

# Israel is besieging Gaza's wounded and sick to death preventing their ability to travel for treatment



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Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Palestinian Territory - The international community must effectively pressure Israel to open the border crossings and allow sick and people to leave the Gaza Strip for treatment. Thousands of sick and injured people face certain death as they are unable to receive t the Strip amid the destruction or travel elsewhere, due to Israel's systematic targeting of the region's health sector—which has renc of its components inoperable—and the strict Israeli siege.

Nine months into its genocidal war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Israel still besieges the sick and injured, preventing them from leaving the Strip to receive medical treatment, despite having destroyed or rendered most of the region's hospitals inoperable. As a result, more than 26,000 sick and injured individuals who require immediate external referrals for life-saving care will die, and thousands more will have to wait to travel to finish their treatment or obtain critical medical and rehabilitation services that are unavailable in the Strip.

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Travel by Palestinians, including sick and injured individuals seeking medical treatment abroad, has all but ceased since the Israeli closure of the Rafah border crossing on 7 May. A limited number of these individuals had previously been permitted to travel outside of the Strip by submitting their names to the Israeli army, which would then perform arbitrary security checks.

In cooperation with the World Health Organisation, Israel permitted 21 patients and several family members to pass through the Rafah border crossing on 27 June, but over 12,000 wounded people trapped in the Gaza Strip still require urgent medical attention to survive. In addition, 14,000 patients, of whom 10,000 suffer from cancer or other serious diseases, are threatened with imminent death if they do not receive medical treatment.

Other than the 21 aforementioned individuals, no injured or ill person has been permitted to leave the Gaza Strip since 7 May, even though there is a complete collapse of health system and the closure of 34 out of 36 hospitals due to the systematic Israeli attacks. The two hospitals that are currently open are only partially operational, and are without access to medical supplies or medications; medical teams there are suffering from extreme fatigue after working nonstop for nine months.

The Euro-Med Monitor team has received complaints from a large number of ill and injured people pleading to be allowed to travel outside the Strip to save their lives.

Israa Jihad al-Jundi, 32, of Shujaiya, east of Gaza City, told the Euro-Med Monitor team: "On 3 July, an Israeli bombing targeted my home, resulting in the deaths of three of my children. As for me, all I saw was a mass of blackness and fire, and I no longer heard anything. I realised that I had been hit by a missile. I ended up in a neighbour's house, my legs covered in concrete. I was taken out by my neighbours and taken to Baptist Hospital. My right leg was implanted with platinum. I sustained multiple fractures to my pelvis, chest, and limbs. I can't walk. My pelvis is not stabilised, I die every day. My only demand is to be treated abroad."

Northern Gaza resident Bilal Munir Abu Sultan stated: "I have been a cancer patient since last April; the disease has advanced to a serious degree around my neck. I need to travel for treatment to save my life. I have to leave right away before the cancer takes over my entire body. There is no health care available here."

Abdul Rahman Muhammad, 17, stated: "On 23 October 2023, Israeli planes bombed my family's home, killing my mother, father, and two siblings, including three children. I was seriously injured as a result. I survived the attack but I suffered from burns and fractures. Although the burns have healed, I am still unable to walk. After they had fitted me with an external platinum insert, they took it off. I had surgery, but it did not work out. Because of the devastation to hospitals and the lack of treatment, [...] there is also no chance to treat me here. I appeal to everyone to facilitate my travel for treatment."

By tightening the ongoing siege, closing the Gaza Strip's crossings, and destroying hospitals and health facilities across the entire Strip, Israel has apparently decided to carry out a mass execution against the sick and injured people in the enclave.

As part of Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people in the Strip, ongoing since 7 October 2023, hospitals, medical facilities, and transportation have been destroyed, and medical personnel have been arrested or killed. As a result, those who were not killed directly perish from a lack of access to necessary medical care. This is all part of Israel's systematic, organised, and wide-ranging plan to destroy the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and turn it into an uninhabitable place that lacks basic services and the most fundamental conditions for life. One of the most criminal parts of the genocide is the systematic and widespread targeting of the health sector: forcing it out of existence through destruction and siege, bringing it to the point of no return, and ultimately depriving the Palestinians of opportunities for survival, recovery, and even shelter.

Israel's actions against hospitals and legally protected individuals in the Gaza Strip are not only crimes against humanity, but also crimes against civilians, because they are part of a larger, systematic Israeli military campaign against the civilian population in the Strip.

In addition to flagrantly violating the principles of distinction, proportionality, military necessity, i.e. in its refusal to take necessary precautions to protect sick and injured individuals, the Israeli army is carrying out its crimes against hospitals in the Gaza Strip with disregard for international law, particularly international humanitarian law. This is a grave violation of the special protection afforded to civilians, civilian hospitals, and medical teams, whether due to their capacity or because they are not directly participating in hostilities, with the protection enjoyed by the wounded and sick, even if they are military personnel.

To ensure the safety of medical personnel and sick or injured patients, plus displaced individuals sheltering within hospitals, as well as enable those who need it to receive life-saving treatment, an immediate international intervention is required to establish field hospitals in the northern Gaza Strip and exert pressure on Israel to cease its repeated attacks on hospitals. Thousands of emergency cases are referred for treatment abroad.