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Israel's war on hospitals must end

11 November 2023

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Hospitals in the north of Gaza are besieged and under attack. Many have fled these supposedly safe spaces in fear for their lives, but thousands of staff, patients and displaced people remain trapped inside. With media having been forced out and communications limited, we are terrified about what comes next for civilians in the north of Gaza.

This morning Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) has heard chilling testimony from inside Gaza's largest hospital, Al Shifa. The intensive care unit has been bombed and damaged. Staff moving between buildings have been shot at and critically wounded. Those who have tried to flee have come under fire, and lie dead or wounded in the street as rescue is impossible. With the mortuary shut down, a hundred bodies are piled up and cannot be buried.

Power has gone out, and staff are having to hand ventilate critically ill patients to keep them alive. At least one patient in intensive care has already died. Babies in the neonatal intensive care unit which MAP has supported over many years are beginning to die from lack of oxygen. More will die soon unless the power supply is restored.

Day after day, week after week, we have been warning of catastrophic consequences if world leaders fail to protect healthcare in Gaza. Our worst fears are coming true.

Time is running out. Our leaders must uphold international law but they are not. They have a Responsibility to Protect civilians but they are not. The war on healthcare must end, fuel and aid must flow to all who need it, and a ceasefire must urgently be reached.

Image: One of the babies in Al Shifa neonatal intensive care unit, taken on 21 October.

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