



EMPHNET Emergency Bulletin

July 1, 2024

Overview of Emergencies in the Region

Situation Overview

The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) confronts ongoing humanitarian crises. These crises are characterized by devastating armed conflicts and recurring public health emergencies. These persistent challenges have significantly weakened communities and strained already fragile health systems. In addition to these issues, the region has increasingly felt the impacts of climate change, manifesting in sudden and intense events such as flash floods in Afghanistan and extreme heat waves in many of the countries. These climate-related emergencies further compound existing challenges, thus exacerbating health disparities and increasing vulnerabilities within the population.

The armed conflicts have created a complex panorama of interconnected crises in the EMR, as they do not only directly harm communities through violence and displacement, but they also disrupt the delivery of essential services, while also harming the environment. In situations, as those seen in Gaza and Sudan, humanitarian aid and healthcare workers are facing life-threatening hardships. This bulletin highlights the critical emergencies seen in the region while shedding light on the alarming violations against humanitarian aid and healthcare workers seen in such emergency situations.

The Impact of War on Gaza in Numbers

Till May 25, 2024

37,396+
deaths
*according to OCHA –
last update June 30, 2024*

85,900
wounded

70%
of hospitals bed
capacity lost

8+
strikes on aid workers'
convoys and premises
have been carried out by
the Israeli army between
October 7, 2023, and May
14, 2024

250
humanitarian aid
workers have been
killed including **188**
UNRWA personnel

**Aid workers have
also been unable
to leave Gaza.
Since Rafah
border crossing
closure on May 7th**

484
Medical healthcare
workers killed



The Impact of Armed Conflict in Sudan

Till June 25, 2024

11 million
people displaced
*(largest internally displaced
population in the world)*

24.8 million
people in need of
assistance in 2024

\$2.7B
Total Funding
Required, with only
\$447.4M (16.6%)
secured

18 million
people are acutely
food insecure

80%
of hospitals in conflict-
affected regions are not
functional

millions
lack needed aid due
to conflict-related
delays and barriers

5 million
people and more are
in emergency levels of
hunger. *(This is a highest
number ever recorded during
harvesting season)*

200
violations against
medical staff were
recorded all over the
country, which led to the
death of **38** healthcare
workers

60
attacks on
healthcare facilities
had been verified in
the conflict-affected
areas *(According to the
WHO, update till October
31, 2023)*

Protection of Healthcare and Humanitarian Workers in Emergencies

Implications and Reflections

In light of the manmade and natural emergencies experienced in the region, continuous attacks and violations against humanitarian aid workers and healthcare providers have been recorded in areas of conflict in the region.

In Sudan, hospitals have been subjected to attacks, rendering them out of service and leaving patients vulnerable and in need of urgent health care. Furthermore, the continuous killing, kidnapping, and assaulting of healthcare providers has led to a shortage of staff available to support the functioning facilities. Moreover, medical personnel who are able to support are hindered due to safety concerns and shortages of medical supplies.

Intense combat has led to further devastating events. On June 21, the Saudi Hospital in Al Fasher city of Sudan, which is the only hospital offering maternal and child care in the area, came under attack. A pharmacist was killed as a result, reinforcing the urgent calls to stop the violence and to protect healthcare workers.

“From bullets or bombs, starvation or disease, each soul lost to this senseless war takes Sudan another inexorable step away from what we all want; Peace,” The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Clementine Nkweta-Salami

From another angle, Gaza has been described by the UN as the **“World’s Deadliest Place for Aid Workers.”** More than 250 humanitarian workers from various national and International NGOs have been killed even after being granted safe passage by the Israeli army. Following the closure of the Rafah crossing on May 7, many international humanitarian aid workers are unable to

leave Gaza. Furthermore, the Israeli military has also conducted more than 435 attacks on healthcare facilities in Gaza and killed at least 484 healthcare workers.

“Mothers and babies must be protected at all times and allowed safe access to healthcare. Healthcare workers must be able to work in safety” WHO’s Director-General Tedros Adhanom

Similar attacks on humanitarian workers and limitations to their support have been reported in many other countries. Some of these attacks are motivated by the workers’ perceived affiliations and spread fear and displacement in the community. They are also used to control critical resources such as drugs, medical equipment, or aid.

Therefore, mitigating such violations is essential to protect health workers’ lives and to enable them to carry out their crucial role. Enhanced security measures should be taken through clear communication and collaboration, reporting and monitoring such violations, and advocating for and enforcing international laws.

International Humanitarian Law is a set of rules that serve to limit the effects of armed conflicts. It is part of international law, and it legally binds countries to its general principles. Among these principles is the protection of civilians and medical personnel, which is crucial to safeguard medical staff and aid workers specially during armed conflicts. Continuous violations not only endanger the lives of the humanitarian workers, but also limit the critical assistance they can provide to the vulnerable civilians. It is crucial to uphold all parties to such binding law in order to sustain humanitarian efforts globally.



World Central Kitchen staff who were killed as Israeli strikes hit a convoy of the NGO delivering food aid in Gaza



Sudan ICRC humanitarian aid worker.



A food convoy waiting to move into northern Gaza was hit (photo credits: UNRWA).

References

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