



Jerusalem, 12 October 2023 - WHO warns that the health system in the Gaza Strip is at a breaking point. Time is running out to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe if fuel and life-saving health and humanitarian supplies cannot be urgently delivered to the Gaza Strip amidst the complete blockade.

Hospitals have only a few hours of electricity each day as they are forced to ration depleting fuel reserves and rely on generators to sustain the most critical functions. Even these functions will have to cease in a few days, when fuel stocks are due to run out. The impact would be devastating for the most vulnerable patients, including the injured who need lifesaving surgery, patients in intensive care units, and newborns depending on care in incubators.

As injuries and fatalities continue to rise due to the ongoing air strikes on the Gaza Strip, acute shortages of medical supplies are compounding the crisis, limiting the response capacity of already overstretched hospitals to treat the sick and injured.

The situation has also gravely disrupted the delivery of essential health services, including obstetric care, management of noncommunicable diseases such as cancer and heart diseases, and treatment of common infections, as all health facilities are forced to prioritize lifesaving emergency care.

Access for emergency medical teams in the field is severely hampered by infrastructure damage. WHO has documented 34 attacks on health care in Gaza since last Saturday that have resulted in the death of 11 health workers on duty, 16 injuries, and damages to 19 health facilities and 20 ambulances.

Without the immediate entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza — especially health services, medical supplies, food, clean water, fuel, and non-food items — humanitarian and health partners will be unable to respond to urgent needs of people who desperately need it. Each lost hour puts more lives at risk.

WHO calls for an end to hostilities and the protection of health care and civilians against attacks. WHO also calls for the immediate establishment of a humanitarian corridor to ensure unimpeded access for health and humanitarian supplies, as well as for personnel, and the evacuation of patients and the injured. WHO further reiterates its call for the respect and protection of health care.

WHO is ready to immediately dispatch trauma and essential health supplies through its logistics hub in Dubai and working with partners to ensure that they can reach the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing. Urgent access through the crossing is essential so that WHO and other humanitarian agencies can act quickly to help save lives.

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