Children from Gaza in Switzerland: NZZ criticizes Federal Councillor Beat Jans

In the Neue Zürcher Zeitung of October 24, editor Zeno Geissler castigates the Swiss government and in particular SP Federal Councillor Beat Jans for their symbolic aid in the Gaza conflict. Instead of bringing around twenty injured children and their families to Switzerland for a lot of money and granting them asylum, it should provide more effective help on the ground. Jans' action has been described as a PR maneuver that incurs high costs, is questionable under asylum law and poses security risks.

Other countries, such as Germany, would have refrained from doing so for good reasons. According to Geissler, it would make more sense to provide medicines in Gaza, promote vaccination programs or finance treatment in neighbouring countries such as Egypt. Rebuilding medical infrastructure would also be more sustainable. Switzerland should concentrate on pragmatic, efficient aid instead of expensive symbolic politics. Genuine humanitarian responsibility means saving as many lives as possible with simple means on the ground – not staging itself as a benefactor at home.

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