From Global Commitments to Local Realities: Antimicrobial Resistance in the Gaza Strip

Jasem Humeid, Eman Elhinnawi, Mabadee Al Farra, Nihad AbuZiada, Motasem Hamdan
Al-Quds University, Faculty of Public Health, Palestine - 2026

Introduction

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major global public health threat that can potentially **undermine** progress towards universal health coverage, sustainable development, and global health security. While AMR affects all countries in the world, its **consequences** can be severe in conflict-affected and/or resource-constrained settings. In such cases, weakened health systems, disrupted surveillance systems, misuse of antimicrobials, inadequate infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, and deteriorating water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions contribute to the emergence and spread of resistant pathogens.

Objectives

- This policy analysis aims to examine how global AMR commitments translate into local implementation during protracted **humanitarian crises** and identifies policy priorities for strengthening global AMR governance.
- To improve preparedness and protect global health security in future humanitarian crises, emphasis should be put on strengthening international accountability, sustainable financing, equitable access to diagnostics and essential antimicrobials, and **resilient surveillance systems**.

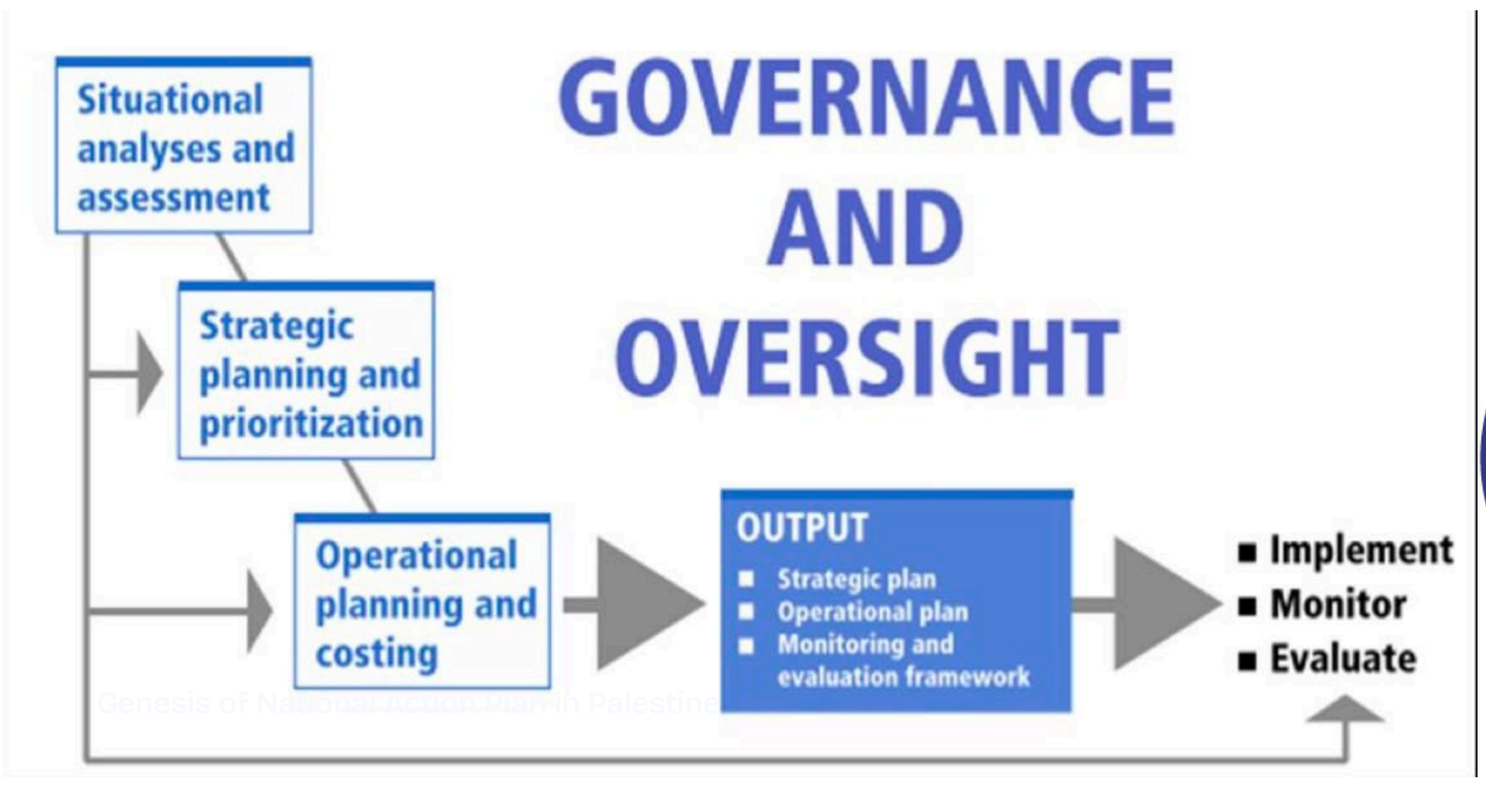
Methodology

The study was conducted through a review of relevant literature, policy frameworks, and institutional reports produced by the World Health Organization (WHO), Palestinian Ministry of Health, and others. The researchers examined global AMR governance, One Health strategies, national policy implementation, and determinants of resistance. In addition, they conducted a key informant interview with a senior IPC focal point from the Ministry of Health in Gaza to provide operational insights into the challenges of implementing AMR policies during an **active humanitarian emergency**.

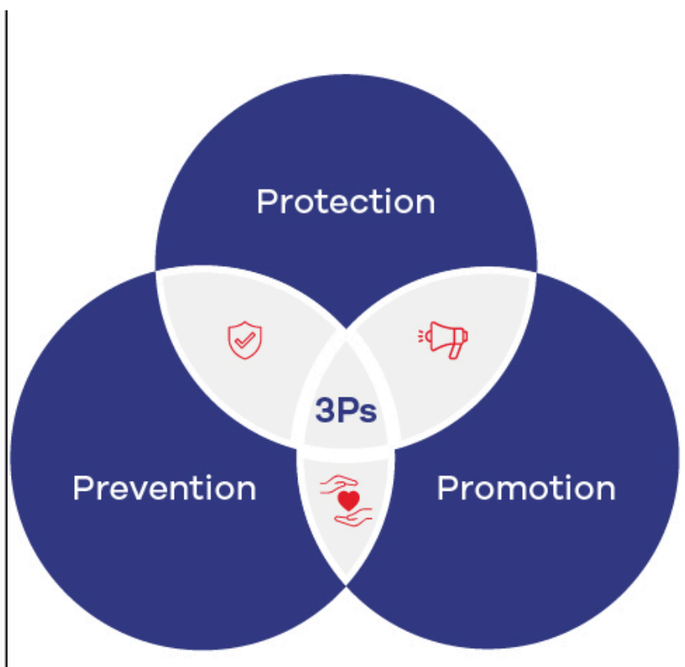
Results

- **Escalating AMR risks:** Conflict has weakened the health system and increased inappropriate antibiotic use.
- **Weak surveillance and infection control:** Damage to laboratories, diagnostics, surveillance systems, and antimicrobial stewardship has reduced AMR control capacity.
- **Humanitarian and environmental pressures:** Displacement, overcrowding, poor WASH conditions, and complex war-related injuries have increased AMR risks.
- I**mplementation gaps:** Palestine's National Action Plan provides a framework, but implementation is limited by insufficient funding, operational capacity, coordination, and adaptation to emergencies

Call for Immediate Action in the Gaza Strip



Palestinian Ministry of Health, 2020. National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (2020–2024).



WHO EMRO, 2008.

Conclusion

The Gaza Strip represents more than the setting of this analysis; it provides a real-world stress test for global AMR governance under conditions of protracted conflict. The findings demonstrate that AMR is not merely a biomedical challenge but also a humanitarian, governance, legal, ethical, and health systems issue with implications extending far beyond Gaza. Translating global commitments into effective local action requires conflict-sensitive policies that integrate antimicrobial stewardship, surveillance, IPC, laboratory strengthening, WASH, and One Health principles within humanitarian response and health system recovery.

References

Abu-Shaban, N. (2025). Antibiotic Resistance in Palestine: An Emerging Part of a Larger Crisis. BMJ (Online), 362. https://doi.org/10.1136/BMJ.K3295

Ahmed, S. K., Hussein, S., Qurbani, K., Ibrahim, R. H., Fareeq, A., Mahmood, K. A., & Mohamed, M. G. (2024).

Antimicrobial resistance: Impacts, challenges, and future prospects. Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health, 2, 100081. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.GLMEDI.2024.100081 Ministry of Health. (2020).

State of Palestine Ministry of Health National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance. World Health Organization. (2023). Antimicrobial resistance. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance

World Organisation for Animal Health and World Bank. (n.d.). Forecasting the Fallout from AMR: Economic Impacts of Antimicrobial Resistance in Humans- A report from the EcoAMR series. 2024. Retrieved July 18, 2025, from https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2024/09/forecasting-fallout-amr-economic-impacts-antimicrobial-resistance-humans-27924-compressed.pdf.