

# **In Defense of Gaza's Hospitals: An Urgent Appeal for Protection Amidst Ongoing Attacks Against Gaza's Healthcare System**

Joint Statement by Members of the Rebuilding Gaza's Health Sector Initiative

Endorsed by: *[Insert organization names]...*

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The reported indiscriminate attacks and bombardment of Gaza's hospitals by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) has caused a complete collapse of the healthcare system and overwhelming disparity of access to healthcare services, with only 10 out of 36 hospitals as partially functioning to date. The reportedly deliberate targeting of medical hospitals and clinics is not only morally reprehensible but is also a clear violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) under Article 19 outlined in the Geneva Conventions.

Investigations by humanitarian organizations on the IDF's claims to target Hamas in their bombardment reveal a failure to consider the safety of patients and medical personnel, including the inability to provide an effective evacuation order and lack of evidence for a calculated attack. It is further supported by testimonies of healthcare workers and organizations reporting damage to medical infrastructure, ultimately leading to the collapse of the healthcare system in Gaza.

## **List of 34 Hospitals in Gaza Attacked by Israeli Forces since October 7th**

### ***Non-Functional***

#### **1. Al-Shifa Hospital**

*November 3rd, 2023 (airstrike)*

*November 6th, 2023 (airstrike)*

*November 10th, 2023 (airstrike)*

*November 11th, 2023 (shooting)*

*November 13th, 2023 (shooting)*

*November 15th, 2023 (raid)*

*November 18th, 2023 (shooting)*

*March 18th, 2024 (raid)*

*March 20th, 2024 (shooting)*

*March 21st, 2024 (bombing)*

Claim: Daniel Hagari (IDF Spokesman) stated army would conduct evacuations of newborns from al-Shifa Hospital,

Refute: Gaza Health Ministry spokesman stated Israel had not provided "any mechanism to get the babies out to a safer hospital."

Refute: Mai al-Kaila, the Palestinian Minister of Health, stated the Israeli army was not evacuating patients, but rather "forcibly evicting the wounded and patients onto the streets, leaving them to face inevitable death."

Refute: The director of Al-Shifa stated Israel's claim to provide incubators to premature babies was false.

Claim: John Kirby, spokesperson for the U.S. National Security Council claimed Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad had "stored weapons" in the hospital. These claims were disputed. (5,6,13)

## **2. Al-Amal Hospital**

*December 22nd, 2023 (shelling)*

*January 2nd, 2024*

*January 3rd, 2024*

*January 16th, 2024 (shelling)*

*January 19th, 2024 (shooting)*

*January 23rd, 2024 (shooting)*

*January 26th, 2024 (tank fire)*

*January 28th, 2024 (shooting)*

*January 29th, 2024 (shooting)*

*January 30th, 2024 (raid)*

*January 31st, 2024 (raid)*

*February 9th, 2024 (raid)*

*February 9th, 2024 (shelling)*

Claim: The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said "troops are continuing to conduct operational activity in the areas of Al Amal and Al-Qarara, eliminating terrorists and carrying out targeted raids on terrorist infrastructure." (28)

Refute: PRCS said Israeli forces wounded displaced people sheltering at the hospital, who later died.

## **3. Nasser Medical Complex**

*December 17th, 2023 (shooting)*

*January 16th, 2024 (shelling)*

*January 17th, 2024 (bombing)*

*January 20th, 2024 (airstrike)*

*January 22nd, 2024 (raid)*

*January 25th, 2024 (bombing)*

*February 7th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 8th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 9th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 10th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 11th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 12th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 13th, 2024 (shooting)*

*February 14th, 2024 (shooting)*

Claim: The IDF claims the hospital was used by Hamas to hold hostages kidnapped from Israel

Refute: Israeli forces raided the hospital in a military operation that lasted 10 days, during which they killed dozens of displaced people, medical staff, and patients inside the hospital, and arrested hundreds more, according to the Health Ministry in the enclave. (5)

## **4. Al-Quds hospital**

*October 28th, 2023*

*November 3rd, 2023 (airstrike)*

*November 10th, 2023*

*November 11th, 2023*

Claim: All Israel News reported that a Hamas battalion operating from the hospital ambushed IDF troops, saying that 21 militants were killed whereas the Israelis suffered no casualties. On 13 November, Refute: Palestine Red Crescent Society condemned allegations that Hamas was attacking from the hospital saying the video from the drone only showed them in the street outside the hospital.

#### **5. Indonesian hospital**

*November 3rd, 2023*

*November 20th, 2023*

Claim: The IDF forces said that it believes the Indonesian Hospital was built on a Hamas tunnel system. Refute: Commentator Taghreed El-Khodary said that Israel convinced the world that al-Shifa Hospital was the headquarters of Hamas because it was the easiest route for them to invade Gaza. (29)

#### **6. International Eye Hospital**

*October 10th, 2023 (airstrike)*

#### **7. The Psychiatric Hospital**

*November 5th, 2023 (airstrike)*

#### **8. Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital**

*October 30th, 2023 (airstrike)*

#### **9. Public Aid Hospital**

*November 3rd, 2023*

#### **10. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Hospital**

*October 15th, 2023 (airstrike)*

#### **11. Al-Helu Hospital**

*November 1st, 2023*

*November 14th, 2023*

#### **12. Al-Rantisi hospital**

*November 10th, 2023 (siege)*

*November 11th, 2023 (siege)*

#### **13. Al-Nasser Pediatric Hospital**

*November 4th, 2023*

*November 10th, 2023*

*January 5th, 2024*

#### **14. Moh El Dorra Pediatric Hospital**

*October 13th, 2023 (white phosphorous)*

**15. Al-Rimal Health Centre**

*November 11th, 2023 (airstrike)*

**16. Al-Wafa Hospital for Specialized Surgery and Medical Rehabilitation**

*November 17th, 2023 (airstrike)*

**17. Governmental Eye Hospital**

*November 10th, 2023*

**18. Mahdi Maternity Hospital**

*November 11th, 2023 (airstrike)*

**19. Patient's Friends Benevolent Society**

*February 12th, 2024*

**20. Al Karama Specialized Hospital**

*October 17th, 2023 (airstrike)*

**21. Yafa Hospital**

*December 8th, 2023 (airstrike)*

**22. Al-Khair Hospital**

*January 22nd, 2024 (raid)*

While the 8 remaining hospitals are partially functional, these centers are unable to provide most medical services due to lack of fuel, power, healthcare workers and damage to medical supplies. These constraints further compound the already significant strain of having to meet the increasing needs of 2.2 million civilians under increasing risk. (17,18)

***Partially Functional***

**23. European Gaza Hospital**

*February 3rd, 2024 (hostility)*

**24. Al-Awda Hospital**

*November 21st, 2023 (strike)*

*December 1st, 2023 (bombing)*

*December 9th, 2023 (shooting)*

*December 11th, 2023 (shooting)*

*December 14th, 2023 (raid)*

*December 19th, 2023 (detainment)*

*December 21st, 2023 (shooting)*

*January 30th, 2024 (strike)*

*January 31st, 2024 (shelling)*

**25. Mohammed Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital**

*March 28th, 2024*

*April 3rd, 2024 (strike)*

**26. Al-Ahli al-Arabi Hospital**

*October 14th, 2023 (strike)*

*December 18th, 2023 (hostility)*

**27. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital**

*January 8th, 2024*

*January 10th, 2024*

*January 13th, 2024*

**28. Kamal Adwan Hospital**

*November 22nd, 2023 (shooting)*

*December 3rd, 2023*

*December 5th, 2023*

*December 11th, 2023*

*December 12th, 2023 (raid)*

*December 14th, 2023 (blockade)*

*December 16th, 2023 (massacre)*

*December 23rd, 2023*

Claim: Israel claims that the hospital was used to shelter terrorists, arguing that this invalidated the protection provided by the Geneva Conventions.

Refute: The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) says that Israel is in clear violation of destruction to parts of the hospital, as well as the arrest and abuse of many medical staff and displaced people. (3)

**29. Al-Helal Emirati Hospital**

*March 2nd, 2024 (bombing)*

**30. Beit Hanoun Hospital**

*October 11th, 2023*

**31. Al-Sahaba Hospital**

*December 15th, 2023 (bombing)*

**32. Kuwait Hospital**

*February 12th, 2024 (airstrike)*

International Committees have yet to address the inadequate justification for deliberately targeting patients, staff workers and the indiscriminate destruction to medical equipment and infrastructure due to unsupported claims.

## ***Minimally Functional***

### **33. Jordan Field Hospital**

*January 17th, 2024 (shelling)*

*January 20th, 2024 (airstrike)*

Claim: Israel denied that it shelled the field hospital in Khan Younis, saying it was engaged in a gunfight with Hamas fighters nearby.

Refute: the Jordanian armed forces denied that this action was a consequence of a clash with resistance factions. It said it "strongly asserts that the deliberate targeting of the Jordanian Field Hospital was part of Israel's consistent approach to targeting hospitals in Gaza." (12)

## **Result of Attacks**

Severe disruptions to healthcare access are a direct result of the ongoing blockade and damage to infrastructure carried out by the Israeli forces. As of March 29th, 2024,

- **24** hospitals are out of service and 2 are minimally functional.
- **~24%** of primary health care facilities are functional.
- **33%** (8 out of 24) of UNRWA health centers are operational

*(Source: oPT Emergency Situation Update, World Health Organization (WHO)) (1)*

## **Disease Outbreaks due to Displacement**

Severe overcrowding due to continued displacement in the Gaza strip has caused a major spike for serious epidemics, including respiratory tract infections, hepatitis, lice, acute watery diarrhea, scabies, and other diseases. The ongoing blockade by Israeli forces have severely disrupted the management of medical waste at hospitals, further increasing risk to hazardous materials and infection. Data provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) presents an increase of disease outbreaks present in the Gaza strip, particularly for diarrheal illness and Hepatitis A. Since Mid-October there are a recorded:

- **586,402** cases of respiratory infections
- **81,259** cases of scabies and lice
- **46,195** cases of skin rashes
- **19,117** cases of jaundice (presumed Hepatitis A after samples tested positive)
- **7,037** cases of chickenpox

*(Source: oPT Emergency Situation Update, World Health Organization (WHO)) (1)*

Destruction to Gaza's healthcare infrastructure has made disease surveillance virtually impossible for global health organizations, posing greater challenges for outbreak prevention. Patients suffering from common medical problems such as pneumonia, bladder or kidney infections, heart attacks, pneumonia, allergic reactions, abdominal infections, strokes, or other non-war related injuries could face death or severe illnesses. Services that were once readily available to Gazans are now extremely difficult to secure under Israel's near siege. (19)

## **Disruption of access to specific treatments**

### ***Cancer***

On October 30th, 2023, The destruction of Gaza's only cancer hospital, The Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, led to the complete collapse of cancer care within the region. Prior to the war, Gaza treated **1800 to 2000** cancer patients per year, of which around 6-8% were children. Currently, only **1-5%** of patients have access to adequate cancer treatment. A ceasefire on Gaza's cancer hospitals is estimated to increase access to cancer care by **19-45%**. (2,14)

### ***Obstetrics***

The latest report from UNICEF in March 2024, estimates that **50,000** pregnant women and girls in Gaza risk missing ante-natal care due to giving birth without electricity or medical supplies. Chance of survival has significantly decreased for both mothers and newborns due to staggering rates of malnutrition and improper prenatal and postnatal care. As of current, **15-25%** of pregnant women have access to health facilities with available commodities (MgSO<sub>4</sub>, antibiotics, uterotonics) for childbirth, but this can drop to as low as **5-15%** without intervention. (14)

### ***Nephrology***

According to a recent assessment by Forensic Architecture, the Israeli occupation's evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip resulted in massive displacement and greater restriction to specific treatments including kidney care centers. It is estimated that patient accessibility to hemodialysis will decrease by **35-45%** if attacks against Gaza's hospitals continue. (1,14)

### ***Trauma Injuries***

Inability to access trauma centers in a timely manner due to the cessation of functioning hospitals is projected to cause **7,560** deaths within the first 3 months of further escalation. Within 6 months, it is estimated that a total of **15,110** deaths would occur as a result of further destruction on Gaza's remaining trauma centers. (14)

### ***Management of Chronic Conditions***

Attacks involving healthcare staff and facilities have rendered outpatient services essentially nonexistent, therefore, exacerbating these conditions and causing preventable deaths secondary to the ongoing attacks to the healthcare system. (14,19)

## **Remaining Hospitals to Date**

### ***Al-Ahli Arab Hospital***

As of February 23rd, 2024, Al-Ahli Arab Hospital is the only functioning hospital in the North of Gaza strip. It has continued to provide care for underweight and malnourished children under the Israeli blockade, in addition to other services such as burn treatments and occupational therapy. While the hospital is minimally functioning, operations to adequately treat patients are severely limited by the shortage of fuel and maximum patient capacity. Any attempts by the Israeli forces to further disrupt operations or otherwise render the hospital non-functional could

imply devastating health consequences for all patients of the hospital, and in particular, the thousands of patients and individuals of whom remain in the northern areas of Gaza. (3)

### ***European Gaza Hospital***

European Gaza Hospital is one of the last remaining trauma centers to provide partial surgical procedures to patients, and one of the few centers in which humanitarian providers are able to perform surgeries. It is already at maximum capacity due to the influx of patients who sought shelter following the bombardment of Nasser Hospital. (19)

### ***Al-Awda Hospital***

Al-Awda Hospital has been subject to several ongoing attacks including indiscriminate shootings and bombardment. Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Dr. Adnan Rami reported that pregnant women have been killed in attempts to access the hospital. It is projected that escalation on Gaza's birthing centers, Al-Awda being of the final ones remaining, will result in a **30%** decrease in access to care. (10)

### ***Mohammed Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital***

Mohammed Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital is one of the few remaining hospitals that provide limited treatment for Cancer and OBGYN care, as well as serving as a main dialysis center.

### ***Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital***

Al-Aqsa Hospital is the only hospital located in the middle of the Gaza Strip and is a main source for Palestinians seeking refuge. (18)

### ***Jordan Field Hospital***

Jordan Field Hospital is one of the last remaining trauma centers to provide partial surgical procedures. It currently also serves as a source of refuge for an influx of displaced Palestinians following continued escalations. (12)

### ***Kuwaiti Hospital***

The Kuwaiti Specialized Hospital is a small hospital with an extremely limited capacity. It has been continuously subjected to Israeli incursions and only offers basic medical services and management to date. (25)

### ***Kamal Adwan Hospital***

Kamal Adwan remains open to serve over **700,000** people in Northern Gaza, despite heavy bombardment in the area. (15)

### ***Al Sahaba Hospital***

Al Sahaba Hospital is functioning very minimally due to ongoing attacks, shelters hundreds of displaced Palestinians, and offers maternity services to the area. As of December, it is functioning with only three doctors able to provide C-sections to patients. (27)

## **Call To Action**



There is a dire need to protect the remaining hospitals that are already at maximum capacity. Consequences of inaction to preserve the remaining operations against Israeli escalation are estimated to cause a total of **19,030** preventable deaths between February and August 2024. (22)

*“Allowing this violence to take place has sent a clear message to the world and the international community that the people of Gaza do not have the right to health and critical determinants of health adequate for their existence.”*

Ms. Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur by the UN Human Rights Council (6)

**We call upon international institutions and leaders** to prioritize the protection of Gaza’s remaining hospitals. We declare the need for Gaza’s remaining healthcare facilities to be classified as protected entities under all circumstances without expectation, to prevent further aggression, and devastation brought upon Gaza’s fragile healthcare system.

**This Joint Statement is supported in solidarity and endorsed by the following organizations:**

\*insert logos here\*

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