

MAP demands the urgent protection of thousands of people trapped at Nasser Hospital

15 February 2024



Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) demands the urgent protection of thousands of patients, medical staff, and displaced civilians trapped in the Nasser Hospital in Gaza, following the Israeli military's storming of the facility this morning.

Reports from inside describe how shelling targeted the hospital's orthopaedic department, while Israeli soldiers entered the compound and opened fire, forcing displaced civilians who were able to flee. Earlier this week, Israeli forces ordered the hospital's evacuation but around 2,500 people remain trapped inside, according to the Ministry of Health, because of sniper attacks on people exiting the facility. The attack follows weeks of Israeli military siege of the hospital and surrounding areas, involving the killing and injuring of dozens of people including patients and medical staff.

Nasser Hospital is the largest healthcare facility, the backbone of the health system in the south of Gaza. Nurses also report that there is no food or drinking water left because of the siege. The hospital has been shelled multiple times throughout the war.

MAP's Gaza Director, Fikr Shalltoot said: "Once again the Israeli military are attacking a hospital full of displaced civilians, medical staff, and sick patients, all of whom are protected under international law."

"We are deeply concerned for the safety of patients at the hospital, and the staff that have stayed to take care of them in impossible circumstances, and call for their protection. World leaders must act now to save Gaza's remaining hospitals and prevent further atrocities against civilians."

Yesterday, Dr. Haitham Ahmad, a doctor in the Emergency Department, reported: "We're living through fear and anxiety amidst attempts to evacuate the people displaced sheltering in the hospital. Many civilians have been shot by snipers, most of them while within the hospital parameters. We're panicking. We woke up today to loud airstrikes and explosions to the north of the hospital. It's

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terrifying. We're running on little food, and medicines are limited. People are panicking. We have patients in ICU, with no chance of survival if we are forced to flee".

Israel's relentless attacks on healthcare personnel and facilities, and total siege, are systematically dismantling Gaza's health system. Since October 7, there have been more than 370 attacks on healthcare in Gaza. As of February 14, only 11 out of 36 permanent hospitals in Gaza are partially functioning and three at minimal functionality.

Hospitals, medical staff and civilians all have protected status under international law. That protection must be strictly upheld by all parties to the conflict, and safe access for humanitarians must be guaranteed across all of Gaza. The dismantling of health services witnessed in the north must not be allowed to continue in the south.

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