

 Statement

31 premature babies at imminent risk of death relocated from Al-Shifa hospital

19 November 2023



UNICEF
Babies at Al-Helal Al-Emarati Hospital in Rafah. November 2023.

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AMMAN – November 19, 2023 – Today, 31 babies clinging to life were rescued from Al-Shifa hospital in northern Gaza and relocated to the south of the Strip. UNICEF, working with WHO, UNRWA, OCHA, UNMAS, as part of an interagency UN effort, alongside the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, medical authorities and staff at the hospital conducted the operation during extremely dangerous conditions.

The newborns' condition was rapidly deteriorating, and follows the tragic death of several other babies, and total collapse of all medical services at Al-Shifa.

The newborns were transferred, following requests from the health authorities, in temperature-controlled incubators under the supervision of medical staff from Al-Shifa

hospital to the Al-Helal Al-Emarati Hospital in Rafah, southern Gaza, where their condition is now being stabilized and they are being cared for in the neonatal intensive care unit.

UNICEF and partners are supporting the identification and registration of the babies to help trace and reunify them with their parents and family members where possible.

Since the start of the escalation, UNICEF has been providing medical and baby supplies to hospitals in the southern and middle areas of the Strip, to support approximately 244,000 people, including newborns in other neonatal intensive care units. In addition, five hospitals have been provided with water through trucking to provide the bare minimum of 3 liters per person per day for some 50,000 people.

Hospitals, healthcare facilities and personnel must be protected from attack. All measures must be taken to spare patients, healthcare workers and civilians from violence. UNICEF continues to call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and to ensure lifesaving fuel and medical supplies reaches medical facilities wherever they are.

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