

After Deadliest Day in Gaza Since 2014: “Accountability” for the Killing of Protesters

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) condemns the killing and injuring of unarmed civilians in Gaza and supports growing international calls for independent investigation and accountability.

By [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#)

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The World Health Organization (WHO) [has assessed](#) that 15 Palestinians were killed and 1,416 injured by Israeli forces in Gaza on Friday 30 March. Out of the injured, 1,010 were transferred to hospital for treatment, including 179 children. As many as 758 people received gun shot wounds, many of these to lower limbs.

These casualties resulted from a violent response by Israeli forces to mass peaceful protests along the border on ‘Land Day’, where Palestinian refugees – which comprise approximately 70% of Gaza’s population – were demanding the realisation of their right to return, as enshrined in international law. Israeli forces used live ammunition, as well as rubber bullets and teargas against unarmed protesters who had gathered near the border in several locations across Gaza. Footage shared on social media appeared to show unarmed Palestinians being shot while [walking](#), [running away](#) from the border, and even while [praying](#). [Warning: graphic content]. A further 49 injuries were reported by the Ministry of Health in Gaza on the second day of protests.

No casualties were reported among the Israeli armed forces and neither does there appear to have been any threat to them or to others that could have justified the resort to widespread use of lethal force.

UN Secretary General [António Guterres](#) has called for an “independent and transparent investigation” into the killing and injuring of Palestinians. This call was echoed by the European Union’s Foreign Affairs representative, [Federica Mogherini](#), who said

“the use of live ammunition should, in particular, be part of an independent and transparent investigation.”

MAP supports international demands for credible investigation into the killing and injuring of Palestinians in Gaza during the protests, and where breaches of international law are identified for those responsible to be held to account. MAP echoes in particular the UN’s independent [Commission of Inquiry into the 2014 Gaza offensive](#)’s conclusion that

“Israel must break with its lamentable track record in holding wrong doers accountable.”

MAP also calls on the international community to take action to end a decade of closure in Gaza, which the [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#) has termed “collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel’s obligations under international humanitarian law.”

MAP CEO Aimee Shalan said:

“This influx of casualties has occurred in the context of a health system that was already on the verge of collapse after a decade of illegal closure and de-development. MAP is doing all it can to support the provision of vital medical care in Gaza, but the international community must do more to save lives. Simply expressing sorrow or concern for lives lost is not enough – Palestinians need countries like the UK to take action to ensure international law is adhered to and the rights due to them are finally granted.”

In February, [the WHO reported](#) that 42% of essential medicines were completely out-of-stock. Electricity shortages and limited fuel for backup generators has led to services in hospitals and clinics being severely reduced, and electricity fluctuations have damaged sensitive medical equipment. More than 6,000 Ministry of Health employees have not received their regular salaries since July 2014.

MAP responded immediately to the influx of casualties, releasing prepositioned emergency medicines and consumables, including antibiotics and analgesics to local hospitals. MAP has also provided limb reconstruction surgical equipment, vital for treating the large number of lower-limb injuries resulting from the use of live ammunition. Many of these patients will need support for years to come. MAP staff and partners in Gaza will continue to monitor and respond to the immediate priorities and unmet needs.

MAP’s limb reconstruction programme is playing a critical role in the treatment of injuries. Through regular visits from a team of orthopaedic surgeons from King’s College Hospital since 2014, MAP and IDEALS have been supporting the development of Gaza’s first dedicated Limb Reconstruction Unit and the training of specialised medical staff.

The protests in Gaza are intended to continue for 45 days, leading up to the 70th anniversary of the Nakba on 15 May. As of Sunday 1 April, protesters continued to be present close to the border.

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