



Health Situation in Gaza

Updates and Technical Recommendations

November 2, 2023

The ongoing attacks on the civilians of Gaza by the Israeli army is causing a tremendous impact on the lives and health status of the Palestinian people. These attacks are causing thousands of deaths and injuries, on top of the inaccessibility to health services, the spread of communicable diseases, the deterioration of mental health, and a strain on the health system. The health system will collapse if essential medical services and medicines are not provided immediately and on a continuous basis.

In Numbers since October 7, 2023

8,796+ Mortalities

2,030 Missing People

68% Mortality Rate of Women and Children

50% of the Missing People are Children

22,219 Injured

45% of housing units are destroyed

51% of Injuries are Women and Children

1.4 million Internally Displaced Populations

* Information source: Palestinian Ministry of Health/Gaza, Palestinian Red Crescent Society

Delivery of Health Care Services

The war facing Gaza has led to a decline in the health status of the population. Prior to the conflict that started on October 7, 2023, Gaza suffered from a high burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH), around 350,000 patients suffer from NCDs, of which diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases are most prevalent. In addition, around 1,000 patients need frequent kidney dialysis. Hence inaccessibility and unavailability of dialysis machines is putting lives at risk. The continuous bombardment of hospitals and health facilities, in addition to the telecommunication shutdown from October 27 until early October 29 by the Israeli Army, has made it near impossible for the delivery of health services and humanitarian aid.

Moreover, the physical health infrastructure and service delivery have been heavily impacted. Prior to the conflict, Gaza was highly dependent on humanitarian aid, with an average of 500 trucks entering Gaza per day. Those trucks carried essential medications, food, water, and fuel. The siege implemented on October 9 by the Israeli Army has cut off the supply of essential services to Gaza. The total number of humanitarian trucks entering Gaza between October 21 and 27 has not exceeded 84 trucks. Damage to health facilities or the lack of fuel has caused almost half of the hospitals and two-thirds of primary health clinics (PHCs) to shut down. The Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, the only hospital in Gaza providing care to cancer patients is not functional due to bombardment and complete lack of fuel which is putting patients' lives in danger.

The Shifa Medical Complex, which is currently performing emergency care, renal care, surgeries and providing intensive therapy, is operating at maximum capacity, and barely covering 30% of needs. The complex is running out of fuel, this will halt the necessary and critical service delivery to injured and chronic patients.

132 Mortality of health personnel

110 attacks on the health sector

16/35 of Hospitals in Gaza are Non-functional

110 Injured health personnel

50 Ambulances Damaged

24 Hospitals were Ordered to Evacuate

32/52 PHC are non-functional

Communicable Diseases

In addition to the restriction of health care service provision, the prevalence of infectious diseases is on the rise. The overcrowding of hospitals and shelters is turning them into a breeding ground for infectious diseases. The health facilities are housing patients, healthcare workers and more than 117,000 Internally Displaced population (IDP). The health system is overstretched, with health facilities operating at maximum capacity. Their constant and repetitive bombardment puts lives in danger.

UNRWA shelters have already reported thousands of cases of acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, and chickenpox. These cases are caused by the overcrowding of shelters, inaccessible health facilities, and lack of accessibility to safe water and sanitation. If no prompt and impactful interventions are made, this situation will inevitably lead to a serious health threat to all people in Gaza and the region.

119% of Hospital beds are currently occupied in 7 major hospitals,

More than 1.4 million people are internally displaced, with more than 600,000 people sheltering in the 150 UNRWA-designated emergency shelters (DES). The average number of IDPs per shelter has reached 2.7 times their capacity with some shelters reaching as high as 11 times their capacity.

The average number of IDP per shelter is 2.7 times their capacity.

To avert additional damage to Gaza, a humanitarian ceasefire should be endorsed. In-addition the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) should be followed under all circumstances. A humanitarian aid channel should be allowed into Gaza on a daily basis to provide citizens and healthcare providers with water, food, essential medications, and fuel. The provision of essential health services, including maternal and newborn services, is of paramount importance at this critical time. The installation of sanitation infrastructure and shelters should also be prioritized. Furthermore, psychosocial support should be provided to the people immediately to avert generational trauma and mitigate the horrific consequences of war.

References

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