

‘Unimaginable Situation’ in Gaza as 600 Patients and Staff Expelled from Al-Aqsa Hospital

Hundreds flee Al-Aqsa Hospital in Gaza amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation across the enclave as Israel presses its assault.

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Six hundred patients and medical staff have been forced to leave the Al-Aqsa Hospital in [Gaza’s](#) Deir al-Balah, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN, following an Israeli evacuation order.

The orders, which were reported by [WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), came amid an influx of injured people arriving at the medical centre.

Al-Aqsa Hospital is the last remaining hospital in operation in Central Gaza, with recent evacuation notices by Israeli forces seeing an exodus of medical staff from.

According to WHO official **Sean Casey** who had visited the hospital on Sunday, the hospital was operating with “30 percent of the staff that it had just a few days ago”.

Casey added that the hospital was receiving “hundreds of casualties every day in a small emergency department”.

International NGOs operating in the hospital, including [Doctors Without Borders](#) (MSF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) have also been forced to leave.

Nick Maynard, MAP’s emergency team’s clinical lead who worked at Al-Aqsa Hospital, told *The New Arab* that the Israeli military informed him that “there will be increased attacks around the hospital are and it is not safe for us to go there”.

“Looking at the direction of the hospital we can see huge smoke clouds above the area... we can hear the incessant bombing,” Maynard said.

“We fear greatly for the safety and the lives of our friends and colleagues, the national staff, who are still in Al-Aqsa Hospital.”

[.@WHO](#) has received troubling reports of increasing hostilities and ongoing evacuation orders near the vital Al-Aqsa Hospital in the Middle Area of [#Gaza](#), which according to the facility’s director forced over 600 patients and most health workers to leave. Their locations are not... pic.twitter.com/Vzd9UWThNm

— Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (@DrTedros) [January 7, 2024](#)

In the days before the eviction, the hospital was already struggling to cope with an influx of injured people and at a reduced capacity due to staff shortages.

“Patients are clearly dying in the emergency department who could be saved if there were enough staff to run the operating theatres to full capacity,” Maynard said.

Enrico Vallaperta, MSF Project Medical Referent in Gaza, who also had been working at the Al-Aqsa hospital told *The New Arab* that “the situation in Gaza is unimaginable”.

“Primary health care has collapsed, people are dying of diarrhea, people are dying of simple bronchitis,” Vallaperta said, adding that the overcrowding of displaced people in Gaza means “we don’t know where we can set up a clinic”.

Elsewhere, the WHO said on Sunday it was forced to cancel a planned aid mission to the Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza after Israel did not give offer safety assurances.

“Heavy bombardment, movement restriction, and interrupted communications are making it nearly impossible to deliver medical supplies regularly and safely across Gaza, particularly in the north,” a post from the account said.

Northern Gaza has been cut off from the south since the beginning of November, following an Israeli military operation that focused on Gaza City and its surrounding areas.

Before that, the [Israeli military](#) forcibly expelled around 1 million Palestinians to southern and central Gaza, areas that are now the focus of Israeli operations.

Israel has [killed](#) 23,084 Palestinians since the start of its renewed war on Gaza, according to data released from Gaza’s health ministry. At least 58,926 have also been injured.

Israel’s conduct has led to accusations of genocide, resulting in a case filed to the [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) by South Africa.

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