



**INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF
THE RED CROSS**

Gaza at risk of complete medical shut down without urgent action to preserve services

Geneva (ICRC) – Concrete actions must be taken to preserve access to life-saving and emergency medical care in the Gaza Strip, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Thursday.

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Today, for approximately 2 million people, the Nasser Medical Complex and the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) – both located in the south of the Gaza Strip – are the only two referral hospitals that provide advanced surgical and medical emergency services with large bed capacities, which is not sufficient for the current wounded and sick across Gaza. Nasser, and a third facility, Al Amal Hospital, operated by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, are in the midst of the current hostilities.

Less than 20% of Gaza's land – roughly 60 square kilometers – is now refuge to over 1.5 million people. These people are living in desperate circumstances in the south of the Gaza Strip where the dramatic escalation of the fighting threatens their survival

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Every hospital in the Gaza Strip is over-crowded and short on medical supplies, fuel, food and water. Many are housing thousands of displaced families. And now two more facilities risk being lost due to the fighting. The cumulative impact on the health system is devastating and urgent action must be taken.

William Schomburg, the head of the ICRC's office in Gaza

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International humanitarian law states that all parties to the conflict must fully respect and protect the medical infrastructure.

The humanitarian imperative to protect Gaza's health facilities is clear. If these medical facilities – especially Nasser and EGH – cease to function, the world will bear witness to untold thousands of preventable deaths given the size of the population, the current extreme living conditions, a collapsing health system, and the intensity of the fighting.

The parties to the conflict and all who have influence upon them must take immediate steps to ensure the hospitals and the people within them are safe; to ensure that health personnel, wounded and sick people, and ambulances can safely access the hospital; and to facilitate the timely re-supply of items necessary to the functioning of the hospitals including medicine, fuel, food and water.

About the ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a neutral, impartial and independent organization with an exclusively humanitarian mandate that stems from the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often alongside its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.

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