the families they support. Additionally, the reported

destruction of their centres has disrupted essential services, including healthcare, early development interventions, and vocational programs, exacerbating the crisis.

DSi has been working with humanitarian organisations, including UNICEF, to provide support for the families that the Right to Live Society assists and to promote disability inclusion in the emergency response in Gaza. However, these efforts are significantly hampered by the ongoing conflict and unsafe conditions for organisations operating in the region.

Our Programme Director, Nathan Rowe, presented a statement to the Civil Society Forum, at the United Nations Conference of State Parties, on the impact of conflict on people with Down syndrome and their families. Nathan shared examples from our network, including Gaza. You can read the full report [here](#).

We urgently call for an immediate ceasefire by all parties and the unconditional release of all hostages. It is imperative that all parties respect international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of all civilians, particularly the most vulnerable, including those with disabilities.

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